The Home Circle.

WATER.

Mother of beauty is water;
Water is fairest and best,
She that bore Love was its daughter;
Everywhere water is blessed!
Strong are the surges of ocean,
Lovely when calmly at rest,
Grand and sublime when in motion,
Chainless, uncurbed, unrepressed.

Water's the girdle of nations,
Reaching from day unto night,
Bidding far off generations,
Pathway of fame and of night;
Ender of benefits, never,
Affluent source of delight,
Bringer of beauty forever,
Ever a joy to the sight.

Over the precipice dashing,
Proud and exulting and strong,
How it goes foaming and flashing,
Leaping and laughing along!
Rainbows its forehead surrounded,
Doing its pureness no wrong;
On it goes springing and bounding,
On it goes singing its song.

Up from the deep it ascendeth,
Viewless, on pinions of air;
With the fine ether it blendeth,
Clouds are its chariots there.
High in the home of the thunder,
Where makes the lightning its lair,
Wearing a mantle of wonder,
There, even there it is fair.
But when in torrents of silver,
Fast it descends to the earth,
Filling the river and rill—for
They unto it owe their birth—
Then it is welcomer, fairer;
Nothing can rival its worth.
Artist, reviver, repairer,
Mother of beauty and mirth.

Water is healer and cleanser;
Water a gift is divine,
Ever of blessings dispenser,
Potent to charm and refine,
As in some glass of magician,
All things transformed in it shine;
Water makes earth's scenes Elysian,
Water is better than wine.

See how it bubbles and sparkles
Up from dim caves into light!
Bright in its beams, when it darkles,
All the bright hosts of the night,
When the full moon in her splendor
Steps up the firmament's height,
Mirrors lake, sea, and stream lend her,
Crystalline, endlessly bright.
Nurse and purveyor of pleasance,
Sister of light and of air,
Famine flies far from its presence;
Vanish the fiends of despair,
Health and wealth cluster about it,
All things below are its care,
Earth were a desert without it,
Treeless and flowerless and bare.
Fill, then, with water a beaker,
Pure as it flows from the spring;
Never vine yielded such liquor,
Spite of what bacchants may sing,
Broods there no spirit of malice
Lurks there no serpent to sting;
Quaff it from Nature's own chalice,
Loud let its eulogy ring.

SPANISH LIFE.

You cannot think how entirely different Spanish domestic life is from what it is in England, nor would you credit it were I to tell you how rough and how rude is the life of the lower—how ephemeral and purposeless the pursuits of the higher classes. Let us take a glimpse of family life in the middle class. The Spanish houses are built chiefly of the hard but porous sand or ironstone, quarries of which abound in the interior; they have some ten or twelve rooms, all of which are paved with stone, or large tiles, for in this country of dew and burning heat—the thermometer has varied from 67° to 95° throughout the summer—no carpets seemed to be used, save just in one room, in the heart of the winter. The stable at the back of the house, and horses, mules, and carriages all passed through the hall just as do the families of the house. I have often been taking a fresco with the senor and his spouse in the hall, and we have had to move the little tables to let the servant and his mules through. Every morning the "creada," or Spanish maid-servant, takes her watering-pot, and carefully lays the dust, and cools the room with an abundant sprinkling of aqua fresca. At early morn the master rises, and his little cup of chocolati, an egg, a slice of melon await him in the sala, or large sitting room. To English eyes a most comfortless place; very large stone-flagged, with few hospitable chairs, walls painted in the rudest way, and one large table in the middle. The rooms, owing to the heat, are always kept darkened by means of closed shutters throughout the day; some of the windows have glass, some not, but all are strongly protected, without exception, by a strong cage of massive ironwork outside. The senora had her chocolati in her bedroom, at the open window, enjoying the fresh morning breeze. All the Spaniards rise as a rule at five or six in summer to enjoy the only enjoyable time of the summer day. At one o'clock they have dinner—the comida—and after that follows the two hours' siesta in the darkened room. Evening then draws on, the delicious night-breeze rises and blows freshly from the hills, and the ladies go out in groups to the alameda or the paseo, or walk. Such is the Spanish lady's day. She has, however, her creadas to look after; and, above all, her dresses to make, or superintend, and her graceful mantilla to arrange. It is quite a striking sight to pass down the streets from six to eight at night, and see the graceful carriage of the head, and the stately upright walk of the Spanish ladies, with their long white dresses trailing behind them in a cloud of dust; how they manage to walk over the rough, unpaved, uneven streets without a trip is a mystery. At about ten all retire to rest, to rise up refreshed for another eventful day. As regards the master of the house, he really seems to have but one interest in life, and that is, politics. He may ride out to view his olive farm, or his mine; and you will certainly meet him in his shop, his casino, or his friend's casa, smoking the inevitable cigarillo, and chatting, or making a bargain. But there is absolutely no reading of any sort, not even a book of the calibre of a three-volume novel. Politics, politics are everything with him, and of politics he seems never to tire. I was but yesterday talking with a friend here, a professional man, one who would give up all for the sake of "his cause," and during the whole weary evening we seemed to have nothing in common. At last I bethought myself of the unfailing subject, and said, "What is your opinion of Senor Castelar's enforcing the penalty of death again?" In a moment all was changed; his look of utter apathy had given place to the keenest enthusiasm, and knocking the cigarille out of his mouth, he said with flashing eyes, and flushed cheeks, "Castelar is a statesman, a poet, and an orator; he knows and says that, in desperate cases, desperate remedies must be applied; so he does right for awhile to enforce once more capital punishment in our army; I am a Republican of Republicans, and I consider capital punishment opposed to the true spirit of Christianity. I desire nothing for my country but to see her sons free; free to serve their God as they like, as their unfettered conscience tells them; freedom in their families; freedom from slavery in their colonies; that is the wish of Heaven; that is my wish also." You will say, what then, are the pleasures of the Spaniards? I asked that question too, and received for answer, shooting in the sierra; a picnic in the "campo"; the annual "ferias" (fairs); and the Paseo de rio (river bank).—*Macmillan's Magazine.*

CONCERNING FRIENDSHIP.

One could wish that there were more perfect friendships among us. Friendships uninterrupted by alternations of fervour and coldness, of honour and neglect,—friendships unbroken by misunderstanding, discord, and estrangement. I do not hold that constancy lives only "in realms above," but one must confess that it is often sadly denaturalized in these realms below. One cause of imperfect friendship may be found in the fact that it is only men of strong nature who are capable of strong affection, and this strength of nature is too apt to be of the fiery and impulsive kind. A man speaks unadvisedly his indignant, yet not within him, and his words are such as his friend cannot forget readily. But this is not the worst kind of estrangement. It is a long way from the worst. The impulsive man is as sudden and earnest in his repentance as he was in his anger, and cannot be at one with himself until he is at one with you again. It is quite true, as the unbenign and spleenful La Rochfoucauld wrote, that "renewed friendships require nicer conduct than those that have never been broken;" but this nicer conduct is a first instinct, and there is a subtle pleasure in it as well as a satisfaction. A sadder—far sadder—alienation is the unspoken. You feel it only—feel it as men living by the sea feel the ground give way before a landslip. Sickness, and fear, and faintness, come over you gradually, and you are slow to face the truth,—slow, and altogether reluctant. Wherein have you erred? this you ask of yourself all day, and you cannot find your error, and the pain of believing that offence has been taken where none was intended is very acute pain, as we most of us know. You cannot humble yourself, saying, "On such a day I did wrong, forgive me!" Your relief would be great if you could do this, nay, if you could do anything; it is the knowledge that nothing may be done that makes the anguish. And the ground goes on loosening, and the fissures go on widening, and at last without any perceptible shock, there is a great gulf fixed:—

"A dreary sea now flows between;
But neither heat, nor frost nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been."

There is one other sad thing about friendship, and that is the gradual decay to which it is liable, especially liable if there is disparity of years. "The younger mind grows, grow it must, if it outgrows all that it loves." But it is painful progress, at the beginning of it very painful. Perhaps in the first days of the friendship the younger man was behind his friend, so far behind that he had no thought of ever arriving at the same point; but as the years increased the power of assimilation increased too, and there was a time when the friends were alongside of each other. But by and by there is less unison, and this is the time of pain. You cannot tell what it is that is disturbing the harmony. Your friend's love is growing less, you say to yourself; or if you are humble, you wonder if you are becoming less worthy of love. The true cause will not strike you for years. Now and then you fancy that he is less receptive than he used to be, or that his insight is a little dulled, but it does not occur to you that the man who is not what you were is not what you are. I quote from the "Autocrat of the Breakfast-table," who adds, "We cannot avoid measuring our rate of movement by those with whom we have long been in the habit of comparing ourselves; and when they once become stationary, we can get our reckoning from them with painful accuracy. But measurement of this kind is only natural in very ordinary friendships.—*Tinsley's Magazine.*

PERSUASION BETTER THAN FORCE.

Deal gently with those who stray. Draw them back by love and persuasion. A kiss is worth a thousand kicks. A kind word to the host is more valuable than a mine of gold. Think of this, and be on your guard, ye who would chase to the grave an erring brother. We must consult the gentlest manner and softest seasons of address; our advice must not fall like a violent storm, bearing down and making those to droop whom it is meant to cherish and refresh. It must descend as the dew upon the tender herb, or like the melting flakes of snow; the softer it falls the longer it dwells upon and the deeper it sinks into the mind. There are few who have the humility to receive advice as they ought, often because there are few who have the discretion to convey it in the proper way, and who can qualify the harshness and bitterness of reproof against which human nature is apt to revolt. To probe the wound to the bottom, with all the boldness and resolution of a good spiritual surgeon, and yet with all the delicacy and tenderness of a friend, requires a very dexterous and masterly hand. An affable deportment and complaisancy of behavior will disarm the most obstinate; whereas if, instead of calmly pointing out their mistakes, we break out into unseemly sallies of passion, we cease to have any influence.

THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN.

He is above a mean thing. He cannot stoop to a mean fraud. He invades no secret in the keeping of another. He betrays no secret confided to his keeping. He never struts in borrowing plumage. He never takes selfish advantages of our mistakes. He uses no ignoble weapons in controversy. He never stabs in the dark. He is ashamed of insinuations. He is not one thing to a man's face and another behind his back. If by accident he comes in possession of his neighbor's counsels, he passes upon them an act of instant oblivion. He bears sealed packages without tampering with the wax. Papers not meant for his eye, whether they flutter at the windows or lie open before him in unguarded exposure, are sacred to him. He invades no privacy of others, however the sentry sleeps. Bolts and bars, locks and keys, hedges and pickets, bonds and securities, notice to trespassers, are are none of them for him. He may be trusted alone out of sight, near the thinnest partition—anywhere. He buys no offices, he sells none, he intrigues for none. He would rather fail of his rights than win them through dishonor. He will eat honest bread. He tramples on no sensitive feeling. He insults no man. If he have rebuke for another, he is straight-forward, open, manly; he cannot descend to scurrility. In short, whatever he judges honorable he practices toward every man.

ABIDE WITH ME.

The beautiful hymn, "Abide with Me," was written by Henry Francis Lyte, an English clergyman, who died at Nice some years ago. The manner in which it was composed is thus told in the *Christian Weekly*:

"It was the autumn of 1847; the gloom of winter was already settling upon the coast and the pomps of decay tinging the leaves. He who was now preparing to leave the parish, and who seemed like one already hovering over the verge of the grave, determined to speak to his dear people once more, perhaps for the last time. He dragged his attenuated form into the pulpit and delivered his parting discourse, while the great tears rolled down the hardy faces of the worshippers. He then administered the Lord's Supper to his spiritual children. Tired and exhausted, but with his heart still swelling with emotion, he went home. The old poetic inspiration came over him and he wrote the words and music of his last song. He had prayed that his last breath might be 'swan like.'

"'In song they may not die.'"

And this effort was to prove a literal answer to his prayer.

"The poem composed under these interesting circumstances, was the well known chant, beginning:

"'Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens, Lord, with me abide;
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O, abide with me.'"

UNCLE JOB'S LESSON OF INDUSTRY.

Uncle Job was seated one evening in the chimney corner at the old farm house, and seeing his nephew and neice ready for a story, he thus began:—

When I was a boy, I learned a lesson about industry, which I have found of some use to me in life. My mother was a poor widow, and had very bad health. She had long worked for me, and it was time, as I was getting a big lad, that I should do something to help her. It is a shame, you know, for a strong and hearty boy to see a sick mother in want of bread, while he stands idle.

One day as I stood at the door of the cottage my kind old schoolmaster passed that way. As soon as he saw me, he stopped, and in his usual kind way, said,—

"Do you not think, Job, that if God had meant that we should live without work, he would have given us everything to our hand, without labor of our own?"

When he had thus spoken, he passed on. It was clear that he had some object in these words. I suppose he had seen that I was not so fond of work as I should have been, and he wished to give me a hint on the subject.

After the schoolmaster had gone up the lane, I stood looking at the birds, and they were busy enough. Some of the little warblers were picking bits of wool from the thorn bushes, which had stuck there as the sheep rubbed against them when feeding. Others carried small pieces of sticks or straws. I ran after them as they flew into the thickets, and found them busy in making their nests. Now and then they stopped to raise a sweet song, and then went on again with their work.

I now turned my eyes on my own arms and strong hands, with their curious joints, so that I could take up things, and carry them about; and I said to myself, if these birds are so clever with their little feet and beaks, and work so merrily, I am sure that I ought not to be idle.

Just at that moment I saw some little ants on the ground. Two or three of them were pulling with all their might some food into their hole under the root of an old birch tree. This put me in mind of the text I had learned at the Sunday-school,—

"Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise."

In another moment I was looking at the beehive in my mother's garden. The bees flew in and out, and up and down the meadow on the other side of the way; and it was as if they sang a song with their wings, hum, buzz, busy, buzz, buzz, buzz. I had heard my mother say, that in a family of working bees, if any are idle, they are turned out of doors. She also had told me how much pains the bees take to get enough sweet juice out of the flowers to make a drop of honey, as big as a pin's head; and yet they toil on till a large hive is full.

While I was watching the bees, the old schoolmaster came along the road again; and seeing me near to the hive he said,—

"Well, Job, what do you think of the busy bees? You see how they improve the shining hour. They will lay in a store of honey which will serve them for food when dull and rainy days to come. I think they give a lesson to us both; do they not?"

The schoolmaster then went on to say,—

"Do not forget, Job, to be busy with your books. Some books are like a whole garden of sweets. If you get all the good out of them that you can, you will get what is better than gold, and sweeter than honey.

"Be busy at your work. What you have to do, do it, and as quickly as you can, do it well. If you have half an hour's work, do it in half an hour. If a boy is to thrive at his trade he must attend to it. But if he means to go through the world ashamed to show his face, why then he may be idle. 'Seest thou a man diligent in business? he shall stand before kings.' But he that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.

"But while you are busy with your books and at your work, do not forget, Job, to be busy in the best of things. Many a man will labor hard for this world, and yet be an idler in regard to the better world. 'Seek first the kingdom' of God. You may labor for the riches of the earth, and never gain them; but if you seek for the true riches through faith in Jesus Christ, and asking for his sake, you are sure to find them. I hope, Job, you will rely on him as your Saviour, and that by the grace of the blessed Spirit, you will live a holy life here, and then dwell forever in heaven."

The pious old schoolmaster then went up the village street; and the next day I engaged myself to Farmer Brown as a plow boy. Many years have passed since then, but the lesson I was taught was not lost upon me, and I now teach it to you, that it may do you good, as it has done to me.

SLAVERY AMONG THE ANTS.

Among ants the habit of slave-making as discovered by the German naturalist, Huber, is one of the wonders of the animal kingdom. This habit belongs to the Amazons, or red ants of South Africa. These leave their own dwelling in the evening, and go to that of some tribe of black ants with the intention of making captives. The assailed are, however, not to submit so tamely. They organize for the defence and resist their assailants furiously. The battle is long and fierce, sometimes one side, sometimes the other, having the advantage. We have read of, and admired, the bravery of the Old Guard in their charge at Waterloo, but here are charges and counter charges as fierce as any on that famous field. We admire our revolutionary fathers for defending their homes against foreign invasion, but what shall we say of the ants defending their until all the adult members of the tribe are killed or wounded. We applaud the heroism of our own brave boys and southern foes in the late rebellion, but here by these animals, the one tribe endeavoring to make slaves, and the other in resisting that making, was displayed a heroism equal to that seen on any battle field of that deathly struggle. But, not stopping to dilate upon the contest, we can say the Amazons may be defeated, but they will probably conquer, and after killing or rendering helpless all their adult foes, descend into the dwelling, make captives, and convey the larvæ and young to their homes. This done, and the slaves being trained to perform the duties of their new condition, the captors give themselves up to a life of ease, and become so enervated and imbecile as to be unable to care for themselves. If after a short period their slaves are removed, the tribe will die for want of food. The distinguished naturalist to whom I referred took a colony and removed their serfs. The result was the tribe were dying rapidly when a single slave was introduced, and was immediately set at work supplying food, rearing young, and in every respect caring for the hive, so that in a few hours life and vigor flourished where had been only indications of infirmity and death.

Sawdust and Chips.

A Galesburg, Ill., barber advertises himself as a professor of crinicultural abscission and craniological tripsis.

Owing to a war among the dry-goods merchants at Denver, calicoes were reduced to two cents per yard, and every editor, reporter, and minister in the place now wears a shirt—gaudy in some instances, but still a shirt.

"Have you any of them flip-flaps and a cool-off?" inquired an old lady of an astonished dry-goods clerk, in Savannah, the other day. After a lengthy examination, the terrified clerk finally discovered she wanted a palmetto fan.

A youth of Salisbury, four years old, and his young sister, saw a rat hasten into a hole in the barn floor. Said he, "Sis, the Bible says, 'Watch and pray.' You pray while I watch the hole, and I'll swat him across the snoot when he comes out."

An attorney about to finish a bill of costs, was requested by his client, a baker, "to make it as light as he could." "Ah!" replied the attorney, "that's what you may say to your foreman, but it's not the way I make my bread."

"Why am I like Texas?" said the unmarried Miss Starr, to a bashful wooer, who didn't "spunk up," as the saying is. "I do not know," said the verdant one. "Because I am a lone Starr." "Then," said Gideon, brightening up, "let me propose annexation," and they annexed.

When Dr. Chalmers was settled at Kilmony, Scotland, he delivered a series of lectures on chemistry. Among other experiments, the powers of bleaching liquid were exhibited. At the close the following colloquy between two old wives was overheard:—"Our minister," said the one, "is mething short o's warlock; he was telling the folks hoo to clean claes without soap." "Ay, woman," was the reply, "I wish he wad tell me hoo to make parritch without meal."

Washington Irving once, when picking up an apple under a tree in his own orchard, was accosted by an urchin of the neighborhood, who, not recognising him as the proprietor, offered to show him the tree where he could get some better apples than those. "But," sad the boy, "we must take care the old man doesn't see us." I went with him, said Irving, and we stole a dozen of my own apples.

A church in the North country, which needed a pastor had a beadle who took an active interest in all proceedings taken to fill up the vacancy. One of the candidates, after the afternoon service was over, put off his cloak in the vestry and stepped into the church, in which our worthy was just putting things to right. "I was just taking a look at the church," said the minister. "Aye, tak' a guid look at it," said the beadle, "for it's no likely ye'll ever see it again!"

An intimate friend of the late Dr. Duncan enquired of him as to the genuineness of the story of his proceeding to undress in a family drawing room on the conclusion of devotional services, fancying himself retiring to rest, and being arrested by the intervention of the ladies present. "Oh, no, that's not true," replied the doctor, "but a curious incident happened to me the other Sunday. Finding myself rather late for the forenoon service, I set out for church as expeditiously as possible, with the wind pretty strong in my face. When about half on my way I indulged in a pinch of snuff. In doing so I had turned my back to the wind, and only realized my position on finding myself at my own door."