

THE BLESSING OF TO-DAY.

Strange, we never prize the music
Till the sweet-voiced birds have flown—
Strange, that we should alight the violets
Till the lovely flowers are gone!
Strange that summer skies and sunshine
Never seem one-half so fair
As when winter's snowy pinions
Shake the white down in the air
Life from which the seal of silence
None but God can roll away,
Never blossomed in such beauty
As adorn the month to-day.
And sweet words that from our memory
With their beautiful perfume,
Come to us in sweetest accents,
Through the portals of the tomb.
Let us gather up the sunbeams
Lying all around our path;
Let us keep the wheat and roses,
Casting out the thorns and chaff;
Let us find our sweetest comfort
In the blessings of the day,
With a patient hand removing
All the briars from our way.
—The Churchman.

GREAT MEN AND THEIR WIVES.

From the days of Socrates to Charles Dickens there has been one long succession of unfortunate examples. Poet and painter, dramatist and novelist, philosopher and linguist—the Mollers, the Miltons, the Byrons, the Bulwers, the Durers, the Scaligers, the Sherdians, the Thackerays—all all marry and quarrel in the future as in the past. All these men, without exception will, in the future, as in the past, blame their wives for the several successive catastrophes. And yet what a record of heartlessness and indifference our greatest men have left of their domestic life. Dr. Franklin, that old utilitarian kiteflier, went to Europe, leaving his wife behind, and never saw her face for eleven years. She had shared his poverty, and practised his Poor Richard maxims, pinched and economized, patched and darned, worked early and late, bred children, nursed them through jaundice, red gum, whooping cough, measles, scarlet fever, and fits, while Benjamin enjoyed the splendour of a court, velvet cushions, great dinners and choice society. Of course when he came back the poor drudge was no match for the philosopher; there was a great gulf between them. That her heart rebelled is manifest in the headstrong acts of her children. He quarrelled with his sons and disinherited one of them. Thus the mother was revenged. A just retribution for any wrong on women is sure to come, in the vice and crime of her children to the third and fourth generations. Henry Clay thought he could safely leave his wife at Ashland to bear children and make butter for the Lexington market, while he made laws for the nation and love to the lovely women in Washington. There his heart stood always open as my boarding house door, but shut against her who was playing Solomon's wise woman on a farm in Kentucky, cutting out lindsay and jeans for the niggers. His dream of ambition over, sick and sad, he went back to Ashland to find that the domestic drudge called by the holy name of wife, had reared up for him a race of degenerate and way-ward children. He was filled with the bitterness of disappointment. But they measured the depth of the mother's humiliation. The angles of incidence and retaliation were but equal. Was it the sorrowful mother that made one son crazy with hopeless love, another a sour, discontented man overcome through life with a sense of inferiority, and jockeys and gamblers of the rest? Truly, wisdom is justified with her children. We do not gather grapes from thistles, nor figs from thorns. By their fruits ye shall know them. Great pacificator! how could he with his narrow political creed over fathom the cause of our social wrongs? We cannot quench our thirst at sweet and pleasant streams, whose fountains we have poisoned. He might depise the wife who ministered to him in carnal things, but just and mighty was her revenge. Henry Clay is dead; his compromise measures are scattered to the winds; but his misdeeds live after him. His own Theodore still lingers in the asylum at Lexington. There is but one thing immortal, and that is love.—Mrs. Stanton.

A MINISTERIAL IMPROPRIETY.

A pastorate terminates. It may be best. And it might last longer if the people thought so. But when there is a demand for a change right or wrong, generally there is no alternative in the matter. The pastor settles in another place. Some of his former charge still hold on to him, yielding a feeble or reluctant support to their own meeting and the new pastor. He (the new one) feels it keenly, especially when he finds that his predecessor favors their disaffection, corresponding with them, visiting back and forth, and he, perhaps, receiving their presents. Oh, it is painful. A pastor needs the united confidence and support of all. He is entitled to it, if he is a faithful minister of Christ.

Why should a former pastor foster this uneasiness? Why cause his successors in office pain? Why do that which will distract and injure the interests of the precious cause of Christ in the place? "I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say."

A DRAWING-ROOM GAME.

Perhaps the best drawing-room game of all is that called Words, an invention not only entertaining in itself, but exceedingly useful to all young people (and between ourselves, to a good many grown-up folks) as a Royal Road to Spelling. It is played in this way: each person, as in the game of Historical Pictures, is provided with pencil and sheet of paper, and a word of moderate length (but with as many vowels as possible) is publicly fixed upon, and written down upon it. The object is to break the word thus given into as many words as possible, using only the same letters; and he who makes most words out of it—unthought of by the rest of the company—wins the game. Any word may be fixed upon for this experiment, but the words to be derived from it may not be names of places nor perfect tenses, nor participles of verbs, nor plurals; and they must consist of not less than four letters. Thus suppose Cambridge to be the word selected. Would it be imagined that this comparatively short word breaks up into sixty-one others! Bridge, image, ream, ridge, badger, crag, bride, acre, admire, game, dear, brig, crib, care, braid, ride, card, dream, dame, mare, gird, rad, hard, beam, abido, bare, garb, mire, drab, amber, bior, bear, bird, grab, grace, gear, dare, rice, race, mead, crap, brace, bead, cram, grado, read, brim, cigar, dre, dram, cadi, rage, grim, oider, maid, cream, badge, crim, cage, drag, mirage. There may be many others; but a novice who attempts this game may be very clever if he hits upon half of these within the time allowed for their discovery, which is five minutes. Nothing but practice can make perfect at this amusement, and a child who is acquainted with it can run off fifty words, while a highly intellectual adult is setting down his ten. But it is not the number of words, it must be remembered, that gains the victory, but their comparative rarity, since all those that appear on duplicate lists are cancelled, and go for nothing. When the clock on the mantle-piece announces that the five minutes are over, everybody is bound to stop, and then each declares how many words he has evolved out of the original. He who has made most (whom we call A), reads them out from his own list aloud, and B.C.D. &c. cry out, "Ah! I've got that!" whenever the word appears in their list also, and it is struck out accordingly. It is like the show of hands at an election. It may be flattering to A's vanity to have got the most words, but he may not be the chosen candidate for all that. It is possible to have made fifty, and yet not one of them to be worth anything, since they may be so common-places that one or other of the rest of the company is sure to have pitched upon them also. In the present case, such words as Crib, Care, Card, for example, are sure to be cancelled, while Mirage, Image and Cadi have a good chance of remaining unchallenged. The game is really an excellent one; but when played among grown-up folks, only good-natured people that don't mind being laughed at should indulge in it, for the mistakes in spelling thus publicly disclosed are always numerous.—*Chambers's Journal.*

PAY YOUR PREACHERS.

If a man is fit to preach, he is worth wages. If he is worth wages they should be paid with all the business regularity that is demanded and enforced in business life. There is no man in the community who works harder for the money he receives than the faithful minister. There is no man—in whose work the community is interested—to whom regular wages, that shall not cost him a thought, are so important. Of what possible use in a pulpit can any man be whose weeks are fritted away in mean cares and dirty economies? Every month, or every quarter-day, every pastor should be sure that there will be placed in his hands, as his just wages, money enough to pay all his expenses. Then, without a sense of special obligation to anybody, he can preach the truth with freedom, and prepare for his public ministrations without distraction. Nothing more cruel to a pastor, or more disastrous to his work, can be done than to force upon him a feeling of dependence upon the charities of his flock. The office of such a man does not rise in dignity above that of a court-fool. He is the creature of the popular whim, and a preacher without influence to those who do not respect him or his office sufficiently to pay him the wages due to a man who devotes his life to them. Manliness cannot live in such a man, except it be in torture—a torture endured simply because there are others who depend upon the charities doled out to him.

Good, many pastors and preachers do not want presents; they want wages. It is not a kindness to eke out insufficient salaries by donation parties, and by benefactions from the richer members of a flock. It is not a merit, as they seem to regard it, for parishes or individuals to do this. It is an acknowledgment of indebtedness which they are too mean to pay in a business way. The pastor needs it, and they owe it, but they take it to themselves the credit of benefactors, and place him in an awkward

ward and a false position. The influence of this state of things upon the world that lies outside of the sphere of Christian belief and activity is had beyond calculation. We have had enough of the patronage of Christianity by a half-scoffing, half-tolerating world. If Christians do not sufficiently recognize the legitimacy of the pastor's calling to render him fully his just wages, and to assist him to maintain his manly independence before the world, they must not blame the world for looking upon him with a contempt that forbids approach and precludes influence. The world will be quite ready to take the pastor at the valuation of his friends, and the religion he teaches at the price its professors are willing to pay in a business way, for its ministry.—*Scribner's Magazine.*

OUR DINNERS.

Let us enter the middle-class dining-room, and look at the company at any ordinary dinner. Look at the host first, whose whole attention ought to be centered on his guests, and on making the conversation brilliant and above all general. Poor fellow, he is working hard at the bottom of the table, through every course for he has to carve. Of course, he carves badly, having never studied that difficult art—breaks a glass or two—jokes in a crestfallen way over the accidents—never hears when he is addressed, or answers vaguely, his entire mind being fixed on the gravy—splashes his cuffs—manual labour in a tight-dress-coat covers his wrinkled brow with honest drops—the sharp corner of his shirt-collar fix themselves into his jaw and bring tears into his eyes. He eats nothing himself—the reason is obvious, he has not a moment to spare—never was a man more pressed for time, so anxious, so nervous, so bewildered. Observe the hostess behind a tall pair of fowls. She knows that she cannot move her arms freely (what woman in a low-necked dress ever could?) her bracelets entangle themselves with the legs of the fowls and with each other, and clank like chains and gyves. She gladly accepts the offer of the nearest cavalier made with half a heart, but noblesse oblige—to "save her the trouble." Of course the gentleman carves worse than the host, because the dish is not in the right position for him—more crestfallen jokes—conversation flags—all watch him—he becomes more nervous and proceeds still more slowly—he explains that he is awkward—the guests wish he would not explain, as it delays him, and the remark is quite superfluous—his knife slipping sends a leg dancing across the table, where it settles in a nimbus of grease upon the hostess's lap—she assures him with a glare that she "does not mind, on the contrary."

The silence is deadly. At last all is served, one of them having got all the meat, another all the gravy, and none of them any stuffing; the carver then obtains a little flabby scrap for himself, perfectly cold, just as all the other plates are removed. Now for the rest of the company. They get enough to eat, but seldom the right kind, and they have other sorrows. They are obliged to sit alternately, men and women. None of the ladies are comfortable. Their feet are cold, their heads are hot, their arms are so confined by their tight low dresses, that they can hardly cut their food, and, moreover, their skirts are being crushed by the crowding chairs on either side. In fact they are altogether got up as if for a dance, when to be sure exercise supplies some reason for scanty clothing. The man nearest the host is in agony about his large and board-like shirt-front; what if that infatuated carver at the end of the table should splash him! He is afraid to look off the dish—he is fascinated by the play of the carving knife, and if he does turn his head, his shirt-collar makes it an act of self-abnegation to address the lady on either hand. There is no possibility of changing the position. *En fin*—the ladies begin to draw on their gloves as soon as dessert arrives—(what gloves are worn for at dinner I am at a loss to conceive). The hostess, after "catching" her own "eye" several times, at last succeeds in catching some one else's. The ladies rise in the midst of a sentence and stumble from the room, treading on each other's skirts and dragging about chairs. As the door shuts, the gentlemen overhear the invariable remark on the stairs—"Difference in the atmosphere outside!"—*St. Paul's.*

A cheerful temper is the clear blue sky of the soul.

The celebrated Dr. Strong, of Hartford, preached some time in a neighboring village. One day a committee called upon him to settle with him for his services, and after stammering for a while, signified to him that his services were no longer desired. "What does this mean, gentlemen?" asked the doctor. "Why," replied the spokesman, with some hesitation, "the people have got the impression that you are inclining to universal salvation." "Gentlemen" answered the doctor, "I never have preached that doctrine, but if I ever should, I promise to make the people of this town an exception."

THE CARE OF GOD.

"Do you see this lock of hair?" said an old man to me.
"Yes, but what of it? It is, I suppose, the curl from the head of a dear child long since gone to God."
"It is not. It is a lock of my own hair; and it is now nearly seventy years since it was cut from my head."
"But why do you prize a lock of your own hair so much?"
"It has a story belonging to it, and a strange one. I keep it thus with care because it speaks to me more of God, and of his special care, than anything else I possess."

"I was a little child of four years old, with long curly locks, which, in sun, or rain, or wind, hung down my cheeks uncovered. One day my father went into the wood to cut up a log, and I went with him. I was standing a little way behind him, or rather at his side, watching with interest the strokes of the heavy ax, as it went up and came down upon the wood, sending of splinters with every stroke, in all directions. In doing so I stumbled forward, and in a moment my curly head lay upon the log. I had fallen just at the moment when the ax was coming down with all its force. It was too late to stop the blow. Down came the ax. I screamed, and my father fell to the ground in terror. He could not stay the stroke, and in the blindness which the sudden horror caused, he thought he had killed his boy. We soon recovered—I from my fright, and he from his terror. He caught me in his arms, and looked at me from head to foot, to find out the deadly wound which he was sure he had inflicted. Not a drop of blood nor a scar was to be seen. He knelt upon the grass and gave thanks to a gracious God. Having done so, he took up his ax, and found a few hairs upon its edge. He turned to the log he had been splitting, and there was a single curl of his boy's hair, sharply cut through and laid upon the wood. How great the escape! It was as if an angel had turned aside the edge at the moment it was descending on my head.

"That lock he kept all his days as a memorial of God's care and love. That lock he left me on his death-bed. I keep it with care. It tells me of my father's God and mine. It rebukes unbelief and alarm. It bids me trust him forever. I have had many tokens of fatherly love in my three-score years and ten, but somehow this speaks most to my heart. It is the oldest and perhaps the most striking. It used to speak to my father's heart; it now speaks to mine."

Was not this an instance of delivering mercy on the part of our God? And this God is the same kind Being who gave you life, and has watched over and cared for you until now.

LAUGHING CHILDREN.

Give me the boy or the girl who smiles as soon as the first rays of the morning sun glance in through the window, gay, happy, and kind. Such a boy will be fit to "make up" into a man—at least when contrasted with a sullen, morose, "crabbed" fellow, who snaps and snarls like a surly cur, or growls and grunts like an untamed hyena, from the moment he opens his red and angry eyes till he is "comforted" by his breakfast. Such a girl, other things being favorable, will be good material to aid in gladdening some comfortable home, or to refine, civilize, tame, and humanize a rude brother, making himself gentle, affectionate and lovable. It is a feast to even look at such a joy-inspiring girl, such a woman-bud, and see the smiles flowing, so to speak, from her parted lips, displaying a set of clean, well-brushed teeth, looking almost the personification of beauty and goodness, singing, and as merry as the birds, the wide-awake birds, that commenced their morning concert long before the lazy boys dreamed that the sun was approaching and about to pour a whole flood of joy-inspiring light and warmth upon the earth. Such a girl is like a gentle shower to the parched earth, bestowing kind words, sweet smiles, and acts of mercy to all around her—the joy, and light of the household.
Family Visitor.

BE GENTLE WITH THEM.

Be ever gentle with the children God has given you. Watch over them constantly. Reprove them earnestly, but not in anger. In the forcible language of Scripture, "Be ye not bitter against them." "Yes, they are good boys," I once heard a kind father say, "I talk to them very much, but do not like to beat my children—the world will beat them." It was a beautiful thought. Yes, there is not one child in the circle around the table, healthy and happy as they look now, on whose head, if long enough spared, the storm will not beat. Adversity may wither them, sickness may fade, a cold world may frown on them. But amidst all, let memory carry them back to a home where kindness reigned, where the mother's reproving eye was moistened with a tear, and the father frowned more in sorrow than in anger.

HOME PROVERBS.

Proverbs intrude when least expected. They offer unasked advice, be it welcome or unwelcome. They will take no denial; they will be heard, and not seldom their unblushing effrontery has turned the scale. How often have the unwary footsteps of one who fancied himself or herself in love been checked by the solemn, deliberate tone of the old proverb: "Marry in haste and repent at leisure."

And so, I apprehend, it was a forethoughtful fatherly love which gave us those divinely inspired proverbs that lay bare the miseries of ill-assorted wedlock. "It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop than with a brawling woman in a wide house;" or, again, "A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike;" or, again, "As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman that is without discretion;" or, again, "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband; but she that maketh ashamed is a rottenness in his bones."

If some minds, however, need caution, others need stimulus; and proverbs are equally ready with the rein or the spur. My private conviction is, that many a man would have lunged back and lost his prize if it had not been for the old homely saying: "Faint heart never won fair lady." Or,

"If ye will not when ye may,
When ye will ye shall have nay."

Or, "By the street of 'By-and-By' one arrives at the house of 'Never.'"

A most beautiful proverb comes to us, as so many of our richest thoughts come, from that family in which all the families of the earth are blessed: "Marriages are made in heaven." Archbishop Trench is mistaken in claiming this saying as a native of England.

It really comes, however, neither from heathendom nor Christendom; but from the Jewish Talmud. "The Holy One, blessed be He, sits in heaven and makes marriages;" and it is thus the echo of the inspired words the Rabbis know so well: "A prudent wife is from the Lord."
—*Rev. E. H. Bickersteth, in "Christian Weekly."*

SOWING AND REAPING.

A Christian gentleman was staying a few days with a farmer, who though a man of sound sense and many amiable traits, was a neglecter of religion, and known to be both passionate and profane. He was an excellent farmer, priding himself not a little on the fine appearance and thorough culture of his farm, and evidently was pleased with his guest, who was a man of winning manners and extensive information.

One day, as the gentleman walked out where the farmer was scattering his seed broadcast in the field, he inquired—

"What are you sowing, Mr. H—?"

"Wheat," was the answer.

"And what do you expect to reap from it?"

"Why, wheat of course," said the farmer.

At the close of the day, as all were gathered in the family circle, some little thing provoked the farmer, and at once he flew into a violent passion, and forgetting in his excitement the presence of his guest, swore most profanely.

The latter, who was sitting next him, at once, and in a low and serious tone, said, "And what are you sowing now?"

The farmer seemed startled. A new meaning at once flashed on him from the question of the morning. "What!" he said, in a subdued and thoughtful tone, "do you take such serious views of life as that, such serious views of every mood and word and action?"

Yes," was the reply; "for every mood helps to form the permanent temper; and for every word we must give account, and every act but aids to form a habit, and habits are to the soul what the views and arteries are to the body, the courses in which it moves, and will move forever. By all these little things we are forming character, and that character will go with us to eternity, and according to it will be our destiny forever."

It was a new and startling view to the farmer, who though sensible and thoughtful on most matters, had given little thought to the subject of religion. "WHATSOEVER A MAN SOWETH, THAT SHALL HE ALSO REAP."
—*Am. Messenger.*

The London *Christian World* says:—"A number of cases continue to be chronicled of the clergy of the Established Church engaging in the grossest ritualism without check from any quarter. It is generally remarked that the ritualistic practices are becoming more marked."

The ostrich (feathered giant of South-east Africa) that used to roam the desert in freedom and solitary grandeur has been reduced by Christian civilization to the ignoble position of a baryard fowl. At the Cape Colony it has become a domesticated fowl, and is forced to submit thrice a year to the disgrace of being plucked.