

MISCELLANY.

THE DEAD CHILD AND THE MOCK-INGBIRD.

The following poem is in no sense a mere fancy. On the contrary, the strange, pathetic incident it commemorates actually occurred, not long ago, in the neighborhood of Jacksonville, Florida.]

Once, in a land of balm and flowers,  
Of rich fruit-laden trees,  
Where the wild wreaths from jasmine bowers  
Trail o'er Floridian seas,

We marked our Jeannie's footsteps run  
Athwart the twinkling glade,  
She seemed a Hebe in the sun,  
A Dryad in the shade.

And all day long her winsome song,  
Her robos and soft trills,  
Would wave-like flow, or silvery low  
Die down the whispering rills.

One morn amidst the foliage dim  
A dark gray plinon stirs;  
And hark! along the vine-clad limb  
What strange voice blonds with hers?

It blonds with hers, which soon is stilled—  
Braver the mock-bird's note  
Than the strains that ever filled  
The queenliest human throat!

As Jeannie heard, she loved the bird,  
And sought thenceforth to share  
With her new favorite, dawn by dawn,  
Her daintiest morning cheer.

But ah! a blight beyond our ken,  
From some far feverous wild,  
Brought that dark shadow feared of men  
Across the fated child.

It chilled her drooping curls of brown,  
It dimmed her violet eyes,  
And like an awful cloud swept down  
From vague, mysterious skies.

At last one dawn Jeannie lay  
All pulseless, pale, forlorn;  
The sole sweet breath on lips of death  
The fluttering breath of morn,

When just beyond the o'er-curtained room  
(How tender, yet how strong!)  
It rang through the misty morning gloom  
The mock-bird's sudden song.

Dear Christ! those notes of golden peal  
Seem caught from heavenly spheres,  
Yet through their marvellous cadence steal  
Tones soft as chastened tears.

Is it an angel's voice that throats  
Within the brown bird's breast,  
Whose rhythmic magic soars or sobs  
Above our darling's breast.

The fancy passed—but came once more  
When, stolen from Jeannie's bed,  
That lay along the porchway floor  
I found our minstrel—dead!

The fire of that transcendent strain  
His life-chords burned apart,  
And merged in sorrow's earthier pain,  
It broke the glad heart.

Maiden and bird!—the self-same grave  
Their wedded dust shall keep,  
While the long low Floridian wave  
Moans round their place of sleep.

Paul H. Hayne, in Harper's Magazine  
June.

CUKIN OF A BAD MEMORY.

Your memory is bad, perhaps, but I can tell you two secrets that will cure the worst memory. One is to read a subject when strongly interested. The other is not only read but think. When you have read a paragraph or a page, stop, close the book and try to remember the ideas on that page, and not only recall them vaguely in your mind, but put them into words and speak them out. Faithfully follow these two rules and you have the golden keys of knowledge. Besides inattentive reading there are other things injurious to memory. One is the habit of skimming over newspapers, items of news, smart remarks, bits of information, political reflections, fashion-notes, all in a confused jumble, never to be thought of again, thus diligently cultivating a habit of careless reading hard to break. Another is the reading of light literature and novels. Nothing is so fatal to reading with profit as the habit of running through story after story, and forgetting them as soon as read. I know a gray-haired woman, a life-long lover of books, who sadly declares that her mind has been ruined by such reading.—St. Nicholas.

"A PLACE FOR THE OLD FOLKS."

If you would make the aged happy, lead them to feel that there is still a place for them where they can be useful. When you see their powers failing, do not notice it. It is enough for them to feel it without a reminder. Do not humiliate them by doing things after them. Accept their offered services, and do not let them see you taking off the dust their poor eyesight has left undisturbed, or wiping up the liquid their trembling hands have spilled, rather let the dust remain, and the liquid stain the carpet than rob them of their self respect by seeing you cover their deficiencies. You may give them the best room in the house, you may garnish it with pictures and flowers, you may yield them the best seat in your church-pew, the easiest chair in your parlor, the highest seat of honor at your table; but if you lead, or leave them to feel that they have passed their usefulness, you plant a thorn in their bosom that will rankle there while life lasts. If they are capable of doing nothing but preparing your kindlings, or darning your stockings, indulge them in those things, but never let them feel that it is because they can do nothing else; rather that they do this so well.

Do not ignore their taste and judgment. It may be in their earlier days, and in the circle where they moved, that they were as much sought and honored as you are now; and until you arrive at the place, you can imagine your feeling should you be considered entirely void of these qualities, be regarded as essential to no one, and your opinions unsought, or discarded if given. They may have been active and successful in the training of children and youth in the way they should go; and will they not feel it keenly, if no attempt is made to draw from this rich experience?

Indulge them as far as possible in their old habits. The various forms of society in which they were educated may be as dear to them as yours are now to you; and can they see them slighted or disowned without a pang? If they relish their meals better by turning their tea into the saucer, having their butter on the same plate with their food, or eating with both knife and fork, do not in word or deed imply to them that the custom of their days are obnoxious in good society; and they are slipping down from respectability as they descend the hill-side of life. Always bear in mind that the custom of which you are now so tenacious may be equally repugnant to the next generation.

In this connection I would say, do not notice the pronunciation of the aged. They speak as they were taught, and yours may be just as uncourtly to the generation following. I was once taught a lesson on this subject which I never shall forget while memory holds its sway. I was dining, when a father brought his son to take charge of a literary institution. He was intelligent, but had not received the earlier advantages which he had labored hard to procure for his son; and his language was quite a contrast to that of the cultivated youth. But the attention he gave to his father's quaint though wise remarks, placed him on a higher pinnacle in my mind than he was ever placed by his world-wide reputation as a scholar and writer.—Congregationalist.

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THE SPEED OF THE WING.

Some Interesting Facts About the Flights of Birds

A writer says: The speed at which some wings are driven is enormous. It is occasionally so great as to cause the pinions to emit a drumming sound. To this source the buzz of the fly, the drone of the bee and the boom of the beetle are to be referred. When a grouse, partridge, or pheasant suddenly springs into the air, the sound produced by the whirring of its wings greatly resembles that produced by the contact of steel with the rapidly-revolving stone of the knife-grinder.

It has been estimated that the common fly moves its wings 330 times per second—i. e., 19,800 times per minute—and the butterfly moves its wings nine times per second, or 540 times per minute. These movements represent an incredibly high speed even at the roots of the wings; but the speed is enormously increased at the tips of the wings, from the facts that the tips rotate upon the roots as centres. In reality, and as has been already indicated, the speed of the tips of the wings increase in proportion as the tips are removed from the axes of rotation, and in proportion as the wings are long. This is explained on a principle well understood in mechanics.

If a rod or wing hinged at one point, be made to vibrate, the free end of the rod or wing always passes through a much greater space in a given time than the part nearer the root of the wing. The progressive increase in the speed of the wing, in proportion as the wings become larger, explain why the wings of bats and birds are not driven at the extravagant speed of insect wings, and how the large and long wings of bats and birds are driven more leisurely than the small and short wings of large and small bats and birds.

That the wing is driven more slowly in the proportion to its length is proved by experiment and by observing the flight of large and small birds of the same genus. Thus large gulls flap their wings much more slowly than small gulls, the configuration and relative size of wings to the body being the same in both. This is a hopeful feature in the construction of flying machines, as there can be no doubt that comparatively slow movement will suffice for driving the long, powerful wings required to elevate and propel flying machines.

The speed of the wing is in part regulated by the amplitude of the wing. Thus if the wing be broad as well as long, the beats are necessarily reduced in frequency. This is especially true of the heron, which is one of the most picturesque and at the same time one of the slowest birds we have. I have timed the heron on several occasions, and find that in an ordinary flight its wings make exactly sixty up and sixty down strokes—i. e., 120 beats per minute.

In the pterodactyl, the great extinct saurian, the wing was enormously elongated, and in this particular instance probably from fifty to sixty beats of the wing per minute sufficed for flight. Fifty or sixty pulsations of the wing per minute do not involve much wear and tear of the working parts, and I am strongly of the opinion that artificial flight, if once achieved, will become a comparatively safe means of locomotion, as far as the machinery required is concerned.

How does the little busy bee improve the shining hour,  
How does the drunkard's nose build up into a jolly tower,  
How is it Spring Blossom is such a certain cure;  
For Constipation, Billiousness, and Woes that we endure. 11405904

THE HABIT OF THRIFT.

The habits of thrift are defined by the London Globe as facts of self-denial for the sake of some objects in the future, and it is just such acts as these which people in all cities find it extremely difficult to practice. It is a matter to a very great extent depending on natural disposition which varies just as much in one class as in another. There are some who by nature are endowed with the accumulative propensity of the squirrel, and bee and the ant. They find a keen and absorbing pleasure in hoarding what they get; not, perhaps, for its own sake, but as a measure of successful action, and as a kind of reserve of power which they have at command should they choose to exert it. Others seem to have nothing of this in their composition. The power that money gives seems to them dormant and useless until it is put to action. They are sanguine, and are gay and light-hearted in the present; whereas the acquisitive individual will usually be found apprehensive of the coming time, and very apt to meet his troubles half-way. Those two types of character are as marked and distinct as any two possibly can be, and the extreme of each can scarcely be considered amenable to modifying influences to any extent. Moreover, they are confined not to one class but are found in all. Education is commonly regarded as the proper cure for thriftless habits, and to a certain extent, no doubt, it is. But education cannot eradicate the constituent traits of individual character. The accumulative and foreboding will always remain more or less so, and the sanguine and free-handed will always feel the passing day to be the one really important point of time. Moreover, although education implies self-restraint and thoughtfulness, it, of course, has a tendency to expand and view and to create desires which may or may not be of a simple and inexpensive kind. The habit of self-restraint is the one point to which education must tend if it is to develop thrift; and looking around on society generally it is difficult sometimes to discern the existence of this control of individual proclivities in one class more than another, though the nature and direction of those proclivities may vary considerably.

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ELDER Traverser, who lately died in Buffalo, was once the most noted camp-meeting leader in eastern New York. Of splendid physique he made short work of interrupters. Once a notorious rough, "Chicago Bob," interrupted the congregation while singing, by crowing. "Sit down Robert," said Traverser. "Chicago Bob sits down for no one," growled the bully; "sit down Robert," once more said the elder. Robert's reply was a movement to throw off his coat. One under the ear came deftly from the elder, followed by another, and another, and still another, and Bob retired unconscious. Next day he appeared among the repentant sinners. "Are you in earnest, Robert?" mildly inquired the elder. "I am." "Really seeking for faith." "You bet. If faith helps a man to get his work in as quickly as you did yesterday I am bound to have it if I sell my hat. He crowed no more.