

The Home Circle.

AN OLD-YEAR SONG.

BY OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

As through the forest, disarrayed  
By chill November, late I strayed,  
A lonely minstrel of the wood  
Was singing to the solitude;  
I loved thy music, thus I said,  
When o'er thy perch the leaves were spread;  
Sweet was thy song, but sweeter now  
Thy carol on the leafless bough,  
Sing, little bird! thy note shall cheer  
The sadness of the dying year.

When violets planked the turf with blue,  
And morning filled their cups with dew,  
Thy slender voice with rippling trill  
The budding April bowers would fill,  
Nor pass its joyous tones away  
When April rounded into May;  
Thy life shall hail no second dawn—  
Sing, little bird! the spring is gone.

And I remember—well-a-day!  
Thy full-blown summer roundelay,  
As when behind a broodered screen,  
So we holy maiden sings unseem,  
With answering notes the woodland rung,  
And every tree-top found a tongue,  
How deep the shade! the groves, how fair!  
Sing, little bird! the woods are bare.

But now the summer's chant is done,  
And mute the choral antiphon;  
The birds have left the shivering pines  
To sit among the trellis'd vines,  
Or fan the air with scented plumes,  
Amid the love-sick orange-blossoms,  
And thou art here alone,—alone,—  
Sing, little bird! the rest have flown.

The snow has capped yon distant hill,  
At morn the running brook will still,  
From driven herds the clouds that rise  
Are like the smoke of sacrifice.  
Ere long the frozen sod shall mock  
The plowshare, changed to stubborn rock.  
The brawling streams shall soon be dumb—  
Sing, little bird! the rest have come.

Fast, fast the lengthening shadows creep,  
The wingless fowls are half asleep,  
The air grows chill, the setting sun  
May leave thee ere thy song is done,  
The pulse that warms thy breast grows cold,  
Thy secret die with thee, untold;  
The lingering sunset still is bright,—  
Sing, little bird! 'twill soon be night.  
—Atlantic for January.

HOME FEELING.

O ye fathers and mothers who have sons and daughters growing up around you, do you ever think of your responsibility in this regard—your responsibility for keeping alive the home sentiment in the hearts of your children? Within the limits of your means, remember the obligation rests on you to make their home the pleasiest place upon this earth; to make the word "home" for them the synonym of happiness. I would not have you import the ices of the outside world into your homes for any purpose; but I would have you to go to the utmost verge of what is moral, to provide at home those things which entice young and growing persons away from home. Let me assure you that you had better spend your money in doing this than in ostentation and luxury, and far, far better spend it thus, than to amass a fortune for your children to spend in the future.

And not only as regards amusements, but also comfort and refinement—for children have a keen appreciation of these things—this is much the best policy. Don't send your boy to school in ill-fitting garments, collar all away and chafing his neck, buttons missing, and shoes down at the heel. Don't make a warehouse or clothes-press of his bedroom. Don't feed him on sour bread, and tough meat, and burnt coffee. Don't let noise and dissension and misrule spoil the hours he spends at home. Don't do any of these things if you can possibly avoid it, especially don't do them for the purpose of laying up money for his future use. The richest legacy you can leave him is a lifelong, inextinguishable and fragrant recollection of his home, when time and death have forever dissolved the enchantment. Give him that, and he will, on the strength of it, make his own way in the world; but let his recollections of home be repulsive, and the fortune you may leave him will be a poor compensation for the loss of that tenderness of heart and purity of life which not only a pleasant home, but the memory of one, would have secured. Remember this, too, that while he will never feel grateful for your money when once you are under ground, he will go to your green grave and bless your very ashes for that sanctuary of quiet, comfort and refinement into which you may, if you possess the means, transform your home.

HOW JOHN MADE IT UP.

He had failed somewhere—in study or deportment, I cannot remember which—and his teacher told him he must stay after school. When the other scholars were dismissed John seized a moment when the teacher's back was turned, and slid out of the door. She called after him to come back, but he pretended not to hear, and ran away. It was a cute trick, he thought, and he bragged over it a little to

the other boys; but he did not go to school the next day. He did not feel like it, he said.

At last he made his appearance again, but instead of the punishment he expected, his teacher, who was giving out the subjects for essays that day, only told him to "write a composition about obedience." John took her meaning at once, and sat scratching his head and puzzling over his composition about half a day. Finally he handed in the following, which is an actual copy of John's composition:—

"When won tells won to do a thing, and he does it, it is called obeying, and when won tells won to do a thing and he don't do it, it is called disobeying. And when a man or woman tells a boy or a girl to do a thing and he don't do it, it is called disobeying, and when a teacher tells a boy to do a thing and he does it, it is called obeying, and when a teacher tells a boy to do a thing and he don't do it, it is called disobeying. The boy's name was John, and he did not obey his teacher, and when she called him back he did not hear her, and he will never do it again."  
The teacher was satisfied.

WEDDED SOULS.

The married state is entered too hastily by many: entered before judgement has fairly ripened. Contracts of this kind should be made to last forever. There is a touching story in the Aecrypha about a young man and woman who were just married and ready to start together on their married career, and this was their first cry to Heaven, when the wedding guests had gone, and they were left alone in their chamber, "Mercifully ordain that we may grow aged together." If all young married folks utter such a prayer, and strive to render its fulfilment possible, would not life be sweeter for many? Audubon, our great naturalist, married a good, sweet woman, and when she began to find him out, she found he would wander off a thousand miles in quest of a bird. She said, "Amen!" and went with him, camped in the woods, lived in log huts and shanties on the frontier, anywhere to be with him. She entered into his enthusiasm, shared his labor, and counted all this a but less for the excellency of the glory of being Audubon's wife. When the children began to come to them, he had to wander off alone, but he could not go into a valley so deep or a wilderness so distant that the light would not shine on him out of their windows. He knew exactly where he would find her, and how she would look, for while, as Ruskin reminds us, the clouds are never twice alike, the sunshine is always familiar, and it was sunshine he saw when he looked homeward. She understood what it meant "grow aged together." Is there not a lesson for wives in this?

"MARKS."

As we stroll along the sandy banks of the streams we see the footprints of those who have but recently passed in the same direction; some, deep and well cut, and others scarcely visible. So it is with the marks we and our fellows are leaving upon the tramped and tracked path of life, as we wend our way toward the shadowy land beyond.

Some of us are writing our record bold and large; others, feebly "make their mark" upon time's closely written page. But, although the inscriptions we leave on the world's register are different, some more prominent than others, yet each of us is leaving an impress behind the influence of which shall live long after the tomb shall have closed over us.

The tide sweeps away our foot-steps from the sand, but not thus are erased the strokes we make upon the broad sheet of human destiny. No! Every single step we take leaves a trace that, if not seen again here, will, at least, be read in the full glare of eternity's light.

This being the case, how vast the importance of asking ourselves the question—"What kind of marks am I making on the great scroll of life?" Now a proper conception of the fact that our lives must leave behind, when we are gone, impressions in the minds and hearts of men, will reveal to us that those lives will be measured in two ways, by their own intrinsic worth and the influence they have upon the destiny of those among whom they sojourned on earth.

In the every day, business life of the world, men are estimated and valued not so much by what they know as by that which they do; this we will find to be the one great rule by which the life work of all is judged. Howard lives long after he has been bidden in the grave; not because of his noble qualities of heart alone, but because of his self-sacrificing, philanthropic life.

Milton is treasured in the minds and hearts of all who love the emanations of the intellect; on account of his grand contributions to the field of literature; Tamerlane is execrated because of his cruelty, while we all, reverent, as sacred, the memory of such as Washington or Lincoln.

Again, not only are we thus "making marks" on the "boards of time," but an influence, silent and unseen, sometimes, it is true, is being exerted by each one of us. An impression is being made upon the weal or woe of our brother man that shall outlast the grandest, most magnificent monument that ever reared itself to heaven.

A party of men, while visiting the Mammoth Cave, shouted aloud in order to try the effect

of their voices in its deep, still chambers, when a little boy one of the company, with youthful ambition, was led to do the same, and his feeble tones were echoed and re-echoed until, in the distant recesses they died away.

This is but a picture of life. As we float down the stream, here and there, all along the voyage, our words and deeds echo and re-echo from the hid chambers of warm, vital, human hearts. Oh, then, let us be careful that every step we take leaves a clear and beautiful track upon the record of human progress—one which will cause only grateful emotions in the hearts of coming generations—one upon which white-robed angels will gaze with joy. Let each word that falls from us on the tablet of immortal souls, be such as will send back to us, not only in time but down through all the long cycles of an endless eternity, a joyful echo, which would not sully even the fair page of God's register.

Above all, let us bear in mind that God Himself is daily, hourly, reading our lives; let us remember that, while tracks upon the sandy shore of "Old Ocean" are washed away by the tide, the "marks" we are making will remain forever, a fixed fact upon the page of eternal history.

WINTER EVENINGS AT HOME.

Dear mothers and sisters, let us get it well in our heads and hearts that home making is far, far above mere housekeeping. Good housekeeping is of very great importance, almost essential; but the real value of house work is, as it makes home sweet and dear. Love is the essential thing, and it will indeed cover a multitude of sins—that is it will lead to mutual forbearance and a desire to make others happy.

In the homemaking business, these long winter evenings are both seductive and harvest. During the day the children may have been at school, the husband and father absent at his business and other members of the family scattered here and there, variously employed. Twilight brings the homesick hour for all who love and miss their home. If all the home hearths were glowing then, if all the home lamps were trimmed and burning, if all the home makers (the mothers and sisters and daughters in particular—home making is woman's special act), were fresh and loving, and cheery and tidy, and free from engrossing toil at that hour, what a little heaven on earth might home become, and where, then, would be the use of asylums and reform schools.

It is of the greatest importance that the little ones should go to bed happy—important for their healths and for their dispositions. And we can all say "good night," and sink to sleep with hearts kindly affectioned one towards another, it will help our souls' growth wonderfully. Then let us have pleasant, social evenings. Let us get the work all done up on the busiest days, if possible, before night comes; and if we have a clean fruce and collar and a bright ribbon, let us put them on for the sake of the dear ones, whose happiness is surely affected by all these little things.

Now, who will read aloud? Yes, I know how almost, and often entirely impossible this is if baby wakes. Selfish little babies! But it is the nature of a baby to be selfish, and we must conform ourselves to it more or less until it gets a little older. Games, then, or puzzles, or light work around the lamp.

Pray, tell me why should a woman's fingers be busy with knitting or sewing, and a man's or boy's be idle or at play? Teach the boys to knit or sew, and when there is need they can employ themselves right usefully so. If they learn to employ themselves while young, if they learn to love work, they will be carving out frames or brackets or napkin rings, or children's toys while the story is read aloud. If potatoes are to be prepared at night for the breakfast, why can not some masculine fingers do it.

About reading—don't be too prosy if there are children among the listeners. It is best to read something that interests all at least a part of the evening. Every parent who deserves the joy and honor of parenthood, has a young spot in the heart, and cannot fail to be interested in any well-written children's book or story.

LIFE UNDER THE OCEAN WAVE.

As every man carries within himself an inner self, a hidden life, that casual acquaintances know nothing of, so the ocean has within its bosom a life which is never revealed except to long acquaintances and an almost loving familiarity. It has a life more multitudinous, quite as wonderful, and not less beautiful than that of the land. Its mountains rise higher than Mont Blanc. Its valleys and gorges are unequalled by those of the Lebanon, the Pyrenes, or even the Himalayas. It has great steppes and immense plains, which rival those of North America or Central Asia. It has vast and limitless forests, which the eye of man has never discerned and never shall, in their entirety—forests that are fuller by far of busy life than even the most prolific of the tropics.

"The terrestrial forest," says Charles Darwin, "do not contain anything like the number of animals that those of the sea do." The surface of the waters, which, ploughed by storms, are such a source of dread to man, are the protection of these children of the mother ocean. At five hundred and fifty fathoms

there is a perfectly uniform temperature, the same in all latitudes. No cold pierces this wonderful coverlet, no storm ever disturbs the waters beneath. Here in their hidden home, safe from the disturbances of this upper life, are myriads of creatures living, marrying, dying; warring one upon the other, organizing into kingdoms, republics, families working in every form of manufacture, spinning, weaving, architects, builders; endowed with mysterious instincts which are quite as wonderful in their way as our higher reason, and bound together by mysterious ties which we are equally unable to comprehend or call in question.

PROVERBS OF ALL NATIONS.

- A deceitful man is more hurtful than open war.
- A fox should not be on the jury at a goose's trial.
- Justice will not even condemn the devil wrongfully.
- A nod from a lord is a breakfast for a fool.
- A good word for a bad one is worth much and costs little.
- An old dog cannot alter his way of barking.
- An idle brain is the devil's workshop.
- A pennyworth of mirth is worth a pound of sorrow.
- Avarice increases with wealth.
- A small leak will sink a great ship.
- Bacchus has drowned more men than Neptune.
- Accept nothing from him who promises a great deal.
- Draw not thy bow before thy arrow be fixed.
- Griving for misfortunes is adding gall to wormwood.
- Good bargains are pickpockets.
- Give neither counsel nor salt until you are asked for it.
- Have not the cloak to make when it begins to rain.
- He who would catch fish must not mind getting wet.
- He is idle that might be better employed.
- He who would stop every man's mouth must have a great deal of meal.
- He that makes himself an ass must not take it ill if men ride him.
- He that knows not when to be silent, knows not when to speak.
- He that fears you present will hate you absent.
- If an ass goes travelling he will not come home a horse.
- If better were within, better would come out.
- It is better to praise poverty than to bear it.

THE COMMON-SENSE OF DRESS.

All honest and graceful dress should follow as far as possible, we think, the shape of the body, as devised and found good by the great Artificer. All that follows those beautiful lines must be itself beautiful. And all that changes, distorts, or exaggerates those lines must be senseless, ugly, ludicrous, and untrue. Whether a gown swell out into the hoops of a great tunc of Heidelberg, or project backward like the reverse side of the Hottentot Venus, it is alike hideous. A gown may be of many folds, of many thickness, but it should not turn a woman into a caricature of the form God made and made best of all.

Dress should be as much as possible true and honest; simple and rich all good dress must be. There is no object, unless a brilliant one, for instance, in swelling the head into the size of a bushel, with heaps of tow and shreds of dead people's hair—hair the antecedents of which one huddlers to think of. The human head, strange to say, was grandly devised, and needs no improvement, if it be only kept well filled with brains. To blow it out like a bladder is only what a feather-headed miliner could wish to do. The perfect ideal of a head is, we hold, a well shaped Greek head, simply bound by braids of its own glossy hair, knotted behind or woven into a crown more beautiful than that of jewels. No thoughtful person should feel any pleasure in wearing sham jewelry, or sham anything. All shams are lies, false pretences, dishonest assumptions, unworthy of common-sense and real gentlemanhood. The beauty of gold is that it is gold, not that it looks gold; the quiet satisfaction of wearing gold is that it appears. To wear false gold is to wear a miserable pinchbeck deception, worthy only of hagnens and bagwomen, swindlers and courtesans, and unbecoming the quiet honesty and frank sincerity of gentle people. Perfect dress should be rich, but not exceptional. It should never try to catch the eye, but please the sense with a quiet, almost unconscious charm. It is only the mountebank and the swindler who swagger in red and yell-w. It is, or should be, only the Anonyma who paints.

A clergyman said, the other day, that modern young ladies were not the daughters of Shem and Ham, but the daughters of Hem and Sham.

"Vegetable pills!" exclaimed an old lady; "don't talk to me of such stuff! The best vegetable pills ever made is apple-dumpling. For destroying a gnawing in the stomach there is nothing like it. It always can be relied on."

Sawdust and Chips.

A five-year-old city boy told his mother how to make butter: "You just take a long stick with a cross at the end of it; then you get a big tub, and then you borrow a cow."

"John," said a schoolmaster, "you will soon be a man, and will have to do business—what do you suppose you will do when you have to write letters unless you learn to spell better?" "Oh, sir, I shall put easy words in them."

A well-known preacher being seen in the streets of New York in a Shaker garb, was asked by a friend, "What in the world sent you into that community?" The reply was, "Three good meals a day and plenty of warm clothing are not to be sneezed at."

An absent minded man entered a Toronto shoe-store the other day, and wanted his boy measured for a pair of shoes. "But where's the boy?" asked the dealer. "I've left him at home; I'll go and get him," and off he started for his home, six blocks away.

A good lady, who on the death of her first husband, married his brother, has a portrait of the former hanging in the dining-room. One day a visitor, noticing the painting, asked, "Is that a member of the family?" "Oh! that's my poor brother-in-law," was the ingenious reply.

A decidedly rough-looking individual applied for a license as a teacher of a school from Troy, recently. "Do you think you can manage a school?" inquired the examiner. "Well, I guess so," said the applicant imperturbably. "If I can't, I can knock the spots out of the youngsters." The vacancy still exists.

A Detroit negro prisoner, on his way to the penitentiary for larceny, was asked what he thought of his trial. He said: "When de lawyer that defend me made his speech, I made sure that I was going to take my ole hat and walk right out of dat court room; but when de older lawyer got up and commenced talking, I knew I was the biggest rascal on top of de earth."

"Gentlemen," said an auctioneer, who was selling a piece of land, "this is the most delightful land. It is the easiest land to cultivate, it is so light, so very light. Mr. Parker will corroborate my statement; he was the next patch, and he will tell you how easy it is worked." "Yes, gentlemen," said Mr. Parker, "it is very easy to work, but it is a plaguey sight easier to gather the crops."

As one of our Deputy Sheriffs, a day or two since, was speaking of taking a man to Lenox, he observed he had much rather take a lady. "What! take a lady to jail?" remarked one of the company. "Oh, no, not to jail," said he. "But," a lady quickly rejoined, "you would have been glad to have taken one to court."

"How do you get along?" said a devoted wife to her husband a down-town merchant, in the midst of the panic. "Oh! I shall weather the storm, but I wish I had only a few hundred dollars more. It would be very convenient to save the least." "Don't you wish you had married a rich wife?" said she, in a teasing way; then rising and going to her room she returned with rather more than the amount required in United States bonds. "Why, where in the world did you get this?" said the bewildered husband. "Well my dear, you went to a champagne supper seven years ago, and on your return, finding navigation around the room very difficult, deposited hat, shoes, gloves, and a large roll of bank bills on the carpet. I put it away, and waited three weeks for you to inquire if I had seen it. When finding you were ashamed to do so, I invested it; and here you have it."

Grains of Gold.

Religion on the tongue and self in the heart is the way of the world.

It is better to be dull, with an ardent desire to learn, than clever with no disposition to improve.

Every heart has its secret sorrow, which the world knows not; and often times we call a man cold when he is only sad.

To admit the righteousness of man, be it ever so little, into the tide-land of heaven, is to admit a flaw into the security.

The grating file is not more necessary to the polish of metals, than are trials for the brightening of grace in the Christian's soul.

Write your name with kindness, love and mercy on the hearts of the people you come in contact with year by year, and you will never be forgotten.

A mother has no right to bring up a daughter without teaching her how to keep house, and if she has an intelligent regard for her daughter's happiness, will not do it.

The covetous man is ever running out into futurity with unobtainable desires after secular good; and if this disposition be not checked, it increases as the subject of it increases in years. Covetousness is the vice of old age.

Education begins with a mother's or a father's nod, with a sister's gentle pressure of the hand, or a brother's noble act of forbearance; with pleasant walks in shady lanes; and with thoughts directed, in sweet and kindly tones and words, to beauty, to acts of benevolence, to deeds of virtue, and to the source of all good.