

The Family Circle.

DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

Miserere : toll the bell,
Let the earth send forth a knoll,
For a great soul takes his flight,
None knows whither, in the night—
Miserere !

Stretched upon his snowy bier,
Dying lies the good old year ;
And upon the midnight gale,
All may hear his parting wail—
Miserere !

In the old king's choquered roign,
There were mingled, joy and pain ;
Friends proved false, while foes were true,
Sinners many, saints—a few—
Miserere !

There were hearts that suffered wrong,
Bore it bravely, and were strong,
Hearts there were, so black within,
Satan wondered at their sin—
Miserere !

Garners full of fruitful store,
Measures pressed, and running o'er ;
Famine in the streets at night,
Doing deeds too dark for light—
Miserere !

Rang the church bells for the wed,
Tolled they also for the dead ;
In one home a joy was born,
From another, joy was torn—
Miserere !

Such earth's sorrow, such its sin,
All must end where they begin ;
Snow which wraps the New Year's feet,
Is the Old Year's winding sheet—
Miserere !

Now his spirit goeth fast,
Midnight hour will be his last ;
To your knees, earth's worn and weary—
Miserere, Miserere.

—Charlotte Jarvis, in *The Week*.

QUEER DESIGNATIONS.

NICKNAMES APPLIED TO MANY ILLUSTRIOUS PERSON-
AGES IN PRESENT AND PAST TIMES.

But no great man has been able to escape the fate of the American Presidents, for the funny man has in turn laid hold of each and given him the name by which he is often better known than by his family designation.

Samuel Adams was the American Cato, the Last of the Puritans, the Yankee Cromwell ; Alexander the Great, even in his own time, was Macedonia's Madman ; Thomas Aquinas was the Dumb Ox ; Pietro Aretino was the Scourge of Princes ; Atilla delighted in the nickname given by his soldiers, the Scourge of God ; Beauregard was the Little Napoleon ; Boswell was the Bear Leader, an allusion to his familiarity with Johnson ; Lord Brougham was the Foaming Fudge ; Brummel, the Dandy Killer ; Wordsworth, Old Ponder, and the Great God Pan ; Cardinal Wolsey's enemies did not scruple to denigrate him the Butcher's Dog ; the Duke of Wellington was the Iron Duke, and William Warburton the Literary Bulldog ; Voltaire had a host of nicknames, among the least complimentary being the Literary Ape ; and Swift was proud of being called the English Rabelais ; James Francis Edward Stuart, son of James II., is better known as the Old, and his son Charles is always mentioned as the Young Pretender. Edmund Spenser, the poet, was called Mother Hubbard, and Southey's name was horribly punned into Monthly.

The nicknames given to Shakespeare are too numerous to be mentioned. While Scott had nearly a hundred, the best being the great Unknown, Richelieu was called innumerable names by his enemies, who went so far as to style him the Pope of the Huguenots, and Alexander Pope was the Wasp of Twickenham. Pericles was called Onion Head by his political enemies, and Napoleon III. Rantipole. Moore was the real Bard of Erin, Mirabeau the Hurricane, and Milton the British Homer. Martin Luther could not escape the title of Hot-headed Monk, nor Louis XIV. that of Louis Baboon. Even in his own country John Knox was the Religious Machiavel, and Ben Jonson was half affectionately denominated Rare Old Ben. Hogarth, the painter, was Painter Pay, and Henry VIII.

was Bluff King Hal. Among his enemies Gustavus Adolphus was the Antichrist, among his friends the Lion of the North. Oliver Goldsmith was the Inspired Idiot, Goethe the Prince of Poets, and George IV. the Beau of Princes. To his friends Garrick was little Davy, to his foes the Coxcomb, and Frederick the Great was Der Alte Fritz, Alaric Cottin, or the Philosopher of Sans Souci, according to the view taken of his character. Franklin was the American Socrates ; Charles James Fox, the Man of the People. Queen Anne of England was Brandy Nan, Elizabeth was Good Queen Bess, Bloody Queen Bess, the Glory of Her Sex or the Untamed Heifer, according to the opinion of the speaker. Disraeli was Dizzy. Gladstone is still the Grand Old Man. The vocabulary of hatred was exhausted, however, in the case of Oliver Cromwell. He was the Almighty Nose, the Blasphemer, the Brewer, Brother Fountain, Copperface, the Coppernose Saint, Glorious Villain, Great Leviathan, his Horseship, the Immortal Rebel, the Impious, the Impostor, King Oliver, Man of Sin, Old Holl, Old Saul, the English Town Bull, the Wise Usurper, and many others, some unfit for repetition. If a man's greatness is to be judged by the number and variety of nicknames given him, old Oliver must have been one of the greatest men who ever ruled a nation.—*St. Louis Globe-Democrat*.

THE BRONTES IN IRELAND.*

In the history of English genius there are few chapters more entirely impressive—partly from the strength and nobleness of its characters, partly from its grave tenderness—than that occupied with the Brontë sisters. The books of these gentle, but most able, girls are of incomparable quality, and their life, as one sees it in the pages of Mrs. Gaskell, is even more distinguished. Since that rich and beautiful Biography much has been published on the subject, and by writers of high ability, for there was a good deal left unexplained, and the work of criticism is never done. It is simple justice to Dr. Wright to say that "The Brontës in Ireland" is the most important book in a long series ; that it is by far the most interesting ; and that, in itself, and apart from the Brontës altogether, it is a piece of work of unique value. He has unlocked a door never open till now, and in the house of the Brontë life and memory there is no more sacred room than this. One wonders whether even the sisters knew all that is treasured there ; and feels that, if it were possible for Charlotte herself to see what has been written, to this book she would turn with the most exclusive interest, for it is the book of her ancestry, of the old days, and of those heart-shaking stories to which she used to listen by the dying fire in Haworth, when her father drew his girls beside him and told them the weird memories of his childhood.

Seldom, indeed, has there been such a cycle of romance. It opens with a mystery ; and the swarthy derelict child, found on a Liverpool steampacket, is the centre of the first group of tales. This is pure tragedy—a gloomy and repulsive picture, almost too closely painted. What follows—the second group—passes into the light of gallant adventure and of love ; it is charming as an idyll, and very felicitously told. In this the hero is Hugh Brontë, but, in the Wonderland of his stirring life, one never sees him without his beautiful Alice. As the family history develops it forms a third and distinct scene ; and there are few more curiously attractive sketches ; one seems, watching the ways of these young Brontë athletes and their sisters, to catch a glimpse of the Homeric age. The last group of memories is concerned with Patrick Brontë, father of the novelists ; and, as the book closes, we pass into the light of our common and modern day.

All this has naturally a value and an interest quite its own. It is a picture of manners and of a type of character now beyond recovery. Some of the chapters will be treasure-trove to students of folk-lore, and there are others which throw welcome light on several matters of social and political concern.

* "The Brontës in Ireland," etc. Truth Stranger than Fiction. By Dr. William Wright. Hodder & Stoughton, 1893.

But the primary value of the story is in direct relation to the Brontë sisters. The literary work of these girls has always been touched with a certain mysteriousness ; it is eminently imaginative, yet every character is, as a rule, worked from an actual original. On this point Charlotte's statements are explicit, and she has indicated, in various instances, the rough material which she and her sisters moulded into form. But the statement was hardly sufficient. There are figures in the scenery of the novels, and there is a certain allusion and manner, for which the girls' own experience and personal knowledge do not account. Clearly the entire territory of the Brontë life and mind had not been explored ; there was something more to be discovered, and it was something on which the whole seemed obscurely, to rest. It has been discovered at last, so far, probably, as it ever can be. Dr. Wright, a native of the Brontë country in Ireland, has turned to the old home, and, with the instinct which led him to the grave of the Hittite Empire, he has found in the family history of the Brontës themselves the *sons et origo* of much of the misunderstanding and the mystery which have perplexed so many.

This is the main significance of the book as a piece of serious research. It is a proof of its admirable handling and manner that it is at the same time a narrative of engrossing interest. The style is remarkably natural, and, like natural things, it varies with every circumstance, sometimes moving irregularly, as when one passes over broken ground ; but habitually striding lightly and strongly forward, and from time to time flashing into colour, as when the cheek glows with exercise and against the wind—always straightforward and explicit.

GRANDPARENTS.

Judged from the stand-point of the average child, there is nobody so delightful as the average grandparent. Grandfathers are the jolliest of playfellows, the most charming of companions. I t h e r s are apt to be absorbed in business, with little time to devote to the amusement of their boys and girls, but grandfathers are no longer in the midst of the conflict ; they can potter about, help in making kites and building boats, tell stories by the hour together ; they can sympathize with "a fellow" in his daily trials and triumphs. A grandfather is very much nearer a boy of five or ten years old than the boy's father is apt to be. He looks through older yet more childlike eyes, and appreciates the boy's difficulties and temptations more readily and more truly than the younger man does. It almost seems at times as if a man must be a grandfather before he entirely enters into the fulness of fatherhood.

As for grandmothers, no family is complete that lacks one. A grandmother over the way, in the next street, in the next town, is a blessing, but a grandmother resident in the family is a gift for which to thank God fervently. Who else so tender, so sweet, so dear ? To her quiet room young and old bring their perplexities, to find the patient wisdom and the ready common-sense which explain whatever was baffling, and devise a way into freedom from care. Grandmother's chair is moved into the sunniest corner of the kitchen when grave household enterprises are afoot. It is her receipt by which the wedding-cake is compounded for the bride, and the mince-meat prepared for the winter's supply.

Grandmother always has court-plaster and witch-hazel and arnica and toothache drops in the little cabinet in her room. She can spread poultices and bind up wounds, and her sweet words and smiles go as far toward healing bruises as her material remedies do.

Grandparents are accused by their sons and daughters, with a fair show of reason, of being decidedly more lenient with juvenile offenders, less sternly disposed toward discipline, than they were to their children in an earlier day. They would spoil the grandchildren if allowed, declare the fathers and mothers, serenely confident in their own discretion, and quite sure they are right in their sternly repressive methods.

Never mind. The wheel of time in its ceaseless revolution is bringing on the day when the man who now laughingly reproves

his parents for their fancied weakness will himself stand in awed pleasure gazing into the round eyes of the second generation, and feeling himself the founder of a line. Then it will be his turn to emulate the grandparent, as the grandparent has been from the beginning.—*Harper's Bazar*.

POWER AND INFLUENCE OF THE IRISH AND SCOTCH.

The *Scottish American* says :—The appointment of the Earl of Elgin to be Viceroy of India puts the coping stone on Scottish appointments abroad, remarks a contemporary. At this moment Greater Britain is virtually ruled by Scotsmen. Canada has the Earl of Aberdeen for its Governor, Cape Colony is under Sir Henry Loch, a Midlothian man ; New Zealand is under the Earl of Glasgow, Victoria under the Earl of Hopetoun, South Australia under the Earl of Kintore, New South Wales under Sir Robert Duff, British New Guinea under Sir Wm. Macgregor, the Mauritius under Sir Charles Cameron Lees, St. Helena under Mr. Grey Wilson, an Ayrshire man, and the Barbadoes under Sir J. S. Hay. All in their turn are under Mr. Gladstone, whose father was a Leith man. The Foreign Affairs are entrusted to the Earl of Rosebery, the army is controlled by Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, and home affairs are managed by Mr. Asquith, a Scottish member of Parliament. This should go some way to avenge Flodden.

We take the following from an exchange :—It is not only in New York and Brooklyn and the United States generally that the sons of Erin have secured a place among the leaders of the people. This fact has been called to mind by the circumstance that while all France was mourning one illustrious Irishman in the person of honest old Marshal MacMahon, the masses of the population of Austria-Hungary were acclaiming another Irishman, the Irish peer Viscount Taaffe, who holds the post of Prime Minister of Austria, for bringing forward a bill in favor of universal suffrage. In Spain one of the most influential military leaders is a general of Hibernian origin, O'Ryan by name, who held the post of Minister of War during the former administration of the present Premier, while the Queen Regent's private secretary and most-trusted adviser and friend bears the name of Murphy. The little king's governess is also an Irishwoman ; and so, too, is the governess of the young Queen of Holland. The tutor of the Emperor William was an Irishman named Audanne.

GOOD-NIGHT.

There is a tender sweetness about some of our common phrases of affectionate greeting, simple and unobtrusive as they are, which falls like dew upon the heart. Good night ! The little one lisps it as, gowned in white, with shining face and hands, and prayers said, she toddles off to bed. Sisters and brothers exchange the wish ; parents and children ; friends and friends. Familiar use has robbed it of its significance to some of us ; we repeat it automatically without much thought. But consider. We are, as voyagers, putting off from time to time upon an unexplored sea. Our barks of life set sail and go onward into the darkness ; and we, asleep on our pillows, take no such care as we do when awake and journeying by daylight. Of the perils of the night, whatever they may be, we take no heed. An unsleeping vigilance watches over us, but it is the vigilance of one stronger and wiser than we, who is the Eternal Good. Good and God spring from the same root, and the same in meaning. "Good-by" is only "God be with you." "Good night" is really "God-night," or "God guard the night."

It would be a childish household in which these gentle forms of speech were ignored or did not exist. Alike the happy and the sorrowful, day by day, may say "Good-night."—*Selected*.

Good nature is worth more than knowledge, more than money, more than honour, to the persons that possess it, and certainly to everybody who dwells with them, in so far as mere happiness is concerned.—*Henry Ward Beecher*.