

# Young Friends' Review.

"NEGLECT NOT THE GIFT THAT IS IN THEE."

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## SONG FROM "PIPPA PASSES."

The year's at the spring,  
And day's at the morn ;  
Morning's at seven ;  
The hillside's dew-pearled ;  
The lark's on the wing ;  
The snail's on the thorn ;  
God's in His heaven—  
All's right with the world.

ROBERT BROWNING.

## THE FIRESIDE ALTAR.

A Sabbath spent in a country home some miles distant from any place of religious meeting, impresses one anew with the importance of practical religion and Christian reaching in the home. With every Christian hearthstone an altar, there would be comparatively little necessity for denominational gatherings; without the home-altar, public exhortation is all but powerless. Where the home has failed to prepare good ground to receive the seed it must fall by the wayside or among thorns.

It seems tacitly acknowledged in the recent enquiry into the decline of the Society that sufficient care has not been taken to familiarize young Friends with Friends' principles, or doctrines. By all means let our young people decide as soon as possible what and why they believe, but seek first that they shall believe something. Quite apart from any question of sectarian teaching, is there not in the dread of religious formalities characteristic of Quakerism, danger of spiritual starving of the little ones? "Milk for babes and meat for

the strong," but food proportionate to the developement must be provided, otherwise the soul is cramped or dwarfed. Spiritual food is as necessary to spiritual growth or developement as mental pabulum to the intellect, or proper nourishment to the body. Shall the last of these be made first and the first last within the home? God forbid. As the warmth of spring sunshine and the revivifying influence of summer rains are to the grain of mustard seed, so are the home atmosphere and loving admonitions or exhortations of a truly Christian household to the germs of spiritual life in every heart. Shall the Tree of Life put forth leaves in vain, while we store the products of orchard and garden? "Feed my Lambs" meant not to leave them to forage unshepherded among rocks and precipices.

It must be admitted, however painful the admission, that to many young people the very word religion is synonymous with dulness or melancholy, and is met with a repugnance amounting often to actual repulsion. In most cases this is largely, if not entirely, due to its association, in their minds, with mortification of the flesh, chilling asceticism and constant self repression. Youthful hearts are peculiarly susceptible to atmospheric influence, and the warmth and brightness of truly spiritual living in the home must exert a powerful influence. Moreover is not the same discipline necessary to the appreciation of spiritual things that we find so important in the development of the intellect? The finest passages of Shakspeare fall dull and meaningless on the uneducated ear; the inartistic eye is