

of intellect, but as the rock could not always be blasted when visitors came, the bell was rung instead, and for a few times answered the same purpose. The thrush flew down close to where they stood, but she perceived the change, and it interfered in the process of incubation; the consequence was, that afterward when the bell was rung she would peep over the ledge to ascertain if the workmen did retreat, and if they did not she would remain where she was.—*London Literary Journal.*

## VII. Miscellaneous.

### 1. CRADLE SONG.

*From J. G. Holland's New Poem "Bitter Sweet."*

What is the little one thinking about?  
Very wonderful things, no doubt  
Unwritten history!  
Unfathomed mystery!  
Yet he laughs and cries, and eats and drinks,  
And chuckles and crows, and nods and winks,  
And if his head were as full of kinks  
And curious riddles as any sphinx;  
Warped by colic, and wet by tears,  
Punctured by pains, and tortured by fears,  
Our dear little son will lose two years;  
And he'll never know.  
Where the summers go:—  
He need not laugh for he'll find it so!

Who can tell what a baby thinks?  
Who can follow the gossamer links  
By which the manakin feels his way  
Out from the shore of the great unknown,  
Blind and waiting, and all alone,  
Into the light of day—  
Out from the shore of the unknown sea,  
To sing in pitiful agony—  
Of the unknown sea that reels and rolls  
Specked with the barks of little souls—  
Barks that were launched on the other side,  
And shipped from heaven on an ebbing tide!  
What does he think of his mother's eyes?  
What does he think of his mother's hair?  
What of the cradle roof that flies  
Forward and backward through the air?  
What does he think of his mother's breast—  
Bare and beautiful, smooth and white,  
Seeking it ever with fresh delight—  
Cure of his life and couch of his rest?  
What does he think when her quick embrace  
Presses his hand and buries his face,  
Deep where the heart throbs, sink and swell  
With a tenderness she never can tell,  
Though she murmur the words  
Of all the birds—  
Words she had learned to murmur well?  
Now he thinks he'll go to sleep!  
I can see the shadow creep  
Over his eyes in self eclipse,  
Over his brow and over his lips,  
On to his little finger-tips!  
Softly sinking down he goes!  
Down he goes! Down he goes!  
See! He is hushed in sweet repose!

### 2. THE CHOICE OF A PATH IN LIFE; OR, WHAT SHALL I BE?

A CHAPTER FOR OUR SONS.

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Owen, "this is the first New Year's Day I have felt really joyful for many a year, because the first of January has seemed a warning that the holidays would soon be over. Now we have no more school—no more fagging in Latin and Greek! Come, Edmund, why do you not join my shout of triumph? You look as grave as if you meditated undertaking all the cares of the nation!" he added, laughing, as he fixed his eyes upon the thoughtful countenance of his cousin.

"I have always been very happy at school," replied Edmund. "I liked my schoolfellows, and we all loved our good tutor, so that leaving such friends is not altogether joy to me. Besides"—and he paused.

"Besides what?" rejoined Owen; "let us have it all out."

"Well, and besides," continued Edmund, "it seems to me rather a serious matter, to step out of boyhood into youth."

"Oh!" answered Owen, "I shall reckon myself quite a man now, I assure you."

"In what respect?" inquired Edmund, drily.

"In the first place, then, you know we shall not be plagued with any more lessons; nor shall we be forced to obey our tutor's orders, or keep school rules, but may do as we please all day, and go where we choose. In short, we are *independent* now!"

"I should be sadly at a loss if I were independent yet," rejoined Edmund. "But are you not going into any business or profession, Owen?"

"Time enough for that, when I have had a year or two of relaxation, after studying so hard. I hope to get a little travelling before I buckle-to for riches."

"That will not do for me," said Edmund. "I must buckle-to at once, in good earnest, for a *livelihood*, and need not aspire to riches; moreover, I have heard my father and tutor both say that lads would not fancy work a hardship if they did not get a taste for dissipation between leaving school and fixing in life."

Owen opened his eyes wide at this speech, for the cousins had been educated, both at home and at school, under very different auspices.

"Pray, what shall you be then?" he asked.

"That is the very question that perplexes me," answered Edmund; "and fills my thoughts continually."

"Well, pray fix on something *gentlemanly*, and do not do anything that will spoil your hands."

"If I can be an honorable character, and maintain myself honestly by my own exertions, I shall not trouble myself about white hands and gentlemanly notions, Owen, I assure you."

These two lads were about the same age, and, in accordance with an annual custom, were visiting, with a large family party, at their grandfather's mansion. Just as Owen had uttered his last remark, the prayer-bell rang, and their venerable relative entered with the usual salutations of the new year. Their own response was chastened by the conviction that he could not survive to witness many more such anniversaries, and that each returning period might be the last of their family gatherings round his cheerful fire side. He might have heard some part of our friends' conversation, but he made no allusion to the circumstance, save that, in his morning supplications at the domestic altar, he prayed most fervently that "the God of their fathers would bless the lads now standing on the threshold of active life, with guidance as to their future course on earth, and crown its close with an abundant entrance into eternal life."

"Mr. M— complained of difficulty in speaking to young people upon religious subjects, yet they perpetually felt how warmly he was interested in their welfare; and many of his grandchildren regarded him as their most confidential and indulgent friend, a title which he richly merited and sedulously turned to their advantage. After breakfast he distributed the customary New Year's Gifts to all except Owen and Edmund, whom he invited into his study to receive the neat substantial watches which he always presented to those who had just quitted the routine of school.

"This is an important era to you, my dear lads," he remarked, as he contemplated the delight with which they examined the bright little monitors, which they deemed a great addition to their dignity. "You read of epochs of time in history, of critical junctures in the career of heroes, of 'golden opportunities' in every individual's life, and all these unite in the experience of to-day! Having completed one brief period of preparatory discipline and study, you have arrived at a point where many ways meet, or rather, where many paths branch off; and need direction as to the one you should choose for your onward course. Have you thought at all what you should be?"

"Oh, yes!" replied Owen. "I mean to be a gentleman; that has been decided long ago."

A smile lurked for a moment in Mr. M—'s eye, as he turned towards Edmund with the query, "And *you*, is *your* choice made?"

"I must be a worker, sir," answered Edmund, "and suppose I shall follow my father's profession, and try to cure, or at least to alleviate, my neighbors' sufferings."

"Well, that is a very honorable, useful, and influential post, Edmund, though involving much self-denial, much patient study, and much persevering activity; and I trust you will be blessed and made a blessing to thousands in your day and generation."

"I had thought of the law, or engineering, or mercantile pursuits," continued Edmund, "but I felt afraid of the temptations I might encounter there."

"There is no sphere free from temptations, my boy; and some fancy the medical student is more exposed to scepticism, infidelity, and dissipation than most others; but there is One, Edmund, able and willing to shield all who seek his protection. While preserving your own integrity, he may enable your steady consistency to attract your associates to the service of the same Master."

"And so, Owen," pursued Mr. M—, turning to his other grandson, "your design is to be a gentleman?"