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Poet's Corner.

TO MY OLD SCHOOLMATES.

BY J. NEWTON BARTHOLOW.

"I gazed upon the ruins of those memorable walls, and wept."—*Extract from a letter written to a lady, in sight of the old schoolhouse.*

I know not how it is; but when
I gaze upon the past,
The happy scenes of schoolboy days
Still cling to memory fast;
Their joyous hours, so free from care,
Cannot return again,
And nothing but their memories
Unto us now remain.

O, well do I remember how
We, on the green sward played,
And laughed as only schoolboys laugh,
As in the woods we strayed;
O, those were bright angelic days,
That dawned upon us then,
When fancy held life's magic brush,
And Poetry its pen.

Though parted now by space, yet we
In unison still dwell,
And memories of the happy past
Do still within us swell;
And amidst the busy scenes of life
There comes a keen regret
That the bright sun of schoolboy days
Has now forever set.

Yet in my heart's remotest cell,
There is a safe retreat,
Where schoolmates as in days of yore,
Shall still together meet;
And there, in memory's magic glass,
We can the past review,
And love the schoolmates of past years,
While gazing on the now.

Then on sweet memory's magic stream
I pass away my hours,
And weave bright garlands of my youth
From fancy's fairest flowers;
And schoolmates one and all, shall have
This solace to them given,—
We once again shall taste the bliss
Of schoolboy days in Heaven.

YOUTH'S DREAMINGS.

They are many and brightly colored—intangible, yet to our eager spirits, a foreshadowing of the surely "Coming," and we stand under the flushing skies of life's dawn, looking out from the fair land, whose spring-tides keep time with our heart-throbs, to the Future, whose warriors we are yet to be—in whose days and hours we are to find, or the alchemy of our hopes failing, not to find the culmination of our yearnings and the reality of our dreams.

Strong in an enthusiasm that will after years will fail to waken—fair with a purity of purpose and an unselfish aim,

that the world will not give us to "possess in peace"—are the dreams of coming life that our youth knows—dreams that break up at first the calmness of childhood's pleasures, startling with their intensity, and half-mystifying by the glimpses of awakening power which they reveal, yet growing in a little time to be companions for all solitude, giving through their promptings, and our sole title of possession, balm for many a thorn thrust.

May-time clouds float between us and their brightness many times; clouds that send us to the gate of the Future with questionings of their reality, doubts, perchance, of their power to work out the aim we have given them, and fears of the world-influence, that must reach them ere that aim can be accomplished, yet, at the last, when they drop, dead, faded, and useless out of our hearts, the pain seems to come so suddenly, so bitterly, that in our blindness and despair we forget that

"Only through the dismal rack
Of clouds, our eyes can bear the sun,
Only the broken glass gives back
A thousand shapes instead of one."

Yet this we may know, that never a thought, or dream, or yearning, died out of our hearts thro' lack of sustenance, or dearth of appreciation, when God had further mission for it—when the end and aim which He saw from the beginning, was unaccomplished.

This is true of our mortal lives, why not, then, of the lives of our hopes and aspirations?

Hearts go outward to the future,
Dreaming of the days it keeps,
Wondering what of love or treasure
In its folds of mist may sleep;
But in crowns that press the forehead,
Thorns are set that pierce the brain
And in world-praise there's no sweetness
Shutting out the gall of pain.

READING AND DEFINITION.

I do not propose to speak of rhetorical excellence in reading, but of the importance of being able to do it with correctness and fluency. A child should be able to read mechanically well, before he is required to recite a lesson learned from a book. I believe every child can become a fluent and correct reader; and the importance of it grows out of the fact that most of our knowledge is gathered from books. Before the art of printing was

known, those who desired to add to their stock of knowledge, were obliged to travel from city to city, and from one country to another, to converse with those who know what they did not. This was a long and expensive method of acquiring knowledge. Now we can remain at home, and learn from books all that is known on any given subject.

But the boys and the girls that read hesitatingly, do not read much. They never undertake to read a volume through, because it is a slow and tedious process. They may as well not read at all, as not read with readiness and care. I speak of this because I find that many children pass through the common school course without being able to read mechanically well.

It is quite important, that they never miscall, or mistake one word for another which resembles it in appearance: as *conduit* for *conduct*, or *troth* for *truth*. I frequently hear mistakes in recitations which were occasioned by thus mistaking the word. But of what use is it to read fluently and correctly, if we know not the meaning of the words? We shall either get no idea, or a wrong one. It by no means follows that we understand a sentence which we pronounce fluently.

Special pains should be taken to teach children the meaning of words. Some attention should be given to it in every recitation. It is not enough to refer the scholar to the dictionary; the definition there given is general, and does not meet the wants of the child. If he can be shown the thing defined, nothing more is necessary. But this cannot always be done. It is useful to explain the difference between one word and others that resemble it; as between *meat* and *flesh*, *lie* and *lay*, *single* and *singular*, *freedom* and *liberty*, etc. It is a very useful discipline for children to be able to point out the difference of allied words and things. It cultivates a habit of observation and discrimination; as, what is the difference between *stationary* and *stationery*, or a *ship* and a *sloop*, or *patience* and *hope*. I trust every teacher who may read this, will do all he can to make his pupils fluent and intelligent readers.—E. D., Jr. *Massachusetts Teacher*.