The Family.

THERE IS BLACK IN THE BLUE OF THE SKY.

An artist one day at his easel stood,
And sketched with a pencil free,
The gold of the meadow, the green of the wood,
And the purple and gray of the sea.
A child looked over, a fittle way luck,
And questioned the artist, "Why
Do you mix with your colour a touch of black,
When you paint the blue in the sky?"

"Only because I see it, my child;
I am painting the sky as it is;"
And he softly said to himself, and smiled:
"It is one of earth's mysteries: Not the lily itself wears a perfect white;
Nor the red rose an unnixed dye;
There is light in shadows, and shadow in light,
And black in the blue of the sky."

There are films over nature everywhere, To soothe and refresh our sight, For mortal eyes were not made to bear
The dazzle of shadeler light,
Our consulation and our complaint—
Awaking both smile and sigh.
There are human faults in the holiest saint;
There is block to the block to active There is black in the blue of the sky.

What then? Are the skies indeed not blue, islies white, not the roses red? Shall we doubt whether ever the crystal dew Drops pearls on the path we tread? We may dwell where there is no blur in the air, No veil over earth, by-and bye, But good is good always and everywhere, Though black may steal into blue sky.

We have read from the leaves of an old.

Of One in the glory unseen,
Whose gaze the poor seraphim dare not brook,
Before whom the heavens are unclean.
And the hope of immortals is the thought
Of a Truth and a love so high
That possible evil sullies them not;
No black in the blue of the sky.

— Youth's Companion. We have read from the leaves of an old-fashioned Book

BOOKS AS PRIENDS.

THE highest use of a book is as a companion and a friend. You are not particular as to the bind-ing; for though you like to see your friend well clad, the tailor does not make the man; neither clad, the tailor does not make the man; neither does the book-binder make the book. A ten-cent edition of an English classic may be a friend. You do not enquire as to utility. The most useful books are those which can give no account of their usefulness. The highest use of a friend is his friendship, and in some respects a friendly book is the very best of friends. Speech is silver, silence is golden. A book is a bi-metallic friend: it will give you either aliver speech or golden silence, as you prefer. I sit by my firelight dreaming, with my friend in my hand. "Come, come," I say to him at last, "you are silent and I amweary; talk to me, amuse me." And he answers not m, petulance with reproach, but looks with kindly face into my eyes, and talks. At last I weary of him. "You talk too much." I say, and turn from him. He stops as quietly as he began, relapses into silence, and breathes no complaint of my unreasonable mood. A book is never jealous, sever suspicious. It asks no attentions. It never pouts or sulke because you prefer another book. pouts or sulks because you prefer another book.

It never reproaches you with—"I thought you had
quite forgotten me." I cannot pet my cat without
a remonstrance from my dog; but I can choose
any book out of my library with no look or word of reproach from its companions. It exacts nothing. Conversation is give and take; but reading is all take. The book demands of you only one thing—attention. That you must give, or it closes its lips and is resolutely silent. Indeed, the generosity of this friend is its worst fault. Bewarel or it will make you selfish. Your true book-lover is in danger of not being a true lover of his kind. There is one virtue no book can cultivate in the soul—the virtue of self-denial. . . . There is no better gift than a book; only see to it that you ve, not an ornament, nor a tool, but a friend. The worst book for a gift is a gilt-book. Never give a book on theology to a minister, nor a law book to a lawyer, nor a medical book to a doctor, nor a school book to a boy. Give a friend, not a tool; a kindly soul, not a useful instrument. Of course, if you are to do this, you must learn something of him to whom you give the book, that you may know what kind of friends he likes. Books, I have said, will be silent, or will speak, as you prefer. Now let me reverse that sentence, and declare that books are a law unto themselves ; and some books which are full of life in one pair of bands are absolutely silent in another. Carlyle is a fiery and impulsive talker to me; but there are some good friends of mine to whom he will say nothing. He is as glum and atlent in their presence as he often used to be in his own household. Wordsworth is a delightful friend to those who are friendly with him. But let a man gibe at his commonplaces, and he closes his lips tightly, and will not open them. So then, if you are giving a book as a friend, you must know your book, and you must know the one to whom you give it, and you must see to it that your book goes where it will receive a warm reception, and where it will exercise its friendly offices. Do not give Wordsworth to a man who sees no parable in nature; nor Carlyle to one who is offended by a sharp tongue and a brusque manner; nor Dickens to a cynic; nor Emerson to a "practical man;" nor Ruskin to a philosopher. It requires skill to select a congenial friend. Your bookseller cannot do it for you. Shopping will not accomplish it.

We read books too little as friends; we use them too much as tools. The same book cannot well be both; certainly not at the same time. You cannot go to it for useful service and friendly converse at the same reading. Your doctor may be your best friend; but consultation over a headache and friendly converse are not the same. Every man ought to have time to take up a book in a receptive mood, and listen to its message. He ought to go sometimes to his books as he goes out in his yard in the morning to hear the birds sing; not as he goes to the newspaper to get the last news. The most fruitful reading is meditative reading. What a book will be to you will depend upon what you are to the book; that is, upon your mood. Some persons read books as men ride across a country on a hunt: the only object is to get in at the death in the shortest possible time. This is the way very young persons read novels. Some persons read books as they go to market . they know what they want to get, and go to the book or to the library to get it. This is the way professional men read their

professional books. Some men read books by stint: so many pages a day, and give themselves a college mark of 10 when the task is done. The most fruitful reading is that which seems to take the least out of the book, and which stimulates the most in the reader. He who can tell what he has read does very well; but he who can tell what he has thought does better. He who can give account of the author's thoughts is a scholar; he who can give account of his own is a thinker. The best friend is he who stirs me most deeply to my own thinking and my own feeling. The best teacher is a friend; and the best pupil is he whose heart is open to receive a friendly suggestion and a friendly impulse. Curiosity is a good reader; conscience is a better reader, but love is the best reader of all. And he who reads with neither love, conscience nor curiosity does not read at all. He only thinks he reads.—Christian Union.

THE STRAIN OF CITY LIFE.

READ the following facts with regard to Chicago From 1852 to 1868 population increased 5 1 times what it was in the first period. The death-rate increased 3.7 times. The deaths from nervous disorders increased 20.4 times. Chicago is perhaps a fast place, but the figures are significant of the

wear of city life on the nervous system.

Is not this strain of the nervous system a peculiar American danger? To be sure, all brainworkers in all countries are liable to it, but in our country climatic influences increase the tendency. Country climatic innuences increase the tendency. Under these influences we have developed national characteristics, showing in form and feature. We do things in a hurry. We are in haste to get rich. We are in haste to be wise. We have no time for exercise. We have no time for play. Both exercise and play are by serious people often looked upon as a waste of time for adults, however good they must be for children and young people. A boy must be a man before his time, and a girl must be must be a man before his time, and a girl must be prim and staid, and must not romp like her more fortunate brothers, but must be a sober woman after she has entered her teens. It seems as if the battle of modern life (at least of modern city life) was a battle of the nerves. "From nursery to school, from school to college, or to work, the strain of brain goes on, and strain of nerve—scholarships, exeminations—speculations—promotions—excited examinations, speculations, promotions, excitements, stimulations, long hours of work, late hours of rest, jaded frames, weary brains, jarring nerves all intensified by the exigencies of our school and city life." The worst of the mischief is, that this strain falls most of all upon those from nature and circumstance least able to bear it—upon our women. Public opinion frown upon their exercising like men. Yet, with a nervous system more sensitive than man's they need the very exercises (out-of-doors) which, by a mistaken public sentiment, they are often forbidden to take. The healthy house work is often deputed to a servant either because too hard for our American girls, or too much beneath them.—From "The Influence of Exercise upon Health," by Professor E. L. Richards, in Popular Science Monthly for July.

JAPAN LIFE IN BOATS.

In Poland some families are born and die in salt mines, without ever living above ground, and in Japan some are born and die the same way on boats without ever living on shore. "One of the most interesting features of Japanese life to me," says a recent traveller there, " was the manner of living in the boats and junks, thousands of which frequent every bay along the coast. The awkward junks always belong to the members of one family, and usually every branch of the family, old and young, live on board. The smaller sailboats are made like a narrow flat boat, and the sail (they never have but one) is placed very near the stern, and extends from the mast about the same distance in either direction; f.e., the mast runs in the middle of the sail when it is spread. In these little boats men are born and die, without ever having an abiding-place on shore. Women and all are nearly naked, except in rains, when they put on layers of Iringy straw mats, which gives them the appearance of being thatched. At night, if in harbour, they bend poles over the boat from side to side in the shape of a bow, and cover them with straw-water-tight atraw and go to sleep all together, like a lot of pigs. A child three years old can awim like a fish; and often children who will not learn of their own accord are repeatedly thrown overboard until they become expert swimmers. In the harbours child-ren seem to be perpetually tumbling overboard, but the mothers deliberately pick them out of the water. and, cuffing them a little, go on with their work. It is really astonishing at what age these boys and girls will learn to scull a boat. I have seen a boat 20st, long most adroitly managed by three children, all under seven years of age. I am told that, notwithstanding their aptness at swimming, many boatmen get drowned, for no boat ever goes to another's aid, nor will any boatman ever save another from drowning, because, as he says, it is all fate, and he who interferes with fate will be severely punished in some way. Besides this, the saving of a boatman's life only keeps a chafing soul so much longer in purgatory, when it ought to be released by the death of the sailor which the gods, by fate, seem to have selected for the purpose .-

VALUABLE ADVICE TO YOUNG GIRLS.

A LADY of intelligence and observation has re-marked: "I wish I could impress upon the minds of the girls that the chief end of woman is not to marry young." If girls could only be brought to believe that their chances for a happy marriage were better after 25 than before there would be much less misery in the world than there now is. To be sure they might not have so many opportunities to marry as before, but as they do not need to marry but one at a time it is necessary that one should be satisfactory. As a girl grows older, if she thinks at all, she certainly becomes more capable of judging what would make her happy than when younger. How many girls of 20 would think of marrying the man they would gladly have mar-ried at 16? At 30 a woman who is somewhat independent, and not over anxious to marry, is much harder to please and more careful in her choice than one at 20. There is good reason for this. Her mind has improved with her years and she now looks beyond mere appearances in judging men. She is apt to ask if this man who is so very polite in company is really kind hearted. Do his polite actions spring from a happy, genial nature, or is his attractive demeanour put on for the occaor is his attractive demeanour put on for the occa-sion and laid off at home as he lays off his coat? A very young girl takes it for granted that men are always as she sees them in society—polite, friend-

ly, and on their good behaviour. If she marries early the man who happens to please her fancy, she learns to her sorrow that in nine cases out of ten a man in society and a man at home are widely different beings. Five years at that period of life produce a great change in opinions and feelings. We frequently come to detest at 25 what we admired at 10.—Scottish American Journal.

A MOTHER'S DEVOTION—A TRUE STORY BY REV. M MCKENZIE, GODERICH.

Anour half a century ago their lived in one of the sequestered glens of Ross-shire. Scotland, a widowed woman who in her younger days came under the influence of the gospel as preached by an eminent divine from the south. Hearing that this minister was to preach within twenty-one miles from her home at a communion season, she resorted thither barefooted and carrying heronly infant child on her back, a boy of two years old, until she reached the place of rendezvous, where amidst much cheer she was most hospitably re-ceived by her kind friends at that season vicing with one another in the degree of their hos-pitality.

During the solemn season this widowed woman

fed her soul most gratefully on the milk and honey of the Word. Her dress, manners, and general behaviour singled her out amongst the assemblage as devoted, pious, affectionate and sweet, and to all not only was her presence there a subject of comment, but her influence shed pathos and

ject of comment, but her influence shed pathos and a charm on the whole proceedings.

Now we would imagine prosperous days and a happy life for so angelic a creature, but God determines something more trying for His loved ones in bringing them to glory. Hence He brought this mother in Israel through hardships and trials into His kingdom. It happened that just as she retired from this living oasis in the desert whereof she drank largely, that an unusual storm set in accommend by a most temperatuous gale, followed up panied by a most tempestuous gale, followed up panied by a most tempestuous gaie, followed up; by showers of snow with keen penetrating frost. Some days after a search party scouring the neighbourhood discovered her body adjacent to a little hill, from which she sought shelter in vain. In her arms she grasped her infant pressing it close to her breast, and it was observed by the spectators that the dear and devoted mother had almost deputed herself can elected to restant her almost denuded herself con pletely to protect her child. To the amazement of the party the child was still living though low, and through the imme diate application of necessary cordials was restored to complete health and strength.

This child, is still living, is now developed to manhood, and has children of his own. And happy we are to inform our readers that hearing of the sacrifice his mother had made for him he consecrated himself to the God of his mother and

has been the means of leading many to Christ.

Reader, Christ made a greater sacrifice than this for you, do you therefore consecrate yourself unto Him as one of His servants, and endeavour to save others by leading them to Christ. "Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee."

PATTY'S INTERRUPTED STORY-BOOK. "PATTY, Lulu Pease has called for you on her way to Sunday School. Are you ready dear?" said grandma, speaking in her pleasant voice from the foot of the stairs.

"I had not thought of going to Sunday School, grandma," said Patty, answering in a low tone.
"I always go when I am at home, but here I might as well take a vacation. Will Lulu mind if I tell her I prefer to stay at home? I have such a nice book to read."

nice book to read."

"I am afraid she will be very much disappointed, my love,; and, to be candid, so shall I, if my Patty does not set a good example. City people, when staying in the country, so often seem to forget or neglect their privileges, and the effect is bad on those who are watching them. Slip on your sack and hat, dear child, and don't keep Lulu waiting. She is sitting on the bench under the big maple-tree."

Patty glanged from the window, and saw I ulu's

Patty glanced from the window, and saw Lulu's golden head bent over her New Testament. a sigh she closed the fascinating Pansy book she had been reading, and somewhat reluctantly set out for the Sunday School. Grandma's wish was law; but Patty in her proud little heart felt that it was very unkind to ask a member of one of the most beautiful, well-ordered schools in the statea school to which visitors came from far and near just to atudy its methods, see its order, and hear its singing—to attend a school so inferior. Being a little lady, however, she said nothing disagreeable to Lulu; and together they walked on meeting here and there on the road little groups of children and young people also bound for the Sunday School. The hedges and lanes were green and flowery with vines, the fields were golden with daisies, and the skies were softly blue. It seemed so lovely out of doors that the girls, Patty especially, felt a sort of shiver when they exchanged gay blossoming world of sunshine, bees, and birds for the basement under the church, with its noisy board floor echoing with every step, and with the pushing back and forth of the benches. Never had this apartment seemed less attractive in the eyes of Patty. She mentally contrasted it with her own school-room at home, its maps and mottoes, its beautiful picture of Christ blessing little children, and its flowers on the deak.

When the lesson had been read, and the opening exercises were over, Patty found herself very glad she had come; for the lady who taught Lulu's class-Miss Myrtle the girls called her-explained the verses so clearly, and had such a sweet, affectionate manner, that every one was drawn closer to the dear Saviour as she talked of His love and compassion.

It turned out that Miss Myrtle was the teacher of the district school, and boarded at Lulu's house, so she walked home with Patty and Lulu. On the way Patty ventured to say:
"Miss Myrtle, do you think the people would be

vexed if we should try to make the Sunday School room a little prettier? It'a—forlorn as it is.
Perfectly horrid! begging your pardon Lulu."
"Vexed! my child, I am sure they would be delighted. I have been longing to brighten it up a little myself. But, Patty, nobody has any money to spare, and few in this busy season have any time. Besides, the school is in need of many things—books for the library, for instance. Those

it has are worn almost to tatters."

"Mother says if we cannot do what we wish,

girls about a plan I have? I think they would

not object to hearing it."
Miss Myttle assented, and went on, hoping that

she had sowed good seed that day.
Patty, flying upstairs, was caught on the landing in grandpa's strong arms, and lightly borne down to the parlor, where she was sealed on the pianostol, with Gospel Hymns open on the rack. And Patty played one favourite air after another, the old people singing and her young upple. But and people singing and her young uncles, Bob and Rule, joining in with tenor and bass, while Kate, the round-armed maid in the kitchen, contributed a clear soprano. "I will sing of my Redeemer," was the closing hymn, and then it was time for that. Neither Patty nor the dear old people knew it, but just outside the garden gate, lurking in the abadow of the trees and keeping well in to the

shadow of the trees, and keeping well in to the fence, skulking from the view of any passer by there was a listener to the music in the person of a city vagabond. He had once been respectable, but drink had brought him to poverty; and here he was, hungry, weary, dirty, tramping miserably on in the sweet summer afternoon, tempted, as never before, to theft, and perhaps worse.

These substantial houses, with their large, roomy barns, their horses and cattle, their fields and orchards, looked so full of abundance and comfort. Their owners had so much and he so little! He was gazing with envious eyes and hardening brow on the broad farmstead which sheltered Patty, when suddenly a sweet child's voice pealed on his car.

"Sing of Jesus, sing forever, Sing the love that changeth never."

Something in the words and the tune smote the Something in the words and the tune smote the hard heart, as the rod of the prophet touched the rock in the desert. He saw down under the tree, and listened till the singing was over, and then went on his way—still poor, hungry, and earthstained, but with a new purpose and something like a prayer in his thoughts. Feeble as the prayer was, God heard it, and guided the wanderer to honest work—the first step upward once more.

Patty thought she would have a chance to get alone with her book when the tea should be over, for there was no evening sermon, only a brief vesper service; but Aunt Mercy happened in, on her way to visit a sick neighbour, and wanted

Patty's company.

'I thought it would please poor Mrs. Saunders, dear, to hear you recite that beautiful poem about Barbara,

Whether we sleep, or whether we wake, We are his who gave His life for our sake.

She cannot read, and her daughter grows tired of reading to her, with everything else to do, and this would be such an entertainment. She could think of it all day to-morrow, when Matilda will be too busy with her washing to ait beside her mother."

This visit and the vesper service past, it was

early bed-time, and soon every light was out. And the Eye that never slumbers was watching over the beloved in the home of Patty's grandfather. The result of the conference with Miss Myrtle

and her pupils, was visible when, on the following Friday and Saturday, all the girls of the neigh-bourhood spent hours on the verandah with Patty, making paper flowers. Wreaths, and garlands of making paper flowers. Wreaths, and garlands of roses, hydrangeas, and peonies grew under their dest little fingers; and when these were istermingled with long festoons of ground pine and boughs of cedar, the room was so decorated and transformed that the boys and girls hardly knew it when Sunday came around. On the superintent's dent's desk, when the next Sunday summoned the children, stood a great bowl overflowing with roses set upon a bed of moss and ferns, the fragrance set upon a bed of moss and ferns, the fragrance set upon a bed of moss and ferns, the fragrance set upon a bed of moss and ferns, the fragrance filling the house and the bloom delighting the eye. It is wonderful how our interest grows as soon as we really begin to work for any cause. Patty became enthusiastic over the Sunday School of

as we really begin to work for any cause. Patty became enthusiastic over the Sunday School of Clover Centre, and wrote so much in its praise to a certain rich and generous cousin Edgar in the city, that when she opened one of his letters in reply to an interesting one of her own, a long, narrow slip of paper dropped from the folded sheet. This proved to be a check for fifty dollars, to be used in the purchase of new singing books and new books for the library. So that a blessing which did not soon pass away came from Patty's interrupted afternoon.—Mrs. Margaret E. Sangster in S. S. Times.

HISTORY OF A DISTILLERY.

WHAT if the history of a distillery could be written out?—so much rum for medicine of real value, so much for the arts of real value—that would be one drop, I suppose, taken out and shaken from the distillery. Then so much rum sold to the Indians, to excite them to scalp one another; so much sent to the Africans to be changed into slaves to rot in Cuba and Brazil; so much sent to the heathers in Asia, and to the islands of the ocean; and so much used at home. Then, if the tale of every drop could be written out, so much pain, so much redness of eyes, so much diminution of productive power in man; so many houses burned, ships foundered, and railway trains dashed to pieces; so many lives lost; so many widows made-doubly widows, because their husbands still live, so many orphans—their fathers yet living, long dying upon the earth—what a tale it would be! Imagine that all the persons who had suffered from torments engendered on that plague spot came together, and sat on the ridge pole and roof, and filled up the large hall of that distillery, and occupied the streets and lanes all about it, and there told tales of drunkenness, robbery, unchastity, murder, written on their faces and foreheads. Would not such a spectacio be stranger than fiction.—Parker.

THE MYSTERY SOLVED.

MRS. PRESIDENT GARFIELD asked someone if he could account for her two sons taking to a seafaring life. Pointing to a large picture of a splendid ship on the wall, he said, "There is the solution of the mystery." And so with regard to sensuous and sensual pictures. Parents little think how far they are responsible for the sin of after-life in their boys when they allow in their otherwise pure homes the impure, ungodly things that provoke to unholiness. Can we not, at least in things like these, help to keep the sons, dearer to us than our lives, at all events from a home influence to evil.—

THE English Presbyterian Church is in the forefront of the Temperance movement. Of her 280 congregations 240 have temperance societies.

> Make us eternal truths receive, And practice all that we believe. —John Dryden.