

The Rona Lighthouse.

A woman stood at a cottage door—
A crofter's cottage and mean and small;
But her heart was rich, if her home was poor,
For her sons were kindly and strong
and tall,
And her own good man was as brave and true
And handsome as even a king could be,
And she did not envy the queen; for who
Could be better cared for and loved
than she?

The wee green island was all their own
(While they paid to the factor the
laird's fair rent);
Little it bore but a crop of stone,
Yet the Rona people were well content.
They had a sheep or two on the heights,
And a few oats grew in a sheltered
place;
And they had at sunset such glorious
lights,
That it seemed heaven came to their
little space.

They gathered at need, in their own
Scotch right,
The bountiful harvest that grew in the
seas;
And they worked in the day and rested
at night,
Thankful, contented, and quite at ease.
So the woman stood at the door, with
eyes
That scanned the sea for the little boat;
Since all that she had in the world to
prize,
Her brave, bonnie laddies, were there
afloat.

The dark came rapidly down that night—
A deep, thick darkness without a ray;
There is almost always a gleam of light
On the sea, but then it had passed
away.

"They are very late," the woman said,
"And in the mitch the water is rough;
But they're in no danger"—she raised
her head—
"My men are trusty and safe enough."

She lighted no candle, for there, within,
Was nothing to do, and naught to see;
She steadied herself, and would not begin
At first to yield to anxiety.
And the hours went by as she waited
there,
But her heart grew heavy with dread
at last,
And she shivered with fear, as she cried
in prayer,
"O God, let the terrible night be past!"

The morning broke on the sullen sea,
And over the cliffs the woman peered,
And round the island in haste went she,
Till at last she saw the thing that she
feared;
For there on the rugged rocks she found,
Cold and lifeless, her dearest ones,
Baffled by darkness, wrecked and
drowned—
Her noble husband, her bonnie sons!

And, oh, the pang of the vain regret,
The deepest trouble, the worst to bear!
She saw that they might have been living
yet,
If only a light had been burning there.
They had sought in the dark for the
landing-place,
But no gleam had shone for their
anxious gaze;
Ah, weeping widow, with covered face,
It is this that will haunt your nights
and days!

But out of the sorrow one blessing arose;
She would do for others, though stran-
gers they,
That which she ought to have done for
those,
Her best and dearest, passed away.
So ever after when gloaming came,
In her upper window there shone a
light;
And many a man's wife blessed the flame
That feebly gleamed on the sea at
night.

"I do my best, but the light is small;
Oh, for a beacon that could not fail!"
So the eager woman spoke to all,
In the earnest tones that must prevail.
Soon a great light shone o'er the western
sea,
Tended ever with loving care,

And the lighthouse-keeper was none but
she
Who had lived and loved and suffered
there.

Alas, for the good that we might have
done,
For lamps unlighted, and helps forgot!
Yet peace and pardon and hope are won
If we lighten the gloom of another's
lot.
Let us throw some gleam on the troubled
sea;
Let us save our brothers some pang of
pain;
For if their journey may lighted be,
We shall not have suffered and prayed
in vain.

TWO PICTURES.

It was a warm summer morning, and
Christy's window was open as usual, but
her outlook was an inlook, for that was
the view she liked best as she sat sewing
day after day. She was so fortunate as
to have a choice of views, which was a
luxury unknown to most of the dwellers
in the crowded old tenement, where no
view at all—unless looking upon a solid
brick wall could be called a view—was
the rule. But the upper corner room,
occupied by Christy and her sister
Martha, had two windows; one looking
out on a side street that led from a wide
thoroughfare to the poorer parts of the
city, the other opening on a narrow
alley. This last was Christy's favourite;
for though she seldom cared to look
down into the narrow passage with its
heaps of rubbish, she could look directly
across it into a window of the great
building which fronted on a handsome
street—the window of a studio.

What a world of wonder and beauty
that room was to Christy! It was so
well lighted that she could see far into
it and catch the gleam of white marbles
and rich bronzes. She had glimpses,
too, of pictures—pictures everywhere;
and there were gorgeous bits of colouring
in draperies and old costumes. She
could occasionally see the visitors that
came to look and admire, and, best of
all, because nearest and clearest, she
could see the artist at his work.

If he had ever looked over at the old
building across the alley, which Christy
thought very improbable, since he had
so many delightful directions in which
to look, he would only have seen a pale
girl sitting at one of its highest windows,
and stitching busily day after day. He
would not even have seen the crutch be-
side her chair, which told why Martha
had to do all the going out, and why
Christy was so often alone. He would
never have guessed that his rooms made
the chief pleasure of his unknown neigh-
bour's life.

To-day there had come into it some-
thing so new and absorbing that for
once Christy's hands dropped idly in her
lap. A young girl was posing for a
picture, and she was placed where the
little seamstress could see her plainly.
A girl with fair, flowerlike face, she was,
dressed in a quaint soft robe of white
that clung about her slender figure, and
bearing in her arms a weight of blossoms,
as if she were but just returned from a
ramble.

"As if she had been where such beau-
tiful things grow. O, how lovely!" ex-
claimed Christy. "And somebody is
going to have a picture of her just that
way to keep always."

Sights and sounds of a nearer world
broke often upon Christy's fairyland.
The wailing of Mrs. Murphy's twins came
with painful clearness and frequency
from a lower room, and the maternal
tenderness with which Mrs. O'Connell
assured her Patsy that he was the "tor-
ment" of her life, and would "come to
the galluses yet," was heard all over the
tenement many times daily. Poor
Martha, too, often came home weary and
discouraged because of careless employ-
ers who calmly asked her to "call
again," instead of paying for finished
work, or unreasonable ones who wanted
marvels of stitching accomplished in
impossible fragments of time. And
there were sober councils when Martha,
with forehead drawn into anxious lines,
and Christy, with pale face paler than
usual, tried to plan how their slender
purse could be made to meet the de-
mands of the landlord and the baker.

But Christy tried to be hopeful, and
she was always helpful. She had com-
forting words for Martha, and the table,
however scant its provisions, was always
neatly spread when the tired workwoman
came home. In the safe shelter of that
upper room the twins were left when
their mother went to carry home wash-
ings. Mrs. O'Connell came there with
her lamentations, and even Patsy
sought it as an asylum from merited
wraith, while many of the other tenants
knew it as a refuge or a resting-place
from their various ills. Altogether, there
was little time for dreaming in Christy's
life, and her patient hands took up their
work again after a few ecstatic minutes,
but her eyes wandered constantly to the
girl who lived in a world so different
from her own.

"To have such beautiful things around
her all the time; to live, really live in
a house where she can see all the pic-
tures and flowers she wants, what would
it be like?" mused Christy. "But I
believe that I'd care most of all about
being made into a picture. How strange
and lovely that would seem! to be made
into a picture that would last and give
pleasure to somebody always."

An uneven step was heard on the
creaking stairs, a step that Christy knew
only too well, for many a peaceful hour
had it disturbed. Her face clouded a
little at its coming just now, but this
would be Granny Flannigan's last visit,
and she must let her enjoy it.

"Yis, indade, child, an' we're off; for
thim that has nothin' to move takes little
time for the movin'," said the old wo-
man disconsolately. "Tim says that
we'll have a bether place nor this, but
well I know the crayther don't be tellin'
me the thruth. It's little good for him
to be sayin' that things 'll all come
straight whin his own steps is that crook-
ed wid drink that he nades a whole
street to walk in. I'm sorry to be
lavin' ye, Christy. Many's the time
ye've helped me wid yer soft ways an'
kind heart—the salnts bless ye! An'
wheriver we goes, I'll always be seein'
ye here so nate and comfortable like, wid
yer face smilin' for iverybody—that's
how I'll be seein' ye always."

Granny's apron was thrown over her
face as she took her departure, and
Christy's eyes were moist with sympathy.
But there was a light shining through
the tears. "Why, I have made a pic-
ture!" she said. "Granny Flannigan
will carry one away with her. I believe
that God is lettin' me make pictures all
the time."

Ah, little Christy! That is what
we all are doing day by day—making
pictures of ourselves in other lives; to
brighten or darken them, to help or to
hinder. And a day is coming when all
these hidden pictures shall be unveiled.
—Kate W. Hamilton, in Forward.

HEATHEN INDIANS.

The Rev. J. E. Betts tells the follow-
ing pathetic story:

"Heathen Indians have a superstition
that old people passing away of certain
diseases do not really die, but only seem
to; that they pass through some strange
metamorphosis in which the heart be-
comes ice, all human sympathy has gone
forever, and that then they become
demons, and will eat nothing but human
flesh. The only preventive measures
are to kill the person who is approaching
such a direful state, and burn the body.

"Some eight or nine years before the
time of my visit to Beren's River, and
before that band of Indians had become
Christianized, such an event had trans-
pired on that same reserve. An old In-
dian woman was approaching her end.
She believed that she would become a
demon, and told her sons so. The three
boys—the youngest of whom was about
twelve or fourteen years of age—held a
consultation on the matter, and, acting
on their convictions of right, resolved to
kill their mother. It fell to the lot of
the youngest boy to do the deed. He
shot her, through a hole in the tent in
which she was lying, and the three pro-
ceeded to burn the body.

"Shortly after this, our missionaries
visited this reserve, and the light of the
Gospel shone upon their understandings
and their hearts. The boy who fired
the fatal shot, when he came to know

the more excellent way, literally died of
grief; one of the others seemed almost
hopelessly melancholy, and the third,
who is suffering from consumption, stood
before us in the social service on Sun-
day, and, with big tears running down
his face, told of his sure and certain
hope of heaven when this life is over.
The missionary told me that, a few Sab-
baths before, in class meeting, this poor
man referred to his deed, for which he
seems unable ever to forgive himself,
and, weeping aloud, he threw up his
hands and looked towards heaven, and
said: 'You all know that I am the big-
gest sinner on this reserve, but I do be-
lieve that God, for Christ's sake, has for-
given my sins, and that I shall yet be
saved in heaven.' Thank God for par-
doning mercy!"

BOOKS AND READING.

Whenever I see a boy or girl absorbed
in reading, two pictures are recalled,
making an afternoon call at a friend's
house, and while seated in the drawing-
room, the lady with whom I was in con-
versation said to her daughter, a young
lady of sixteen: "My daughter, will you
please to put down that book; I have
not been able to examine its contents
yet." I noticed that the book was im-
mediately laid aside without a question.
It was a delightful family, the members
of which have all turned out well.

It will take a little time and pains to
advise and counsel in the matter of the
reading of the young people of the house-
hold, and it will take perhaps not a little
self-surrender and patience to enable any
young person with an ordinary amount
of self-confidence and personal curiosity
to accept the judgment of another as to
personal reading.

My other recollection is not so pleas-
ing. Being the guest for the night in a
Christian family, I was quartered, be-
cause of the unusual number of guests,
in a room belonging to one of the boys.

I remember well the terrible disap-
pointment, and the sudden shattering of
my conception of the young fellow's
character when I found, hidden under
his pillow, one of the most abominable
copies of an illustrated criminal weekly.
Somehow or other I always dread to
hear the name of the young man men-
tioned, lest the harvest from that sowing
should appear.

If a man is known by the company he
keeps, surely it is equally true that he
is known by the books he reads.

Read only the best books. Life is too
short and time is too precious to read
trashy books. There is so much worth
reading that it is a sin to spend time in
reading many of the paper-covered
stories. This is one of the sins to be
regretted and repented of in after life,
although it may not seem a very serious
matter now.—Sunday-school Classmate.

A POST OFFICE IN 600 B.C.

The invention of the post office, says
Harper's Young People, is ascribed to
Cyrus, King of Persia, who lived about
600 B.C.

Cyrus required all of his governors of
provinces to write to him exact accounts
of everything that occurred in their
several districts and armies.

The Persian Empire was of vast ex-
tent, and some means had to be provided
to render that correspondence sure and
expeditious. Cyprus therefore caused
post offices to be built and messengers
appointed in every province. He found
how far a good horse, with an experi-
enced rider, could travel in a day with-
out being hurt, and then had stables
built in proportion, at equal distances
from each other. At each of these
places he also appointed postmasters,
whose duty it was to receive the letters
from the couriers as they arrived and
give them to others, and to give them
fresh horses in exchange for those that
had performed their part of the journey.
Thus the post went continually, night
and day, rain or snow, heat or cold; and
Cyrus received speedy news of all oc-
currences, and sent back whatever orders
he considered necessary.

Darius, the last king of the ancient
Persians, was superintendent of the
postal service before he came to the
throne.