

## GENERAL READING.

## ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY.

The woman of to-day has a well-defined individuality. She stands in the rarefied atmosphere of this upland of the ages, clearly defined in character and attitude against the horizon of the future. She does not wear the misty aureole of the saint; but one may note in her face and figure that which is better; she has grown glad and strong in the purer air and increasing light of the last century.

Through the mists that he below us we may discern the typical woman of yesterday, luminous through the mist—and so a saint—but she is "bound hand and foot with grave-clothes," and there is that in her uncertain step and wistful face which shows that the word "come forth" comes to her faintly and from far.

"Education is deliverance said Froebel. The lesson has been long and difficult, and the patient souls who have painfully spelled out their little part by a rush light, appeal to us out of the past.

Elizabeth of Hungary, princess, saint martyr, woman (the last the highest title), stands, as we look down through the centuries, this side the heavy bar of mist that we call the Dark Ages, and just within the light of that strange dawn of religious feeling the age of chivalry. She did not share the peculiar spirit of her age, but lived in bondage to it. "There were giants in those days," whose natural inheritance was self-will physical courage, passion, pride, and religious fanaticism, and among them she was a "spirit in prison." But let us speak of her life, which, though touched here and there with the fancies that marked the poetical superstitions of the Middle Ages, and especially of the thirteenth century, is, in all the material facts, perfectly authentic.

In the year 1207, Gertrude, Queen of Hungary, wife of Andreas II. gave birth to a daughter. That year, it is recorded, was crowned with singular blessings to the whole country; for the wars which had ravaged Hungary ceased, and nature poured out upon the land an abundant harvest. Many things are told of the wondrous child that came to the court of Hungary that year. She was free from the unreasoning petulance of childhood. Her earliest utterances were prayer, and at three years of age she was of radiant beauty, affectionate, generous, and religious as a nun.

Herman, Landgrave of Thuringia, a good and gentle prince, of poetic renown, and a patron of the Minnesingers held his court at this time in the Castle of the Wartburg, Eisenach. The fame of the little Hungarian princess was brought to his court by the poets and wise men who thronged there, and he said to himself, "Would to God that this fair child might be the wife of my son." The thought pursued him until he resolved to send an embassy to the king of Hungary. He intrusted his message to the Count Reinhard of Muhlberg, Walter de Tarila, his seneschal, Bertha the Beindeleben, a noble widow, and sent with them a train of knights and ladies from the court bearing gifts. The message and messengers were received with royal hospitality. And strange as it seems to the mothers of this age and nation, they were permitted to bear back to the court of Herman the little princess Elizabeth, then four years old. With her went stores of costly gifts of jewels, silks and horses from the East, and a cradle and bath of pure silver of rare workmanship. Two baggage wagons bore gifts to the Hungarian court, but thirteen returned to Thuringia.

There was great rejoicing at the betrothal of Elizabeth and the young Prince Louis, which was performed with great pomp at Eisenach. After this the children called each other brother and sister and grew up as such, though Louis knew that his new sister was different from his own sister Agnes, and indeed, unlike all the children of the court. She was heavenly minded even in her plays and exercised a peculiar ascendancy over her playmates which they could not understand. The noble passion of her life, charity, was largely developed at this early age, and it was her care to gather the food that remained from the royal repasts, to give to the poor children who came to the castle gates.

The spirit of the child was pleasing to the Landgrave Herman, but after his death which occurred when Elizabeth was nine years old, she began to feel dimly the bars which were to prison her.

The Landgrave, Sophia, was proud and ambitious, and had little patience with the charity and humility which led Elizabeth to a group of beggars sooner than to a court banquet, and the ladies of the court were quick to reflect the feeling of the Landgrave and her daughter.

It is said that on the day of a great religious festival, Sophia and the two young princesses went to the Church of St. Catherine at Eisenach. According to the custom of that day they wore long embroidered mantles, over which their hair hung loosely, and a golden coronet upon their heads. They knelt

on entering the church, before a crucifix, and as Elizabeth raised her eyes to the thorn-crowned brow of the image of the Saviour, she involuntarily took off her coronet and laid it at the foot of the cross. Her royal-mother-in-law elect, whispered a bitter reproach, and bade her replace her coronet.

"Dear lady mother," she replied, weeping, "reproach me not. How can I, in his presence wear this crown; it is a mockery of his."

Then as the eyes of the people fixed upon them, the Landgrave and the princess Agnes, removed their crowns also, "which they disliked greatly," adds the chronicle.

The years that followed were full of trial and sorrow to the young princess. The court jeered at her religious whims and low associations (among the suffering poor), and the Princess Agnes told "her that her brother Louis would never marry such a *Begaine*, but would send her back to Hungary to her father.

Louis was quietly watching her through these years. He, like his father, was a good and gentle prince, and held Elizabeth in reverent affection. He did not openly show her attention, or come like a true knight to her defence; but he comforted her with tender words, and often brought her little gifts as tokens of his affection. He was her only comfort, and she prayed constantly that his heart might not be turned from her; for she knew that every earthly influence was employed to make him false to her.

Walter de Varila, who brought her as a little child from Hungary, was devoted to Elizabeth. He watched with jealous eye the gathering feeling of dislike to his favorite, and resolved to speak to Prince Louis.

"It is thought by many," he ventured one day, as they were hunting, that you love not the Lady Elizabeth, and will send her back to her father."

Louis threw her hand vehemently toward the Inselberg, which rose before them saying:

"Seest thou yon high mountain? If from the base to summit it were all of pure gold I would not exchange it for my Elizabeth. I have only her. *Ich will meine Elisabeth haben.*"

These words, borne from Walter to Elizabeth, with a little token, a silver mirror surmounted by a crucifix, drove away all her fears. About a year afterward they were married, and three days of feasting marked the event. Louis was then twenty years of age. He was of the true German type, of a ruddy complexion, and with long, fair hair parted over an ample brow. His face was marked by his princely temper. It was serene and mild, but resolute. It is recorded of him that "in his words he was as modest as a maid," and in his life a "blameless prince." Elizabeth was about fifteen years of age. She had the peculiar beauty of her race a tall, slender figure, clear, olive complexion, and dark abundant hair. Her eyes were often spoken of in later years "as glowing with love, but as if thought tears."

There are many touches of romance in the accounts of earlier years, which may have grown out of the poetic tendency of the chronicles of the age; but as the story of her life as the mistress of the Wartburg and Landgrave of Thuringia becomes more clearly a part of history we feel the power of her pure and patient spirit, her loving and suffering woman's heart. Only in outline, however, may we trace the short, sad life, "filled with pangs and struggles such as then haunted the unreasoning minds of women, distracted between their earthly duties and affections and their heavenward aspirations,—as if this world were not God's world and his care, no less than that of other world." (Mrs. Jameson.)

The married life of Elizabeth was most happy—too happy, she feared—and so with her new blessings she began a course of penance and self-denial, for beside her happiness she saw "a gulf threatening to devour her." She wore hair-cloth next her skin, often scourged herself and caused her ladies to scourge her, and rose to pray in the coldest nights. Her husband was troubled by these things, and sometimes remonstrated; but he dared not forbid her prayers or penance, for he felt that they were, perhaps, the safeguard of himself and his people. It is recorded of her, however, that she always bore to her husband a cheerful and loving face and manner, and dressed to please him, though in his absence she always wore a black robe.

Conrag of Marbourg, a man of the sternest character, was her spiritual director and confessor, and he ruled her with a rod of iron. He imposed upon her sensitive conscience and gentle, womanly nature to the last degree of endurance, and doubtless at her canonization by Gregory IX. four years after her death, felt that Heaven had made him instrumental in the creation of a saint. She dared not eat of the food prepared for the royal table, because Conrad had declared the tax upon the people which furnished it unpleasing to God, and so lived much upon bread and water; but it is related in a legend that Louis, sitting beside her at table one day, tasted the water that she

drank, and found it rare wine, of a flavor unknown to any earthly vintage, and he thereafter believed that his wife was served by the angels.

(To be continued.)

## THE SEVEN WISE MEN MEN.

Most people have heard of the "Seven Wise Men of Greece," but very few know who they were, or how they came to be called so. Here is the story of them, and the moral of it is worth remembering, if their names are not:

The seven wise men of Greece are supposed to have lived in the fifth century before Christ. Their names were Pittacus, Bias, Solon, Thales, Chilon, Cleobulus, and Periander. The reason of their being called "wise" is given differently by different authors, but the most approved accounts state that as some Coans were fishing, certain strangers from Miletus bought whatever should be in the nets without seeing it. When the nets were drawn they were found to contain a golden tripod, which Helen, as she sailed from Troy, is supposed to have thrown there. A dispute arose between the fishermen and the strangers as to whom it belonged; and as they could not agree, they took it to the Temple of Apollo, and consulted the priestess as to what should be done with it. She said it must be given to the wisest man in Greece, and it was according sent to Thales, who declared that Bias was wiser, and sent it to him. Bias sent it to another one, and so on, until it had passed through the hands of all the men, afterwards distinguished by the title of the "Seven Wise Men;" and as each claimed that some one was wiser than he, it finally was sent to the Temple of Apollo, where, according to some writers, it still remains to teach the lesson that the wisest are the most distrustful of their wisdom.

## EDISON'S EARLY LIFE.

This remarkable inventor, of whom the public has recently heard so much is still a young man, having been born in 1847, at Milan, Erie county, Ohio. His mother was of Scotch parentage, but born in Massachusetts; she was finely educated, literary and ambitious, and had been a teacher in Canada. Young Edison's only schooling came from his mother, who taught him spelling, reading, writing and arithmetic. He lost his mother in 1862, but his father, a man of vigorous constitution, is still living, aged seventy-four. When he was seven years old, his parents removed to Port Huron, Michigan. The boy disliked mathematics, but was fond of reading, and before he was twelve years old, had read the "Penny Cyclopaedia," Hume's "England," and Gibbon's "Rome." He early took the railroad, and became a newsboy on the Grand Trunk line, running into Detroit. Here he had access to a library, which he undertook to read through; but, after skimming over many hundred miscellaneous books, he adopted the plan of select reading on subjects of interest to him. Becoming interested in Chemistry, he bought some chemicals, and fixed up a laboratory in one of the cars. An unfortunate combustion of phosphorus one day came near setting fire to the train, and the consequence was, that the conductor kicked the whole thing out. He had obtained the exclusive right to sell papers on the road, and employed four assistants; but, not satisfied with this, he bought a lot of second hand type and printed on the cars a little paper of his own called the *Grand Trunk Herald*. Getting acquainted with the telegraph operators along the road, he took a notion to become an operator himself. In his lack of means and opportunities, he resorted to the expedient of making his own apparatus at home. A piece of stove wire, insulated by bottles, was made to do service as line-wire. The wire for his electro-magnets he wound with rags, and in a similar way persevered until he had the crude elements of a telegraph; but the electricity being wanting, and as he could not buy a battery, he tried rubbing the fur of cats' backs, but says that electricity from this source was a failure for telegraphic purposes.—*Pub. Science Monthly*.

## SEIGE OF GIBRALTAR.

The most memorable in some respects, of all the fourteen sieges to which Gibraltar has been subjected, was the last, called the "great siege"—one of the mighty struggles of history—which began in the year 1779. The famous General Elliot was commander of the fortress. Spain, in alliance with France and Morocco, endeavored to surprise Gibraltar; but a Swedish ship gave Elliot the alarm. The garrison comprised but five companies of artillery, and the whole force was less than five thousand five hundred men. The enemy's force was fourteen thousand. The siege began by the blockading of the port and a camp was formed at San Roque, with the design of starving out the garrison. When the English Governor, resolved to open fire upon his besiegers, a lady in the garrison fired the first shot. Never did a siege-war

rage more furiously than did this for nearly three years. The garrison was often reduced to sore straits for food. "A goose was worth a guinea," and Elliot tried upon himself the experiment of living upon four ounces of rice a day for a week. Exciting stories are told of the privateers, that ran in, amid terrible dangers, with provisions, and of the storms which threw welcome wood and cork within the reach of the besieged. The rock at one time would surely have been taken had it not been for Admiral Rodney, who, sailing off the strait, captured a small fleet of Spanish war ships and merchantment, and clearing the strait of besiegers, brought his prizes into port. But all danger was not yet averted; Gibraltar was again blockaded; scurvy broke out in the garrison, and Morocco refused her harbors to English ships. The enemy crept closer and closer to the fortress, but relief coming every now and then enabled the English still to hold out. The bombardments were fearful to endure. "The city was almost destroyed; scarcely a house was habitable, and those left standing were pierced by shot and shell." At one time the desperate garrison fell to plundering the town. Elliot shot the leaders in this outrage. The long agony, full of terrific combats and frightful privations ended by the final abandonment of the siege early in 1788. If in that year the English had to make up their minds that they must let go their American colonies, they had at least the consolation that Gibraltar was still theirs.

## THE ROSE OF SHARON.

The so-called Rose of Sharon is one of the most exquisite flowers in shape and hue. Its blossoms are bell-shaped, and of many mingled hues and dyes. But its history is legendary and romantic in the highest degree. In the East, throughout Syria, Judea and Arabia, it is regarded with the profoundest reverence. The leaves that encircle the round blossoms dry and close together when the seasons of blossoms are over, and the stalk, withering completely away at last from the bush on which it grew, having dried in the shape of a ball, and is carried by a breeze to great distances. In this way it is borne over the wastes and sandy deserts until at last, touching some moist place, it clings to the soil, where it immediately takes fresh root and springs to life and beauty again. For this reason the Orientals have adopted it as the emblem of the Resurrection.

## FAMILY READING.

## A PEAN, AND A PRAYER.

May every year but draw more near  
The time when strife shall cease;  
When truth and love all hearts shall move  
To live in joy and peace.  
Now sorrow reigns and earth complains,  
For folly still her power maintains,  
But the day shall yet appear,  
When the might with the right and the truth  
shall be;  
And come what there may to stand in the  
way  
That day the world shall see.  
Now interest pleads those noble deeds,  
The world will not regard,  
To noble minds when duty binds,  
No sacrifice is hard.  
In vain and long enduring wrong,  
The weak have striven against the strong  
But the day shall yet appear, &c.  
Let good men ne'er of truth despair,  
Though humble efforts fail;  
Oh! give not o'er until once more  
The righteous cause prevail.  
The brave and true may seem but few,  
But hope hath better things in view,  
For the day shall yet appear, &c.

## SOUND ADVICE.

We would advise all young people to acquire early in life the habit of using good language, both in speaking and writing, and also to abandon the use of slang words and phrases. The longer they live, the more difficult the acquisition of good language will be; and if the golden age of youth, the proper time for the acquisition of language, be passed in abuse, the unfortunate victim of neglected education is very probably doomed to talk slang for life. Money is not necessary to procure this education. Every man has it in his power. He has to use the language which he reads, instead of the slang which he hears; to form taste from the best speakers and poets of the country; to treasure up choice phrases in his memory, and habituate himself to their use, avoiding at the same time, that pedantic precision and bombast which show rather the weakness of vain ambition than the polish of an educated mind.

## HOME COURTESIES.

A writer in Harper's Bazar makes some excellent remarks concerning courtesies at home. Please listen, good people of the home circle: The placing of the arm chair in a warm place for mamma, running for a foot-stool for auntie, hunting for papa's spectacles and a score of loving deeds, show surpassed and loving hearts. But if mamma never returns a smiling, "Thank you, dear," if papa's "Just what I was wanting, Susie," does not indicate that the little attention is appreciated, the children soon drop the habit. Little people are imitative creatures, and quickly catch the spirit surrounding them. So, if mother's spool of cotton rolls from her lap, the

father stoops to pick it up, bright eyes will see the act, and quick minds make a note of it. By example, a thousand times more quickly than by precept, children can be taught to speak kindly to each other, to acknowledge favors, to be gentle and unselfish, to be thoughtful and considerate to the comfort of the family. The boys, with inward pride of their courteous demeanor, will be gentle and patient, even when big brothers are noisy and heedless. In the home where true courtesy prevails, it seems to meet you on the very threshold. You feel the kindly welcome on entering. No rude eyes can scan your dress. No angry voices are heard up stairs. No sullen children are sent from the room. A delightful atmosphere pervades the house—unmistakable, yet undescribable.

## THE APPLE IN THE BOTTLE.

On the mantelpiece of my grandmother's best parlor, among other marvels, was an apple in a phial. It quite filled up the body of the bottle; and my childish wonderment constantly was, "How could it have got there?" By stealth I climbed a chair to see if the bottle would uncrew, or if there had been a joint in the glass throughout the phial. I was satisfied by careful observation that neither of these theories could be supported; and the apple remained to me an enigma and a mystery.

One day, walking in the garden, I saw it all. There, on a tree, was a phial tied, and within it a tiny apple, which was growing within the bottle while it was little, and it grew there.

More than thirty years ago we tried this experiment with a cucumber. We laid a large bottle upon the ground by a hill of cucumbers, and placed a tiny cucumber in the bottle to see what would be the result. It grew till it filled the bottle, when we cut it off from the stem, and then filled the bottle with alcohol and corked it up tight. We have it now, all as fresh, with the little pricklers on it, as it was when first corked up.

So sins will grow, if allowed, in the hearts of children, and cannot be easily removed when they have their growth.—*Youth's Companion*.

## PRAYERS.

Prayers need not be fine. I believe God abhors fine prayers. If a person ask charity of you in elegant sentences he is not likely to get it. Finery in dress or language is out of place in beggars. I heard a man in the street one day begging aloud by means of an oration. He used grand language in a very pompous style, and I dare say he thought he was sure of getting piles of coppers by his borrowed speech; but I for one gave him nothing, but felt more inclined to laugh at his bombast. Many prayer-meeting prayers are a great deal too fine. Keep your figures and metaphors and parabolical expressions for your fellow creatures. Use them to those who want to be instructed, but do not parade them before God. When we pray, the simpler our prayers are the better; the plainest, humblest language which expresses our meaning is best.—*Spurgeon*.

OUTDONE BY A BOY.—A lad in Boston, rather small for his years, works in an office as errand boy for four gentlemen who do business there. One day the gentlemen were chaffing him about being so small, and said to him: "You never will amount to much; you never can do much business, you are too small."

The little fellow looked at them: "Well," said he, "as small as I am, I can do something which none of you four can do."

"Ah, what is that?" said they. "I don't know as I ought to tell you," he replied. But they were anxious to know, and urged them to tell what he could do that none of them were able to do.

"I can keep from swearing!" said the little fellow. There were some blushes on four manly faces, and there seemed to be very little anxiety for further information on that point.

## FAITH IN THE FAMILY.

One of the most intelligent women I had ever known, the Christian mother of a large family of children, used to say that the education of children was eminently a work of faith. She never heard the tramping of her boys' feet in the house, or listened to their noisy shouting in their play, or watched their unconscious slumbers, without an inward, earnest prayer to God for wisdom to train them, and for the Spirit of the Highest to guide them. She mingled prayer with counsel and restraint; and the counsel was the wiser, and the restraint was the stronger for this alliance of the human and the divine elements in her instruction and discipline. And at length, when her children had become men and women, accustomed to the hard strife of the world, her name was the dearest one they could speak; and she who "had fed their bodies from her own spirit's life," who had taught their feet to walk, their tongues to speak and pray, and illumined their consciences with the great lights of righteousness and duty, held them in the remembrance of an early education that had its inspiration in faith in God, and its fruit in the noble lives of upright, faithful men.