

GENERAL READING

JOSEPHINE.

June 24th, A. D. 1763, was an important day for the inhabitants of Martinique, for on it was signed the treaty which ceded their island home to France.

Great were the rejoicings, and amid the frantic shouts of an excited populace, the ringing of bells, the firing of cannon, the blaze of bonfires, a new-born babe opened its eyes upon a world which was to bring to it the height of human felicity, and almost the lowest depths of human sorrow.

The parents of the little stranger augured a splendid destiny for her, for not only was she born on a most auspicious day, but her brow was encircled by a transparent crown,—at least so her attendants said,—and this was "an infallible sign that a glorious future was to be hers. Still even a fond mother would hardly suppose that the daughter of a simple citizen of Martinique would one day be Empress of France,—and yet it was so, for the child born that day was Josephine Tascher de la Pagerie, first wife of the Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte.

From earliest childhood Josephine gave evidence of a most trusting and affectionate nature. Surrounded by slaves to whom her slightest wish was law, how easily might she have become a tyrannical mistress instead of the true friend ever ready to advance the worthy, and (as far as she could) shield the unfortunate from the cruelty and injustice which invariably attend slavery! When still a mere child she was betrothed to a young Englishman of noble family, whose parents having attached themselves to the fortunes of the House of Stuart, now found England to be no longer a suitable home for them.

The children were deeply attached to each other, and seem to have been quite aware of the arrangement entered into by their parents, for while pursuing their studies together under the same tutor, they often spoke of each other as "husband" or "wife."

Years passed over; Josephine was nearly fourteen when one day she and two of her young companions resolved to seek the hut of an old negress (or as some accounts say, an old creole), who pretended to foretell future events. The result of the interview between the fortune teller and the young girls is so well known that it is almost useless to reproduce it here, and yet a sketch of the life of Josephine would be incomplete without it. To one of Josephine's companions the old woman merely predicted "a husband and a home in another island." A safe prediction, for the inhabitants of the neighboring islands are frequently intermarrying.

To another she said, "Your parents will soon send you to Europe, your ship will be taken by Algerian corsairs; you will be led away captive and conducted to a seraglio. There you will have a son who will reign gloriously."

This was literally fulfilled, and the young creole whose history was thus foretold was the mother of the famous Sultan Mahmoud.

To Josephine she promised even a more eventful future, as the following, which I copy from the *Memoirs of the Empress Josephine*, will show: "You will be married to a man of a fair complexion, destined now to be the husband of another of your family. The young lady whose place you are called to fill will not live long. A young creole whom you love does not cease to love you, but you will never marry him. Your first husband will be a man born in Martinique, you will separate from him and he will perish tragically. Your second husband will fill the world with his glory, and will subject many nations to his power. After having astonished the world you will die venerable. When you leave this island a prodigy will appear in the air."

How much of this strange speech was really made at the time of Josephine's visit to old Euphemia, and how much was added afterwards, none can now know, but it is said the Empress and her relations always gave the old woman credit for all of it. How literally the leading events were fulfilled, all students of history know, but to some of my readers it may be new to learn that at the time of old Euphemia's prediction, Maria Tascher, the eldest sister of Josephine, was engaged to and preparing for her marriage with M. de Beauharnais. She died suddenly, and a year after Josephine became his wife. The marriage was an unhappy one, and a legal separation took place, though at the time of his death he was guillotined during the Reign of Terror; they were on better terms, and he left her the sole care of their children. On leaving the Island of Martinique, the ship in which Josephine sailed was surrounded by a phosporic flame called "St. Elmo's fire."

The death of Maria Tascher de la Pagerie was a sad blow to her mother, with whom she had always been the favorite daughter, as Josephine was of her father. Shortly after this family affliction Madame Benardin, a wealthy widow living in Paris, and sister to Monsieur Tascher de la Pagerie, was very urgent that her brother should leave his home in Martinique and share hers. He was inclined to do so, but his wife could not bear the thoughts of ending her days away from her beloved islands, and Madame Benardin's kind offer was refused. Then it was that young Josephine was sent to her aunt, who being struck with the girl's remarkable beauty, determined to secure for her the position which had been intended for her sister.

The Marquis de Beauharnais was quite willing to receive Josephine as his daughter-in-law. Monsieur Tascher was equally willing to receive Monsieur Alexander de Beauharnais as his son-in-law, and as for the young people themselves they were not consulted in the matter. It was nothing to the elder members of the families that both Alexander and Josephine had placed their affections elsewhere—the marriage was "desirable," and all they had to do was to submit?—any wonder they separated after a time?

The married life of Madame de Beauharnais extended over a period of about

one at least, at the monastery of Pantheon. The rest of the time she lived under her husband's roof, though she might as well have been miles distant, they had so little in common; but for the sake of her children, Hortense and Eugene, she calmly bore her loveless lot. The year 1793 was a terrible one to France—in January the King, Louis XVI, was executed, and from that time all semblance of order vanished. The prisons were crowded with members of the best families of France, their only crime being that they were born "aristocrats," but that was a crime which could only be dissolved by death. Each morning the death roll was read, which condemned guiltless persons to a cruel death, and each evening the vacant places of the murdered ones were filled with others equally guiltless. No pen could adequately describe that fearful time which has been aptly termed the "Reign of Terror." From the second to the seventh of September, 1005 persons were said to have been put to death in the prisons, besides she almost countless numbers that fell by the guillotine.

Monsieur de Beauharnais was early marked as a victim. Was he not the son of a Marquis?—did not the objectionable *de* belong to his name?—and worse still, had he not raised his voice against the murder of Louis? Josephine had been reconciled to her husband shortly before this, and she was called upon to share his imprisonment. Her prison was a house belonging to the Carmelite nuns—which was crowded to its utmost capacity with heart-broken women, whose male relatives were incarcerated elsewhere. There, as Josephine says, the dawn of each day announced to us that new victims had been carried away during the night. Those who remained spent the morning in agonizing reflections. In the afternoon I joined my fellow-prisoners, and hastily ran over the journals, which were then but the archives of death. Thus it was the became aware of M. de Beauharnais' death, and there she received his farewell letter. At this time she too was marked for destruction, and only saved because the death roll being longer than usual, there was not sufficient room for all in the vehicle which was to transport them to the scaffold. This circumstance was taken advantage of by a mulatto, who, having been brought up in the de la Pagerie family, recognized Josephine, and determined to save her if possible. He had influence with Marat and others, and as her name had once appeared on the death-roll, he had but little difficulty in obtaining her release, particularly as owing to some mistake she had been numbered among the printed victims of that day. Next day the tyrant Robespierre was deposed, and soon all the luckless prisoners were liberated.

We now come to the most important period of Josephine's life—her introduction to Napoleon le petit corporal. Many stories are told of their first meeting, but we will listen to her own words on the subject: "Being one day on a visit to a friend, while sitting by a window, I was looking at some violets, when suddenly, the famous Bonaparte was announced. Why, I am unable to say, but that name made me tremble; a violent shudder seized me on seeing him approach. I dared, however, to catch his attention; while the rest of the company looked at him in silence, I was the first to speak to him."

The acquaintance thus commenced was eagerly continued by Bonaparte, who soon made her an offer of his hand. She hesitated at first on account of her children, one of whom, Hortense, had a great aversion to him. But the conqueror of Italy was not to be defeated by a woman; he persevered in "his suit, and two days before leaving Paris to take command of the army of Italy, Madame Beauharnais gave her hand to "little Bonaparte," as she frequently called him.

Josephine was now about thirty-three. Her husband, was nearly six years younger, but the difference in age never appears to have been felt by either. They were devotedly attached to each other, her influence over him was great, and always for good, and when his insupportable ambition he decided upon divorcing her, he suffered as keenly as she did.

(To be continued.)

OUR HYMN WRITERS.

Having mentioned the best known hymn of John Fawcett, which is one of the most precious and familiar of English hymns, will not refrain from alluding to the circumstances of its origin. Mr. Fawcett was at first settled as pastor of a humble church in Walsgate, Yorkshire. His meagre salary poorly sufficed for the wants of his increasing family, and when a few years later, he was invited to become the successor of the Rev. Dr. Gill as pastor of an influential church in the city of London, it seemed almost a matter of fact that he should accept. He had preached his farewell sermon and had actually commenced removal by sending forward his library and a part of his household goods to London. His poor people were almost broken hearted; men, women and children clinging to him in affectionate reconciliation. The last wagon was being loaded when the good man and his wife sat down on one of the packing cases to weep. "O John," said the kind hearted wife, "I can't bear this. I don't know how to go." "Nor I either," said Mr. Fawcett, "nor will we go. Unload the wagons and put everything back in its place." The affections of his church were stronger than the attractions of London; and so this noble man buckled on the armor for renewed service on a salary of less than three hundred dollars a year. It was then he wrote this hymn which has come to be known almost as widely as the language in which it was written. He gave up London and became a citizen of the world.

The deepest and most sacred beliefs of the church are better learned here than in the creeds themselves; and the spiritual life of the church is better expressed here than in the liturgies. The heart is often

creed have written hymns truly catholic and spiritual. The hymns of the Galvianistic Watts, Doddridge and Newton sung with no sense of discord alongside with those of the Wesley's. Hymns from such Unitarian authors as Mrs. Barbauld, Mrs. Adams, Sir John Bowring, Sears and Bryant, are gladly welcomed into the choicest evangelical circles. Such hymns as "Nearer my God to thee," "In the cross of Christ I glory," "How blest the righteous when he dies," and many others which like these, have come from writers not counted as evangelical, but hold their place unchallenged among the choicest hymnic treasures of the church, must be accepted as indicating that there may be a faith of the heart deeper and more spiritual than that of the head. Our deepest convictions are not always expressed in the creeds which we honestly profess. Under a special pressure, which God knows how to apply, and often does apply by his providences, an old faith which had been accounted dead sometimes springs suddenly into vigorous life, thus giving evidence of its real existence even in the years in which its possessor was little conscious of it; even so do these hymns bear witness to an undertone of spiritual harmony which is not silenced by the discordances of the creeds.—*National Repository for November.*

BEYOND THE RANGE OF VISION.

Hitherto man's knowledge of the extent of the universe has been bounded by the limits of vision. During the day, when the range of sight is narrowed by the sun's excessive brightness, we see but a minute fraction even of the little world we inhabit. At night a wider range of vision is possible, and some thousands of stellar and planetary bodies are added to the domain of positive knowledge, thus enlarging man's idea of the magnitude of the universe. But the increase of knowledge which darkness gives, is almost infinitesimal, compared with the wider view opened up by the telescope. The most powerful telescopes enable us to penetrate to the limits of the universe no one imagines. Our positive knowledge ends with the limit of vision. We have supposed that this would always be so. Hitherto science has given no hint of the possibility of exploring the vast beyond, from which no visible ray of light has ever been detected, or is ever likely to be detected, by the most far-reaching and sensitive optic aids. But now there comes a promise of an extension of knowledge to fields of space so remote that light is tired out and lost before it can traverse the intervening distance. This new agent is the tasimeter, by which it is possible not only to measure the heat of the remotest visible stars, but Edison believes, to detect by their invisible radiations stars that are unseen and unseeable. Mr. Edison's plan is to adjust the tasimeter to its utmost degree of sensitiveness, then attach to it a large telescope, and so explore those parts of the heavens which appear blank when examined with the highest powers of the instrument. If at any point in such blank space the tasimeter indicates a vast number of nearer bodies, he does this invariably, the legitimate inference will be that the instrument is in range with a stellar body, either non-luminous, or so distant as to be beyond the reach of telescopic vision; and the position of such a body can be fixed and mapped the same as if it were visible. As the tasimeter is affected by undulations and is without far more accurately sensitive, the probabilities are that it will open up hitherto inaccessible regions of space. Possibly, too, it may bring within our ken a vast number of nearer bodies, burnt out since briefly reflecting planets—now unknown because not luminous.—*National Repository for November.*

FAMILY READING.

A DREAM.

RELATED BY FATHER HICKS, OF ANNA-WAY, HENRY COUNTY, ILL., NOW EIGHTY-THREE YEARS OLD.

My father and family lived on a farm near Dake Ontario, Prince Edward county, Canada. One night I dreamed my father died; they carried him to the grave and buried him. After the grave was filled, I returned to the house and went in, and it looked so lonely that I went out and stood against the house with my head on my hand crying. I heard my father walking toward me, and I saw my father coming, and he said: "Joseph what is the matter that you cry?" I said, "O father I thought you were dead!" "So I am," said he. "You have come back to live with us, have you not?" said I. He said "No." "I will go with you then," said I. "You cannot go where I am going with that body of yours he replied. I then said "I wish I were dead." "Would you be willing to die for the sake of going with me?" he asked. I said, "Yes."

He told me to go and lie down on the ground, I did so, and I had the strangest feelings come over me that I ever experienced; and in a moment of time my spirit left my body and stood by my father; and I saw my dead body lying on the ground, and father said, "Now you can go with me." Everything looked differently from it did before. There was a very high steep mountain, and father said "Follow me," and he went the mountain, and there was a narrow road leading to the top, with small bushes and briars on either side of the path. I saw a great number of men and women going up the mountain before us. And I saw several paths leading from this one to a large broad road on the left, and a number left this path and went to the broad road. And I said, "Father, let us leave this road and go over to the broad one." Said he, "Joseph, all who leave this path for the broad one go up no higher." I said no more to him about it, but when we reached the top of the mountain there was the

They were covered over with carpets, and the carpets were washed over with silver. My father stepped over the carpet, and I stopped. Father said, "Joseph what do you stop for?" And I said, "To wipe the dust off from my feet before I step on the silver carpet, or I shall soil it." There is no dust that can stick to your feet now; follow me."

We went on, and I looked ahead as far as I could see, and I saw something that looked like a building. We went on toward it; the nearer we came to it the larger it looked. When we came to it, it appeared to be very large and high. All on one side it seemed to be open, and we were going from one side to the other in a circle, and in the center of the palings was a large square on the inside. When we came to the gate, father knocked, and a solemn looking man came and unbolted the door, and father went in and he bolted it again. He said nothing to me. After gazing a little, I walked to the left, off the silver carpet, and I saw some distance before me a valley surrounded with a high stone wall. On one side was a high hill, and the wall went into the hill on its side, and on the hill was a road, with a number of men and women walking on the top but no children; but when they walked opposite the centre of the valley they slipped and fell, and kept sliding down the hill and fell into a gulch of fire. I saw those who had been there for some time, and they were cursing each other; men were cursing their wives, and wives were cursing their husbands, on account of bringing them there; and parents were cursing their children, and children their parents, and some were cursing God for ever creating them. While I stood looking at this awful scene, I saw the largest man I ever beheld come over the wall; he had a long rod in his hand with a hook on the end of it, and he came toward me, and I came toward me and I ran toward the silver carpet, and he ran after me, and almost caught me before I reached the carpet, when I said, "Satan," (for he was none other), "you have come as far as you can." He said, "Yes, but you have been trespassing on my premises; I did not watch you close enough; but I will watch you closer after this, and if I catch you on my grounds again I shall take you to that place which you have been looking at." I said, "God forbid that I should ever get on your premises again." His hair was very black, and his hair looked like long black snakes squirming around his head. I then left him and went to the gate where my father went in; I knocked with all my might at the gate, when the same solemn looking man came and looked through and said, "What do you want?" And I said, "I want to go in." He then said, "What do you want to go in for?" I said, "My father is there, and I wish to go to him. He then said, "Your father is prepared for this place, and you are not. If I should let you in what would you do?" I said, "I would do as the rest do." He said, "This is the place of happiness." I replied "I wish to be happy." "It is not the place alone that makes the happiness," said he, "but a preparation for the place." He then left me at the gate and went back into the building and sat down in the golden arm chair, and while I stood looking in, I saw a great multitude of men and women, all dressed in white, with little books in their hands, singing, all with their faces toward the man who sat in the armchair. As they sang they bowed their heads. A little above the assembly there was a gallery with a number of old men standing in it; they two were singing and bowing to the two men (for there were two), sitting in their arms. I thought in my mind that the old men were the apostles and prophets. Over them was another gallery, where there were none but children; they all had books singing glory to God and the Lord Jesus Christ. While I stood looking, the solemn looking man and my father came, and he said: "I am going to let your father take you back to earth again, and you must take that body you left on the ground and inhabit it so many years." He told me he had a duty for every one to perform on earth; he said, "I shall lay a special duty and if you perform it faithfully after so many years you can come into this place which you have been looking at." He then said, "For your soul's sake do not be forgotten." He then unbolted the gate, and my father came out and told me to follow him. We went over the silver carpets until we came to the top of the hill where we went up; and we went down and came to the old house where we started from. I saw my dead body lying on the ground where I had left it: My spirit then entered into my body, and I had another strange feeling as when my spirit left it, and I awoke from my sleep. As to the number of years I have to wait before going to that place, I never could remember.

SCRAPS OF TESTIMONIES FOR JESUS.

God hath need of every one of his children. In a regiment of soldiers the general leads and the officers follow, and in the rear you will see a tramp, perhaps a little black boy, with a pail of water and a tin cup. He is doing only a little thing but a very necessary one. God, our General, leads the army, and we may only be the bearer of a cup of cold water to some thirsty soul; but God needs us to do just that thing. He needs us, though we are ever so humble; and we need Him. Jesus says, "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away." We may, then, be in Christ, yet if we are without fruit we shall be cut off. It is not only our privilege but our duty to bear fruit to the glory of God. Are we doing so?

Stop abiding in your love to Christ, and abide in Christ's love to you! Stop trying to keep yourself, and let Christ keep you. These fruits come from abiding in Christ—perfect love to God and perfect love to man—and then we have answers to prayer. The Word says, "Abide, ask, done."

cessity and perfectly satisfy every want. Let circumstances be what they may, we may live without care, for He careth for us.

A brother who believes in taking the little things to God, was deprived of his sleep in the morning by the twittering of numberless little sparrows that surrounded his home. As sleep was a necessity to him, on account of his occupation, he asked the Lord to harmonize the nature to his—other to remove the or enable him to sleep more soundly. The next morning he did not hear the sound of a sparrow; they had all gone to the parks and other places far away, and they did not return till some time after he awoke. God doth care for us even in little things! E. J. C.

A PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.

A young girl was sent by her father, some years ago, from one of the towns of the Lebanon to a convent in Damascus. At home she had been quite serious and religious, so far as she knew her duty; but in her new position she devoted herself with great enthusiasm to all the penances and requirements of the order of which she had become a member. She had heard of the Bible, but had never seen a copy. Often did she ask of her Superiors to be allowed the reading of God's word, and as often was her request disregarded. She was told that there were other things far more important for her to do to advance her spiritual interests. After a time, for some reason, her father took her from the convent and brought her to his home. Not long after she was married. One day she visited the bazaar of her native place, seeking for cloth for a dress. While examining the goods shown her in one of the shops, her attention was directed to the shop on the other side of the street. She very quietly and innocently inquired what was held for sale in the shop opposite. She was told it was a book-shop, and that Bibles were for sale there. She at once put down the piece of cloth she was examining, and crossing the street entered the shop and asked to see a Bible. The bookseller took one from the shelf and handed it to her; she took the book and opened it with eager curiosity. After examining it for a little time she told the book-seller how long she had desired to have a Bible, but had never seen a copy before. "I should like to take this Bible to my house," she said; "I cannot pay you for it to-day; but if you will trust me, I will see that the money reaches you." She then gave the names of her father and husband, as a guaranty that the book would be paid for or returned to the shop. The salesman saw, in the eagerness of the young woman to possess the word of God, that she was to be trusted, and told her to take the book and read it carefully. With rapid steps she hastened back to her home and begun at once to read the precious word. She gave all the time at her command to its study. She became more and more interested in what she read, and persuaded her husband to join her, and he became almost as enthusiastic as his wife in the examination of Bible doctrines. The Lord blessed them both in the study of his truth. They gave themselves to their Saviour in an everlasting covenant, and are now members of the evangelical church at Zableh, and are co-workers in leading others to the Fountain that they may drink of the water of life from the same source whence their thirst was quenched.

THE HOME.

REV. JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

True society begins at home. When two young people love each other and marry, they restore the picture of the apostolic church. They are of one heart and soul. Neither do they say that anything they possess is their own, but they have all things in common. Their mutual trust in each other, their entire confidence in each other, draws out all that is best in both. Love is the angel who rolls away the stone from the grave in which we bury our better nature, and it comes forth. Love makes all things new; a new heaven and a new earth; makes all cares light, and all pains easy. It is the one and the same power which realizes Fortunio's purse and Aladdin's palace, and turns the "Arabian Nights" into mere prose in comparison.

Think how this old story of love is repeated forever in all the novels and romances and poems, and how we never tire of reading about it; and how, if there is to be a wedding in a church, all mankind go, just to have one look at two persons who are supposed at least, to be in love, and so supremely happy. But this, also, is not perfect society. It is too narrow, too exclusive. It shows the power of devotion, trust, self-surrender, that there is in the human heart; and it is also a prophesy of something larger that is to come. But it is at least a home, and become real society, can come true homes must come. As in a sheltered nook in the midst of a great sea of ice which rolls down from the summit of Mont Blanc, is found a little green spot full of tender flowers, so, in the shelter of home, in the atmosphere of household love, springs up the pure affections of parent and child; father, mother, son, daughter; of brothers and sisters. Whatever makes this insecure, and divorce frequent, makes marriage not a union for life, but an experiment which may be tried as often as we choose, and abandoned when we like. And this cuts up by the roots all the dear affections of home; leaves children orphaned, destroys fatherly and motherly love, and is a virtual dissolution of society. I know the great difficulties of this question, and how much wisdom is required to solve them. But whatever weakens the permanence of marriage tends to dissolve society, for permanent home are to the social state what the little cells are to the body. They are the commencement of organic life, the centers from which all organization proceeds.