

SERPENT OF THE GLEN.

A LEGEND OF THE NORTH OF IRELAND.

(Written for the Ontario Workman.)

Not far from Londonderry walls
Glen Eddra's mountains rise,
Grey rocks beneath the eye appals,
Blue summits reach the skies.

Glen Eddra's hills own many a flock,
Glen Eddra's banks are fair,
Bright waters dash from rock to rock
And lift their voices there.

They sing the songs of liberty,
They ring the sounds about,
The echoing hills in ecstasy,
Give back a joyful shout.

I yet would see, Oh! dear old glen,
Each sweet enchanting place,
Could I but climb thy hills again,
I'd worship on my face.

I yet would be where beauty lives,
With charms of changeless hue,
For time as well as distance gives
Enchantment to the view.

Oh! dear old glen, I'd write with tears,
The memories of the past,
The glories of a thousand years
Have mingled with the blast.

Thy pastures fair a thousand years
Are clothed with living green,
Thy flocks and herds a thousand years
Have drank the running stream.

Thy sons are brave, when duty calls
No second choice they make,
Yet peaceful as the moonbeam falls
Upon the sleeping lake.

Thy singing birds within thy brakes,
Thy golden sunsets too,
Eut lovelier still than sounds or shapes,
Thy maidens fair and true.

Farewell, farewell, thou fairest spot
Upon green Erin's shore—
A thousand world's might be forgot,
Yet, still I'd love thee more.

The shepherd leans upon the rock,
Just where the waters meet,
He gazes on his quiet flock,
His dog is at his feet.

The heat is great, the hunter calls,
The hours are passing slow;
Hast thou no story of the Falls,
Pray, shepherd, let me know.

I want to learn the reason why,
Upon the bushes round,
Beside the foaming waters nigh
So many rags are found.

A charm the waters do possess,
The sick of every kind
When plunged is healed of his distress,
The deaf, the dumb, the blind.

And if the faithful surely knows
That he is cured of all;
A rag he ties from off his clothes
Beside the Waterfall.

And, sir, that you may understand,
The reasons why and when,
I'll tell you now while here you stand,
A story of the glen.

In years gone by a serpent kept,
I've heard my father say,
His baneful watch, nor ever slept
By night nor yet by day.

Beneath that rock across the stream,
So very grey and old,
It long has heard the jackdaw scream,
Long screened the sleeping fold.

One third of all the flesh he claimed,
Oho third of all the fish;
Uncooked he ate, nor ever blamed
The dinner or the dish.

His bed I need not speak about,
But so it came to pass,
When full of flesh and full of trout
He lay upon the grass.

And some there were who knew the snake,
And they were wont to tell
That when he tried a speech to make
He spoke the English well.

The maidens all both short and tall
Were frightened at his look,
While children listened to his call
Then to their heels they took.

The men of Cawmore watched him sure,
For when at night they slept
Full well they fastened to the door,
Their arms beside them kept.

And all the country round about
Were frightened for the snake,
Lest he should find their hen-roosts out,
And all the chickens take.

So wild and furious was his will,
That all the people fled
Into the church upon the hill,
And Masses there were said.

But nothing could affright the pad,
Of notice none he took;
But in his sleeve a laugh he had
At Candle, Bell and Book.

To think that nothing could prevail
It moved the people sore,
To hear the anguish of their wail
It grieved their Bishop more.

Well might his reverence grieve at length,
Well might his heart be sad,
For while he only had one tenth,
One third the serpent had.

Saint Heney was a bishop stout,
A man of faith and prayer,
For when he brought his crook about
The devil was no where.

One day while they were taking stock,
Deep in the wooded glen,
The Saint a standing on the rock,
The snake within his den.

And to this day this rock is named
Because of this event,
And to this day this place is famed
To which Saint Heney went.

Then thus the Saint: Oh, mighty snake,
I wish you long to live,
With you a bargain I would make,
If you consent will give.

If you have faith in what I say,
A trick to you I'll show,
I thought of it the other day,
I'll please you well I know.

I'll bind you round with rushes three,
I'll lift you on my crook,
I'll carry you along with me,
Beside the running brook.

And if I fail then you can try
Some other trick, you know
Some fun to have, that you and I
Good friends at length may grow.

All right, all right, you little saint,
I like the frolic well,
If you can lift me and not faint,
You'll something have to tell.

The snake he binds with rushes bright,
His mouth he makes full sure,
He ties his tail and body tight,
That all may be secure.

Then lifting up his hands on high,
He gives a mighty shout;
The rushes turn to iron bands
They bind the snake about.

And now the knave finds out, too late
That all his strength must fail,
He cannot bite, nor move about,
Nor wriggle with his tail.

The holy Father soon begins,
He beats him long and sore,
He whips him well for all his sins,
Till he can whip no more.

Hold on, hold on, the reptile cries,
No more lay on the birch,
And by the Virgin in the skies,
I'll serve the Mother Church.

Thy prayer is heard, the Saint replies,
The Virgin is our boast;
Of all the angels in the skies
I love the Virgin most.

And by the Candle, Bell and Book,
And by the Saving Mass,
I will not spoil this holy crook
On such a sorry ass.

But, yet, thou crawling thing of sin,
I must not set thee free;
Be sure the tithes of all this glen
Belong to only me.

I'll keep thee far from mischief's call,
Away from herds and flocks;
Beneath Glen Eddra's waterfall,
Between the gaping rocks.

And there, thou cursed of the past,
Thou shalt be lodged and fed
Until the great Archangel's blast,
Shall raise thee from thy bed.

In mercy Father, to my wees
Oh, grant my last request,
And I'll forgive thy cruel blows,
The crosses on my breast.

The fair fields of Magilligan,
The pastures of Myroe,
Thy foes and mine have seized upon,
I fain would lay them low.

Then place me with my head just north
Across the foaming flood;
That when from hence I issue forth,
I then may drink their blood.

The blood of all the Scotch, he cries,
I then may drink their blood;
I like it well the Saint replies,
And flings him in the flood.

Down, down, he sinks the foaming steeps
A dark and dismal den;
No eye can pierce the spot where sleeps
The Serpent of the Glen.

One third of all the fish he eats
That swim within the pool;
One third of all the flesh he meets,
And yet is never full.

Since then no man has ever dared
Across the raging pool;
His soul in mercy might be spared,
If e'er so great a fool.

Until the resurrection morn
Shall fill the hills with light;
The soul has never yet been born
To gaze on such a sight.

When bursting from his bands he springs
Into the woods again,
And down the river Poo he swims,
God help the Scotchman then.

Beneath the waters let him rest,
Who once disturbed the glen;
The will of Heaven is always best
For angels, so for men. S. M. N.

The Home Circle.

HOME POLITENESS.

Should an acquaintance tread on your dress,
your best, your very best, and by accident
tear it, how profuse you are with your "never
minds—don't think of it—I don't care at all."
If a husband does it, he gets a frown; if a
child he is chastised.

Ah! these are little things say you. They
tell on the heart, let us assure you, little as
they are.

A gentleman stops at a friend's house, and
finds it in confusion. "He don't see anything
to apologize for—never thinks of such matters;
everything is all right," cold supper, cold room
crying children, perfectly comfortable. Goes
home; his wife has been taking care of the
sick, and worked herself almost out. "Don't
see why things can't be kept in better order;
there never were such cross children before,"
No apologies, except away from home.

Why not be polite at home? Why not use
freely the coin of courtesy? How sweet they
sound, those little words, "I thank you," or
"You are very kind." Doubly; yes, thrice
sweet from the lips we love, when heart smiles
make the eye sparkle with the clear light of
affection.

Be polite to your children. Do you expect
them to be mindful of your welfare; to grow
glad at your approach; to bound away to do
your pleasure before your request is half
spoken? Then with all your dignity and
authority, have politeness. Give it a niche
in your household temple. Only then will
you have the true secret of sending out into
the world really finished gentlemen and lad-
ies.

Again we say unto all—be polite.

THE FLOATING GARDENS OF MEXICO.

When the city of Mexico was taken by the
Spaniards under Cortez, in 1521, it occupied
several isles in Lake Texcoco. The water from
various influences, chiefly volcanic, has since
receded, and the city, although still retaining
its ancient site, is now two and a half miles
distant from the lake. At the time of the
Spanish conquest, however, it represented
very much the appearance of Venice, a "city
in the sea," "throned on her hundred isles,"
the margins of whose broad and narrow canals
streets were in many places lined with splen-
did mansions. According to the ancient Span-
ish historians, the native Mexicans had at-
tained a high degree of perfection in various
arts, for which they do not appear to have
been in any way indebted to the civilization
of the Old World, and which must have been
an outgrowth of unaided indigenous talent.
Among the many novelties and wonders which
met the eyes of the Spaniards were the *chin-
ampas*, or floating gardens, which abounded
on the lake, and supplied the city with vege-
tables, fruits, and flowers, the latter being in
great request among the Mexicans for decorat-
ing the altars of their gods. These gardens
were formed by constructing a large raft from
the reeds and other aquatic plants which
grew by the shores of the lake, making it suf-
ficiently firm and buoyant to sustain a quan-
tity of soil which was spread over the surface
and kept in position by a low fence of wicker-
work, or intertwined reeds and branches
which ran round the edge of the raft. The
fertility of these little floating islands, owing
to the constant supply of moisture, is very re-
markable, and the old chroniclers described as
being literally covered with flowers and fruit
and verdure. The city of Mexico it still to a
great extent supplied from these singular mar-
ket gardens which form the sole support of
some villages on the shores of the lake, inhab-
ited by families of the descendants of the abor-
iginal race who fell beneath the treachery of
the sanguinary Cortez. Two of these villages,
Santa Anita and Ixtacalco, which are not very
far from Mexico, are particularly noted for the
production of beautiful flowers, and at certain
seasons, when their floating gardens are in full
bloom, they are a favorite resort of pleasure-
parties of the citizens.

THE HABIT OF READING.

"I have no time to read," is a common
complaint, especially of women, whose oc-
cupations are such as to prevent continuous
book perusal. They seem to think, because
they cannot devote as much attention to
books as they are compelled to their vocations
that they cannot read anything. But this is a
great mistake. It isn't the books we finish at
a sitting which always do us the most good.
Those we devour in the odd moments, half a
dozen pages at a time, often give us more sat-
isfaction, and are more thoroughly digested
than those we make a particular effort to read.
The men who have made their mark in the
world have generally been the men who have
in boyhood formed the habit of reading at
every available moment, whether five minu-
tes or five hours.

It is the habit of reading rather than the
time at our command that helps us on to the
road of learning. Many of the most cultivat-
ed persons, whose names have been famous as
students, have given only two or three hours

a day to their books. If we make use of spare
minutes in the midst of our work, and read a
little, if but a page or a paragraph, we shall
find our brains quickened and our toil lighten-
ed by just as much increased satisfaction as the
book gives us. Nothing helps along the mon-
otonous daily round so much as fresh and
striking thoughts, to be considered while our
hands are busy. A now idea from a now vol-
ume is like oil which reduces the friction of
the machinery of life. What we remember
from brief glimpses into books often serves as
a stimulus action, and becomes one of the
most precious deposits in the treasury of our
recollection. All knowledge is made up of
small parts, which would seem insignificant in
themselves, but which, taken together, are
valuable weapons for the mind and substan-
tial armor for the soul. "Read anything con-
tinuously," says Dr. Johnston, "and you will
be learned." The odd minutes which we are
inclined to waste, if carefully availed of for
instruction, will, in the long run, make golden
hours and golden days, that we shall be ever
thankful for.—Scribner's

SELF-CULTURE.

When we read the lives of such men as
George Stephenson or Hugh Miller, or of that
gifted poet of the people who is now on our
shores, Gerald Massey, we are thrilled with a
sort of vicarious pride. Their difficulties, by
that feeling of championship and sympathy
which the sight of brave and stubborn contest
against odds awakens in most minds, seem to
have been ours, and we triumph with them
when they wear the crown of success. "A
self-made man" awakens in most all a glew of
appreciation and regard which we do not feel
for the man, equally distinguished for ability
and learning, he has got, who has been regu-
larly taught in the schools. The one has
had the countersign, and has been invited
into the fort, the other has scaled the ram-
parts and conquered his place. Yet when we
come to look at it thoughtfully, and sift from
it the glamour of romance in which the most
prosaic of us takes delight, it is not the pro-
cess so much as the result which ought to
command our admiration. It is man and not
the means with which we and society are
concerned. Whether or not a more symmet-
rical development of the whole man, physical-
ly and mentally, is usually attained when
favorable circumstances have surrounded him
from birth, is hardly the question. There
comes a compensative strength to those who
struggle; and among the men who have
achieved distinction there have been many
who have put their feet on the lowest round
of the ladder and climbed it almost unaided.
The fact is that no matter how many helps
and helpers a man may have, they are all of
very little use if he do not help himself.
Wordsworth said very truly,—

"These two things, contradictory as they
may seem, must go together—manly depend-
ence and manly independence, manly reliance
and manly self-reliance." The most gifted
teacher cannot furnish intellect to his pupils,
and intellect will win its way whether the
teacher be gifted or not. The education
which we receive from others—in our homes,
through our friendships, in schools, and other
intercourse with the world—is only proface
and supplement to the other education which
we are all the time giving ourselves. It de-
pends largely upon our own estimate of what
in the end are the best things to be desired,
what we become. There are those who think
strong bodily health the thing to be most
wished for in life, and so they spend their
days in the consideration of hygienic theories,
and bend every energy to the formation of
muscle and brawn. There are others to whom
mental power and acquisition seem the only
good worth striving for, and so early and late
they task the brain, giving it little rest and
wearing it out by intense application. Both
seem to us to make a mistake. Wise self-cul-
ture implies the training and strengthening of
all the powers of mind, body, and spirit. He
who sacrifices one portion of himself on the
altar of another, makes a fatal and foolish
error. A sound mind in a sound body is in-
dispensable to all signal success in any field
of life. Will our readers pardon a quotation
here from the sturdy John Milton, who is
telling his readers something about his daily
habits. "Up and stirring, in winter often er
the sound of any bell wakes man to labor or
devotion; in summer as oft with the first bird
that rouses or not much tardier, to read good
authors, or to cause them to be read till the
attention be ready or memory have its full
frught; then with clear and generous labor
preserving the body's health and hardness, to
render lightsome, clear, and not lumpyish obe-
dience to the mind, to the cause of religion and
our country's liberty."

THE MOTHER IN HEAVEN.

In turning over some old papers in a country
attic some time since, I came across the fol-
lowing sentiments, which, from some hints by
the author accompanying, I think he intend-
ed to put into verse. They struck me, even in
prose, as expressing the cry from so many
hearts, that I have ventured to copy them and
send them to you, hoping you might think
them a healthy relief from the absorbing pol-
itical topics of the day, and give them a cor-
ner in your valuable paper:

When the heart is oppressed with anxious
cares, when the world looks cold and drear,

when black disappointment hangs heavy
round our necks, and we hunger after a love
that seems ever to recede, whether do our
souls turn for succour? To that mother in
heaven who never failed us while here.

When our hearts ache to find ourselves no
longer needed to partake in the pleasures of
our children—scarcely welcome even to share
in their sorrows,—whom cold duty takes the
place of the heart's offerings in sickness or suf-
fering,—to whom do we cast our eyes upwards
thinking, oh, were she was here, whom should
we find ever at our side? Our mother in hea-
ven.

When those we love have gone astray, and
language fails to express the bitter shame;
when the little feet whose first tottering steps
we have upheld, or watched through the firm-
er strides of youth and manhood, have turned
into devious paths, heedless of entreaty or
prayer, whether do we turn, longing to rest
our weary heads on the bosom that ever an-
swered our cry for sympathy? The mother in
heaven.

When years have past, and we are left
alone, children gone, some separated by seas
or mountains, others by the greater distance
of coldness or forgetfulness, whose voice then
comes back to us with the loving tones we
vainly long to hear once more? The dear
mother in heaven.

Is not the wish wrung from us, that once
again we were children to be clasped in that
warm embrace? Do not the bitter tears come
as we remember how unmindful we were of
the rich motherly blessings while we had
them?

Oh, ye, who still have mothers to feel for
you in your joys or your sorrows, remember,
however your hearts may change, their's
never do; the mother's heart is the one thing
that never grows old. Amid the trials that
must be our portion in this world, a good
Being has sent to all one blessing—one love
purer than all others. Happy are those who,
with anguish and remorse, do not have to say,
It is our mother in heaven.

THE LEGEND OF SANTA CLAUS.

The popular name of the saint who presides
over Christmas and the toy gifts of that wel-
come season, is derived from Saint Nicholas.
The legend of his first appearance is an Italian
one. According to this, a shoemaker named
Giraldi, who lived in Ferrara, was so miserably
poor, that his labor from day to day barely
kept his family from starvation, and he was
unable to give even a small dowry to his
pretty daughters. It was not thought proper
to marry without a dowry, and thus the
young girls, though each had an admirer, were
compelled to remain single. Their father,
however, went every morning to the shrine to
pray to his patron saint, St. Nicholas, that he
would work a miracle to relieve him from his
distress.

One of his nearest neighbors, a rich mer-
chant, who chanced one day to overhear his
simple petition, ridiculed the idea of his ex-
pecting the saint to take care of his daughters
and recommended him to choose a patron
saint who would be able to do something for
him.

"Mine," he said, "is the Jew Buenajuto;
he lends money at two per cent. a month; and
if you know how to manage you can make
four with it. He is not so deaf as St. Nichol-
as."

The poor man was shocked at this impious
speech, and assured the merchant that his re-
ligious faith could never be shaken. He went
every day to church, notwithstanding the
other's mockery.

It was now Christmas day, when the mer-
chant and the Jew settled up their yearly ac-
counts. Buenajuto found he owed his friend
three hundred ducats, and, wishing to give
him an agreeable surprise, he ordered one of
the ducks he had carefully fattened, to be kil-
led and roasted, and then with his own hands
introduced the three hundred gold pieces
into the inside, and sewed them up. He then
sent the duck to the merchant as a Christmas
present.

The merchant's wife, who shared the com-
mon prejudices against Jews, declared she
would not touch the duck, and the rich man
resolved to sell it. When Giraldi passed on
his way from church, his neighbor, as usual,
bantered him on his devotion, showed him the
Christmas gift his patron saint had sent him,
and taunted him with the stolidity of Saint
Nicholas, who could not even send him a piece
of bread. Finally he offered to sell the duck
for a dollar, and to wait for payment, as he
knew Giraldi to be strictly honest. The shoe-
maker carried the duck home, and when he
carved it for his Christmas dinner, and the
three hundred ducats fell out, his first ex-
clamation was,—

"Praise to St. Nicholas!"

When he recovered from his surprise, he
would have taken the money back, but his
wife persuaded him that, as he bought the
duck, it was rightfully his own. He there-
fore divided the sum between the two suitors
for his two oldest daughters.

The merchant, after some days, discovered
his loss of the three hundred ducats, and went
to the shoemaker to demand the money, which
was refused. The case came before the mag-
istrate, who was a pious man, and heard with
indignation how cruelly the poor man had
been ridiculed about his religion. His sen-
tence was that Giraldi should keep the money,
and that the merchant and the Jew should,