

MINNIE MAY'S DEPARTMENT.

MY DEAR NIECES,—

Although I had always heard a great deal about the picturesqueness of the St. Lawrence, I was by no means prepared for the great beauty of that favored waterway to Montreal. A large party of us took the boat at Hamilton, some to remain over at intermediate points and others to go straight on and join the ocean steamer for England; in this way prolonging their journey by water three days. We stopped at the "Queen City" long enough to see something of our friends, who met us at the wharf, and take a run up into the City in search of "bargains." Eaton's was of course the great centre of attraction, and, having purchased one or two necessary articles and not a few unnecessary ones, "because they were so cheap," we repaired to the basement of the store for ice cream, of which they gave us a most generous share for five cents. Then as the captain had informed us we were to leave at "six sharp," we returned to the "Hamilton," not a moment too soon, as they were just about to draw in the gangway. The bell for tea rang shortly after, and though we all declared we were not hungry, we certainly managed to do ample justice to a very good tea. I think the meals on the "Hamilton" are excellent, considering how cheap the fare is; a return ticket from Hamilton to Montreal costing \$16, including berth and meals. After tea we all went up and sat in the bow of the boat and managed to pass the time pleasantly enough, reading till we could no longer see, and then chattering away at a desperate rate. We remained on deck till midnight, when we reached Cobourg. Having watched a solitary passenger land there on a very dark wharf, we unanimously decided it was time to turn in.

Next morning, when we came on deck again we found ourselves at Trenton; we would have had plenty of time to go and explore the neighborhood there had we felt so disposed, but we were all too hungry to do anything but wish for breakfast; neither the most amusing book nor the most interesting conversation diverted our thoughts in the slightest from the much-longed-for meal, and when the bell at last *did* ring, we hurried off more like a pack of famished hounds than hungry "humans."

Belleville, Northport, Deseronto and Picton were all passed before noon; to the latter place the "Hamilton" seemed much attached, and more than an hour's delay was caused before we could get off again. The water is so much lower this year—lower than it has been for forty years, I was told on good authority,—that the most careful steering is necessary in order to avoid the many shallow places. We next passed Glenora, and Bath shortly after, and then we pursued the even tenor of our way with no further stoppages till we reached Kingston. We would like to have explored the "Limestone City," but our time there was too short; the detention at Picton had made us an hour or so late, and the captain was anxious to make up time. As we approached Gananoque, numerous lovely islands appeared in sight, their size and shape as varied as their color and foliage. We seemed to pass them too quickly to appreciate the romantic beauty of our surroundings. The captain told us the names of many of the islands, and legends in connection with them. On one, rather larger than the rest, an Indian family had lived,—father, mother and daughter, the latter a very pretty little savage. A young Englishman, having seen her paddling down the river in her canoe one day, fell desperately in love with the pretty Leetah, and eventually—much to the horror of his friends—married her. It did not take him long to find out what a mistake he had made, and at last he resolved to leave her forever, and return to England, taking his little daughter with him. This he shortly after did, and poor deserted Leetah died of a broken heart. The ghost of the lovely Indian girl is still supposed to appear periodically, paddling around in her canoe, lamenting for her husband and child. On another, "Refugee Island," some criminal, escaped from justice, had taken refuge, and managed to remain in concealment there till both he and his crimes were forgotten.

MINNIE MAY.

Vacation Time.

The grammars and the spellers,
The pencils and the slates,
The books that hold the fractions,
And the books that tell the dates,
The crayons and the blackboards,
And the maps upon the wall,
Must all be glad together,
For they won't be used till fall.

They've had to work like beavers
To help the children learn;
And if they want a little rest,
It surely is their turn.
They shut their leaves with pleasure,
The dear old lesson books,
And the crayons and the blackboards
Put on delighted looks.

So, children, just remember,
When you are gone away,
Your poor old slates and pencils
Are keeping holiday.
The grammars and the spellers
Are as proud as proud can be
When the boys forsake the school room,
And the teacher turns the key.

Margaret E. Samster.

THE QUIET HOUR.

"Intercessory Prayer."

"Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

The Spouse in the Canticles, who represents the Church, cries to the heavenly Bridegroom: "Set me as a seal upon thine heart." Christ answers this prayer by interceding for each of His people in Heaven, by bearing upon His heart the wants, trials, troubles, sins, of each, and by pleading for each the merits of His most precious Death and Passion. In the seventeenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, which contains the great high-priestly prayer of Our Lord, we find Him commencing this office of Intercession. "I pray for them," says He of His disciples. The Intercession then commenced; but it has been continuing ever since; it embraces not the Apostles only, but every soul of the redeemed. Of this Intercession the breastplate of the Jewish high priest supplies a beautiful figure. In the breastplate there were twelve precious stones, arranged in four rows of three, upon each of which was written the name of one of the twelve tribes. The breastplate, when worn, would rest upon the priest's heart,—would rise and sink with every palpitation of the breast. When he appeared before God in his full sacerdotal attire, there would be the twelve names upon his heart, indicative of his love and care for the whole people of Israel. The names upon the high priest's breastplate betoken the individuality of Christ's Intercession for His people. Not a sparrow is forgotten before God. And not a single want or woe of a single soul is forgotten by the God-man when He intercedes. The Intercession of the great High Priest for the whole Church is ever rising, like a cloud of fragrant incense, to the Throne of Grace. And it should be our ambition to throw, each one for himself, our little grain of incense into His censor. The prayer, which is offered by the Head in Heaven for the whole Body, should be re-echoed by the members here on earth.

By undue and overstrained self-inspection the mind is apt to become morbid and depressed. A man may become a valetudinarian in religion, full of himself, his symptoms, his ailments, the delicacy of his moral health; and valetudinarians are always a plague, not only to themselves, but to everybody connected with them. One tonic adapted to remedy this desponding, timid, nervous state of mind, is an active sympathy, such as comes out in intercessory prayer, with the wants and trials of others, a sympathy based upon that precept of the holy Apostles, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

If the Lord's Prayer is to be the great model of Prayer, as it surely is, how much intercession ought not our prayers to contain! This extraordinary Prayer is so constructed that it is impossible to use it without praying for all other Christians as well as ourselves. Intercession, instead of being a clause added on to it, is woven into its very texture. Break off the minutest fragment you please, and you will find intercession in it. When we pray for others, we usually add some paragraphs at the close of our ordinary prayers, distinct from them. But in the model Prayer, the intercession and the petitions for self interpenetrate one another; the petitioner never employs the singular number. A wonderful contrivance, indeed, by which the Author secures a more important end than we perhaps are apt to think of. The Prayer, it must be remembered, was given as a kind of watchword for Christians. Now, this sign or watchword must necessarily have Love woven into its very texture; for what was the appointed note whereby the world was to know disciples of Jesus from those who were not His disciples? His own words answer that question very pointedly: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Then in the very watchword of the disciples there must be Love. And this could not be more strikingly contrived than by drawing up the watchword in such terms that no man could use it as a prayer for himself without at the same time interceding for his brother Christians. And yet there is perhaps no part of devotion which good Christians more systematically neglect. May it not be said that commonly even devout persons feel very little interest in any intercessions, except such as touch their own immediate circle of family and friends? While, perhaps, there are some who, of set purpose, hug a sort of spiritual selfishness, and would not hesitate to avow that for them the personal question of their own salvation is indeed the whole of religion.

Some, no doubt, shrink from intercessory prayer, under a feeling that, as coming from them, it would be presumptuous. "What am I, that I should plead the cause of others?—I, who have so much to ask for myself, and who have no native right to ask at all. Or how can I think that prayers from me, like those from righteous Abraham, can win anything from God for my brethren?" The feeling is mistaken in its application. In the first place, what God expressly commands us to do, it can never be a presumption to do. Next, as regards the imagined feebleness of our prayers for others, we must inquire how far it may possibly

resolve itself into a half-sceptical question as to the efficacy of Prayer altogether. Then, we should remember that our prayers do not stand alone, but that in offering them we co-operate with the whole Church, and, above all, with Christ, the Head of the Church.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Intercession.

Some one is praying for me to-night;
Some one kneels at a holy shrine;
In the quiet gleam of a taper's light
Two cheeks with starting tears are bright,
And a name that is uttered is mine.

Some one is praying for me I know;
Ah! hard was the battle I strove to win,
Sharp was the onset, bitter the blow,
That drained life's fountain and laid me low,
And heavy my weight of sin.

Some one is praying for me this night;
In an earthly temple he kneels alone;
Some one wrestles with words of might
That a heart so black may be washed and white,
And his word mounts up to the throne.

The sound of the Angelus heard in the air;
The strain of the choir in a sainted tower,
The song of a child untouched by care,
Are not so sweet as the peace of prayer
That comes to my spirit this hour.

Some one on earth and One on high
For a passing soul with pierced hands pleads;
This night of battle, when I must die,
Is bright as a pageant of victory
With its trumpets and neighing of steeds.

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER.

A prize will be given in January for the best short original fairy tale. The writer must not be more than sixteen years of age. Send the stories, with name, age, and address of writer, to Cousin Dorothy, FARMER'S ADVOCATE, London, Ont.

An Unexpected Messenger.

(Continued from page 285.)

The evening wore on, and when the children's bedtime came she took down her husband's well-worn Bible, her comfort in trouble, and read a few verses; then they all knelt while she asked God's blessing on them, praying that her boy might be kept from temptation and brought safely home. As she tucked her in bed, May coughed several times, and Mrs. Service said anxiously, "I do not like that cough, May; you are so subject to croup."

She was about to retire when May gave two or three choking coughs, then suddenly sprang up, crying, "Oh, mamma, mamma!" Mrs. Service was at her side in a moment. "Mamma, I am choking here," she said, putting her hand to her chest. Her mother hurriedly prepared medicine, but without effect, and at last, frightened, she went to the window and raised the blind. Seeing a light in a neighbor's window, she roused Bertha. "Run in to Mrs. Waldy's and ask them to bring the doctor, quick, May has the croup." She bent over the child, doing all in her power, but every moment her breath came harder. Bertha soon returned with Mrs. Waldy and the kind old doctor, who bent over the child anxiously; but the terrible disease was destined to prove fatal, and at last he said, "I cannot do any more."

Mrs. Service held her child's head in her arms, watching her sufferings with a white face, until at last her agony ceased, and she laid the golden head back on the pillow. Her baby was gone. Bertha threw herself into her mother's arms and sobbed herself to sleep. When all had gone and the house was quiet, she drew down the blinds and sat down to wait for Arthur. As the young people neared home, seeing a light, one said to Arthur, "Is anything wrong? What is the light doing so late?" "I don't know," he answered, and as they drove up he bid all a hurried good-night, and entered the house.

When Mrs. Service heard the bells she rose. "Oh, how can I tell him," she moaned; "it will break his heart." Controlling herself by a powerful effort, she sat down again as Arthur entered.

"Why, mother, why are you up so late; is anything wrong?" "May has been very sick," she answered. "What was the matter—croup?" he added quickly. "Is she better?" "Yes, she is better now," she answered. A suspicion of the truth began to dawn upon him. "Mother, tell me," he said, huskily. "My poor boy, can you bear it? She took the croup very bad about ten o'clock, and when the doctor came he could not save her."

He covered his face with his hands, but presently said, "Where is she?" She pointed to the room, and going in, Arthur closed the door and threw himself down by the silent form of his darling, who a few hours ago was playing so happily with her doll.

His heart smote him as he remembered how she had stretched up her little arms to be kissed and he had refused; she would never be held in his arms again, and he would never hear her merry, ringing laugh, or the patter of her little feet.

Mrs. Service softly entered the room as he rose to his feet. "Mother," he said, "could you have saved her if I had been here to bring help?" "No," said she. "Did she speak?" he asked again. "She said: 'Kiss Arthur and tell him to be good.'"

There was a long silence as they stood looking at their darling; then he said, "Mother, I have gone wrong; I have been wild and caused you a great deal of anxiety. I know you did not want me to go to-night; but I did not break my pledge,