

## Choice Literature.

### MUSIC.

The whistling wind in some stray nook,  
The rustling of the forest leaves,  
The sound of ocean when it heaves,  
The murmur of the babbling brook:

The thrilling song of a lark on poise,  
The warble of some mating bird,  
Were the first measures man e'er heard  
Save the soft music of his voice;

Till from a quaint, sea-echoing shell  
Some love-lorn god in wandering found  
And idly strung burst forth the sound  
That ravished men and gods as well.

Since then the tale to tell were long,  
From savage couch to sweetest lute,  
From strident gourd to organ-note,  
And music's triumphs wed with song.

—Alex. F. Chamberlain in *The Week*.

### THE MORAL EFFECT OF PRETTY GOWNS.

I have chosen the adjective "pretty" rather than "elegant," "costly," or even "tasteful," because "pretty" is exactly what I mean. The other day, at sunset, I was on my way home, after hours of absence, and with the pressure of desire to be beside my own hearth, felt little inclined to stop anywhere. But, as I passed a neighbour's, a girl I know tapped on the window, and then ran to the door, throwing it open, so that the light in the hall streamed out on the shadowy street.

"Come in, dear," cried my girl friend, coaxingly, "I have something to show you."

So I went in, and with real interest examined the lovely water-colour, framed in carved white-wood and gold-leaf, which Fanny's friend, the young artist who is studying at the League in New York, had sent her for a birthday present. As I said, I know, Fanny, who is one of my girls, and I know her John, and they both occupy a warm corner in my heart. One of these days they are to be married, and I think they will be very happy, so congenial are their tastes, and so generous are their sympathies.

What has all this to do with the moral effect of a pretty gown? More than you imagine.

Fanny's mother died five years ago, and Fanny has been mother, as well as sister to three brothers, bright, sturdy little fellows, rapidly shooting up to tall, aggressive adolescence. Fanny has had a great deal to do, far too much for one so young, if Providence had not ordained it as her duty, and some time ago she began to feel that she had no time to spend on her dress.

"It is as much as I can do," she told me, "to slip into a wrapper in the morning, and stay in it all day. I haven't time to put house dresses on, much less to make them, and then John never gets here before nine o'clock. When I expect him I make a toilette on purpose."

Meanwhile, the boys were growing unmanageable. They were bright, loving fellows, but the street was growing increasingly attractive to them. Of their father, a lawyer, absorbed in his profession, and a recluse in his library when at home, they saw little. It depended on Fanny to tide her brothers over the critical time when boyhood's bark slips over the bar into the open sea of manhood.

Fanny and I put our heads together, and I urged upon her the trial of personal charm as a home missionary effort. I begged her to discard her wrappers. They are garments fit only for one's dressing-room or for an invalid's leisure. "Let your brothers see you simply but prettily dressed every day, looking bright, and neat, and sweet, with little touches of adornment about your costume, and observe whether or not the effect will not be for good."

The effect was at once visible in the line of a certain toning-up of the whole house. It is not for nothing that the soldier in service is required to keep his uniform and accoutrements in perfect repair and in shining cleanliness. A pro-

found truth lies under the strict requirements of military discipline, for he who is negligent of the less, will inevitably slur the greater.

Fanny's simple gray cashmere, with its pink satin bows, made her more careful that her table should be attractively appointed, as well as generously provided with viands, it made her intolerant of dust in the parlor, it sent her on a tour of inspection to the boys' rooms. She found, she could not explain how, that she had time for everything, time to go walking with her brothers, time to talk with them over school affairs, and over the matches and games in which they took delight. The boys realized that they counted for a good deal in their sister's eyes, that she thought it worth while to dress for them, and they were, therefore, on their best behaviour.

You can fill out the story for yourselves. Perhaps, some of you are at work in Sabbath schools, and working girls' clubs, and young people's reading-rooms. Do not make the mistake of supposing that there is any merit in going into these benevolent works in a dowdy gown, or an unbecoming hat. Try the effect of a pretty toilette; you will discover it to have far-reaching influence on the side of good morals.—Mrs. M. E. Sangster, in *The Congregationalist*.

### SILENCE IS GOLDEN.

Silence is golden sometimes. Especially it is golden when you are conscious of irritated nerves, and your temper is in the condition which invites the last feather, and rejoices to be broken under its weight. The most amiable disposed people have their days of darkness; their moods when nothing looks bright; their seasons of inconsistency, when they astonish their friends by their success in the art of being disagreeable.

If you and I are sadly aware that we are not in an angelic temper, that we are fretted by petty things, and ready to quarrel with our nearest and dearest, in danger of saying sharp or bitter things, prompted by to-day's misery, which tomorrow we shall repent of in sackcloth and ashes, there is one safeguard within our easy reach.

Feel as we may, we can repress speech. Our lips are our own, we may lock their gateway, if we choose, to whatever is unkind, or censorious, or unworthy of our better selves. Nobody compels us to find fault audibly. Nobody urges us to scold or complain. If we avail ourselves of the escape-valve of hasty speech, we shall certainly suffer pangs of regret by and by, besides inflicting present pain on children and servants, who cannot answer back when we chide; on brothers and husbands who are too patient or too proud to be resentful; or, perhaps, on some dear, aged heart, which has had its full of sorrow, and does not need our adding a drop to the brimming cup.

Silence is golden when we are tempted to unkind gossip. Somebody's name is mentioned, and at once recalls to the mind an incident, a forgotten story, something which ought to be buried in oblivion's deepest depths. Do not yield for an instant to that suggestion of the Evil One which bids you revive what ought to be kept buried in the grave where it has found retreat. The impulse to speech on such occasions, is unworthy a Christian.

Silence is not golden when an absent one suffers defamation, when it is the badge of cowardice, or when one's Christian belief should be asserted. To sit with closed lips, when all that is most precious to heart and life is assailed by the tongue of the scorner, is far from noble—it is following the Lord afar off, and is next door to denying Him altogether.

Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I myself have founded empires; but upon what do these creations of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded His empire on love; and to this very day millions would die for Him.—Napoleon I.

### THE VALUE OF STORIES.

A gentleman who acted as a private secretary and amanuensis for Prescott, the historian, gives some extremely interesting particulars in relation to the daily habits of that remarkable man. He was as regular in his movements as clock-work, and among his invariable habits, was that of listening every day of his life, for the space of an hour, to some tale or story, read to him by his wife or his secretary. He needed this kind of mental refreshment as a relief from his grave study of the matter-of-fact histories in which he worked, as much as he needed sleep over exercise in the open air. And what he required every mind requires. Stories, therefore, are as necessary to the preservation and improvement of the human intellect, as any other kind of literary exercise. It is only the thoughtless and unphilosophical, who speak of stories with contempt. They are to the sober realities of earth, what flowers are in the vegetable world. Roses and violets are as important in the economy of the universe, as are oaks and cedars. The storywriter, therefore, is not to be held in less esteem than the author of ponderous volumes of history, or dissertations on philosophy and political economy. Each has its sphere, and is entitled to respect according to the degree of ability with which he fulfils the duty which his talents qualify him to discharge.

### A TRUE STORY.

In the latter part of last century, a girl in England became a kitchen maid in a farmhouse. She had many styles of work, and much hard work. Time rolled on, and she married the son of a weaver of Halifax. They were industrious. They saved money enough after a time to build them a home. On the morning of the day when they were to enter that home, the young wife rose at four o'clock, entered the front yard, knelt down, consecrated the place to God, and there made the solemn vow: "O Lord, if Thou wilt bless me in this place, the poor shall have a share of it."

Time rolled on, and fortune rolled. Children grew up around them, and they became prosperous; one, a member of Parliament, in a public place declared that his success came from that prayer of his mother in the door-yard. All of them were wealthy—four thousand hands in their factories. They built dwelling houses for labourers at cheap rents, and when they were invalided, and could not pay, they had the houses for nothing. One of these sons went to America, admired the parks, went back, bought land and opened a great public park, and made it a present to the City of Halifax, England. They endowed an orphanage, and they endowed two almshouses. All England has heard of the generosity and good works of the Crossleys.

Moral: Consecrate to God your small means and humble surroundings, and you will have larger means and grander surroundings.—*London Presbyterian*.

### PUNISHING A CHILD.

I will not say that the punishment of children can be dispensed with in every instance, writes Edward W. Bok, in the *July Ladies' Home Journal*. No possible rule can apply to all cases, since every instance must be a law unto itself. At the same time, striking a child should be employed only as the very last resort whereas now it is used in all too many cases as a first. Kindness and firmness, when brought together, form the best basis for a child's education. Mothers should learn to control hasty actions; fathers must allow reason to have fuller play. The process may seem a little more tedious, but the result, when reached, will be worth it all. Instantaneous correction may seem to be achieved by punishment, but the effect is not lasting. Girls are shamed by it, boys grow

resentful under it. We need only apply the lessons that come to us in after life to this question to reach the best solution. Kindness draws us all closer; firmness of character cements lifelong friendships; sympathy wins us all. And as these elements appeal to us as we have matured, so do they, and even more strongly, appeal to the more responsive nature of a child. A boy should never find weakness in him to whom he looks for strength. A girl should never find anger where she has a right to find mercy. And as for our little misdoings in childhood, we sought mercy and pardon, let our children come to us, and because we are parents find us other than we ourselves sought and hoped to find. As we wished should be done unto us at one time in our lives, so let us now do unto others, that they, in turn, may likewise do unto those who follow us. A boy admires firmness in his father, just as much as we business men admire the same quality in each other. His admiration of firmness in his father may not be based upon judgment, but by his very instinct he respects it. A boy's respect for his father is gained in proportion as he knows that his yes means yes, and his no means no. Firmness of character, and unwavering discipline will do more for a boy than all the punishments a father can inflict upon him. The one develops respect; the other develops passion and resentment.

### THE TRAIL OF THE SERPENT.

The other day I transformed a savage old male rhesus macacus, which was tearing at his cage to get at me, with crimson face and gnashing canines, into a limp and pallid coward by the exhibition of a Japanese toy snake which I had in my pocket. Practical naturalists, who have to do with strong and fierce monkeys, occasionally resort to a similar stratagem in order to intimidate them. Mr. Rudyard Kipling introduces this fact into one of his tales, and makes the caretaker of an orang-outan, on board ship, gently hiss like a serpent whenever his charge became too obstreperous. I have tried the same experiment with apes of various kinds, and invariably with immediate results. The suddenly arrested movements and startled, timorous look at once betrayed how much the mind of the beast was agitated by that uncanny sound. Is it not strange that throughout all nature, from the desolate swamp to the opera-house radiant with electric light, a hiss is an intimation of hostile intent? And that it invariably sends a flutter of apprehension through the nerves of the hearer? An actor who was great in the part of the ultra-villain in melodrama said that he never heard the hisses with which the gallery applauded his quasi-turpitude, without an uncomfortable momentary shudder, although he well knew that the sound was meant as an expression of the most sincere appreciation of his talents. Does not the novelist make his arch-reprobate hiss his curses when his demonic emotion is too intense for shouting? Is it not possible that political audiences are unconsciously guided by a deep-seated animal instinct when they greet the unpopular orator or sentiment with a storm of sibilant? Of course the speaker or actor knows quite well that the auditorium is not (except metaphorically) a nest of serpents, just as the keeper of the reptiles at the zoological gardens knows that a harmless snake will not kill him when he handles it; but the disconcerting aura comes all the same, and the hiss generally serves its purpose. I have taken pains to let a monkey see that my toy snake was only made of paper, yet the next time it appeared from my pocket he sprang back involuntarily just as at first.—Dr. Louis Robinson, in *North American Review*.

Duties never conflict. God has but one duty at a time for any child of His to perform. If we were doing the one duty God has for us to do at the present moment, we are doing just right. If we are not doing that one duty, we are at fault, no matter how good or how important the work we are doing. And we need have no question as to what is our duty in God's plan for us.—*Sunday School Times*.