

The Family.

THE FIRST MEMORY.

It is my earliest memory;
Behold, by window's sunlight kissed,
Lies, glistening, the golden mist
That hides, forever hid, from me
The fairy land of infancy!

FROM 1789 TO 1889. WONDER-FUL!

Few people, who have not made the matter a subject of study, are aware of the tremendous changes and wonderful progress that have been wrought in this land of ours within the one hundred years whose close we are just celebrating. In 1789 there were no friction matches, nor omnibuses; no railroads, nor steamboats; no telegraphs, nor telephones, no gas nor electric lights, nor stoves, nor coal-fires. The farmer, instead of riding gaily around his grain-fields through it swinging a scythe or sickle, till at sunset his back was well-nigh broken, instead of threshing with a machine he beat the grain out slowly during the long winter months with a flail instead of mounting a double-plough of steel he scratched the soil with a wooden plough. His wife and daughters were the busyest of women in spinning flax and weaving linen, and manufacturing a hundred things that now come to them ready made. The fashionable tailor shop was patronized by the very select few, while the great majority of husbands and sons obtained their clothing from the industrious needle of the wife and mother. The floors—of even the parlours—were sanded, not carpeted. There was no china—except possibly a stray piece—in the cupboard, nor cut glass to reflect light for the eye. The young lady entertained her suitor arrayed not in silk, but in linsy-woolsey, or bright calico. And neither could carry off in triumph the delightful vision of the other in the form of a photograph. Books were like angel's visits—few and far between—and they were read by the aid, not of gas, but of the tallow dip and the pine knot. The rude sundial, in many homes, was the only family clock, and such an article as a watch for \$3 would have been regarded as the eighth wonder of the world. People didn't travel much in those days. If a merchant wanted to go from New York to Boston he rode in a coach from 3 o'clock in the morning until 10 o'clock at night for six successive days. If he had business at Albany he went by a sloop that might get in a calm for a week. It was not till after 1806 that Fulton managed to get the first steam craft up the Hudson, and not till 1825 that George Stephenson had made a rail car capable of beating the three mile per hour canal packet. Piety was not afraid of the cold a century ago, nay, even impenitent sinners were willing to go to church and sit without any kind of fire through a sermon of 15 heads or more. Criminals could hardly get across the line then to enjoy their boodle in the luxuries of Canada. In fact, they were handled rather roughly. The counterfeiter got his ears cropped and was exposed to the jeers of the public in the town pillory besides. A thief was made to sit on the gallows as preliminary to being tied to a whipping post for 39 bloody lashes. A forger got a red-hot brand applied to the palm of his hand. A pilferer would be sold into slavery for six months or two years. A burglar was hanged for his crime. And if a man contracted debts that he could not pay he went to the vilest, filthiest and darkest prison that could be devised, frequently out of some old abandoned mine that was without light or ventilation. A gentleman in these "good old times" didn't lose his character by fighting duels, or gambling, or getting drunk every day, or attending cock fights and similar sports. Andrew Jackson, even so late as his day, could bet in a cock-pit without forfeiting his respectability. Infidelity was common and rampant. "The boys" says Lyman Beecher, "who dressed flax in the barn, read

Tom Paine and believed him." The students of Yale and Harvard were almost to a man professed and aggressive infidels and atheists. At West Point, so late as 1825, there was not one professing Christian among the professors or cadets. It was difficult for a clergyman to get justice from a jury. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in 1789, said: "We perceive with pain and fearful apprehension a general dereliction of religious principle—an abounding infidelity—a dissolution of religious society seems to be threatened. Formality and deadness, not to say hypocrisy, visibly pervade every part of the Church. The profligacy and corruption of public morals have advanced with a progress proportioned to our declension in religion." The churches themselves, it must be confessed, were in a low state. Lotteries were authorized under their aid for endowing Harvard, and Dartmouth, and Union, and Princeton, and Rutgers; nay, for the advancement of religion. The slave trade was in full blast, and the selling of wives and children away from their husbands and parents was common all over the States. But we cannot enumerate further particulars. Independence and freedom had been won, and with these Christianity took a fresh start, and now at the end of a century's amazing progress we may thank God and take courage.—Christian at Work.

THE NEW JAPANESE CONSTITUTION.

THE 11th of February is the anniversary of the birth of the Japanese Emperor, Jimmu Tenno, the founder (in 660 B. C.) of the present reigning dynasty, and it was this anniversary, this year, which the present Emperor chose upon which to proclaim the new Japanese constitution. The unique occasion was marked by brilliant and joyous festivities, and the constitution was proclaimed with great solemnity and ceremony in the presence of a large assemblage of Japanese nobles. "The gardens," says an eye-witness, "were turned, as if by magic, into very fairy-lands of brightness and beauty." The new constitution, thus ushered in with pomp and showy rites, transforms Japan at once from a pure despotism into a parliamentary monarchy after the English model. The Emperor and his successors are established on the throne "for ages eternal," but his powers are very much restricted. He retains a veto upon all laws passed by his Parliament, but all laws must be made by Parliament, and no law can be put into execution until it has been so made. The Emperor, however, in case of emergency, can proclaim a law when Parliament is not sitting; but such a law must be approved by Parliament at its next meeting, if it is to remain in force. The chief command of the army and navy, the appointment of all civil officials, the power to make war or peace, to conclude treaties, to confer titles and to grant pardons and amnesties still remains in the sovereign's hands. Japanese subjects have largely increased rights, which are jealously secured by the new constitution. They are to be free from illegal arrest, trial, or punishment; their houses are not to be entered or searched without due warrant, their letters are to be protected, and they are to enjoy, within reasonable limits, freedom of religion, speech, press, public meeting and association. The two Houses of Parliament are constituted as follows: There are four classes of peers—princes of imperial blood, and princes and marquises of twenty-five years of age and over, nominated by the Emperor, who are life peers, counts, viscounts and barons elected for seven years by the House itself; a certain number named for life by the Emperor for services to the Empire, or eminent capacity; and forty-five members elected for seven years by the people of defined districts. The House of Representatives comprises three hundred members, chosen by ballot for a period of four years. The voters must be twenty-five years of age, must have resided in their district for at least a year, and must be paying taxes not less than fifteen Japanese dollars, besides having paid an income tax for three years. Candidates must be at least thirty years of age. The House may be at any time dissolved, and a new election ordered within five months by the Emperor. The "budget"—a regulation of the taxes, receipts and expenditures—is to be in the hands of Parliament, as is the case in England; but the expenditures of the Emperor's household, and the sums devoted to the army and navy in time of peace, as well as "all expenditures that may have arisen by the effect of law," are not to be interfered with by Parliament. A Privy Council will advise the Emperor on important matters when he seeks their counsel, and the Cabinet consists of ten members, at the head of the great departments, who are responsible to the Emperor and to Parliament. These are the main features of the instrument, which has been long and carefully considered with the object of conferring a large degree of political and civil freedom upon the Japanese.—Youth's Companion.

"SHE KILLED HIM."

CHARLES—was a young, popular, and growing preacher, who died just as he seemed to be entering upon greater usefulness. His wife was a cultured, bright young woman, and hence we looked up in amazement when the good doctor said: "She killed him." "Killed him, doctor? What do you mean?" The old man replied: "He was studious and conscientious. She was critical and ambitious, and wanted her husband to preach the best sermons possible. Hence she criticised their construction and their delivery. She had him read them over and rewrite them. She noticed all the errors and told him, and all the fine things and praised him. She was determined he should be the most finished preacher among the young men. Thus she urged him on to do a little better each time, till, like an over-driven horse, he gave out. She killed him." Of course the papers said it was hard work and nervous prostration, but the wise old doctor said: "She killed him." She would not let him alone, and with wifely skill diverted his mind when he needed rest, but kept him constantly in the excitement of mental effort by the spur of her ambitious love. And he is not the only preacher who has been killed thus. Most ministers need home for sympathy, diversion and rest, where they shall be lifted out of the strain of mental work. If there is any "preach" in a man, God and the congregation will bring it out. The minister's home should be an inner world, free from the excitements of professional life. But many a young man breaks down, killed by the ambition of his wife. We have thought much of the doctor's words, "She killed him," and have come to the conclusion that other men die in the same way. Their wives kill them. The young business man is doing the best he can, but his ambitious wife must live as fashionably as other young people; he desires to gratify her; and hence the worry, excitement, and temptations, until brain, nerves, and will give away. The poor fellow was overworked, but she "killed him." A young mechanic toils hard for humble wages; he is honest and faithful, but is constantly reminded by his young wife how poor they are, and how much better off and how many more comforts other people have; and she doesn't see why they need to be so poor; and thus, day after day and week after week, the hard-working man is told of his small pay and how little they have in the house, until his courage is gone, home is unpleasant, and he goes out to spend his evenings where he is not restrained by his liabilities. And, then, down a wreck. "She killed him." Multitudes of married men are made drunkards by unhappy homes, for unhappy homes make drunkards as truly as drunkards make unhappy homes. Then also in the spiritual life some wives kill their husbands. Multitudes of unchristian men are so constantly thorned by their well-meaning but unwise Christian wives, upon their duty to "come to Christ," that the poor man is on a religious gridiron, and the sound of religion becomes repulsive to him. She constantly reminds him that she "has to live a Christian alone." She has "no help from her husband." And thus she drives away all the tender emotions of his heart. She kills his religious tenderness. Thus it is that ministers and others are sometimes killed by their wives.—Morning Star.

"ONLY A BOY."

MORE than a half century ago a faithful minister, coming early to the Kirk, met one of his deacons, whose face wore a very resolute but distressed expression. "I came early to meet you," he said. "I have something on my conscience to say to you, Pastor, there must be something radically wrong in your preaching and work; there has been only one person added to the church in a whole year, and he is only a boy." The old minister listened. His eyes moistened, and his thin hand trembled on his broad-headed cane. "I feel it all," he said. "I feel it, but God knows that I have tried to do my duty, and I can trust him for the result." "Yes, yes," said the deacon, "but by their fruits ye shall know them," and one new member, and he, too, only a boy, seems to me a rather slight evidence of true faith and zeal. I don't want to be hard, but I have had this matter on my conscience, and I have done my duty in speaking plainly." "I've," said the old man; "but 'Charity suffereth long and is kind; beareth all things, hopeth all things.' Ay, there you have it, 'hopeth all things.' I have great hopes of that one boy, Robert. Some seed that we sow bears fruit late, but that fruit is generally the most precious of all." The old minister went into the pulpit that day with a grieved and heavy heart. He closed his discourse with dim and tearful eyes. He wished that his work was done forever, and that he was at rest among the graves under the blooming trees in the old Kirk-yard. He lingered in the dear old Kirk after the rest were gone. He wished to be alone. The place was sacred and inexpressibly dear to him. It had been his spiritual home from his youth.

Before this altar he had prayed over the dead forms of a bygone generation, and had welcomed the children of a new generation; and here, yes, here, he had been told at last that his work was no longer owned and blessed! No one remained—no one? "Only a boy."

The boy was Robert Moffat. He watched the trembling old man. His soul was filled with loving sympathy. He went to him, and laid his hand on his black gown. "Well, Robert?" said the minister. "Do you think if I were willing to work hard for an education, I could ever become a preacher?" "A preacher?" "Perhaps a missionary."

There was a long pause. Tears filled the eyes of the old minister. At length he said, "This heals the ache in my heart, Robert. I see the Divine hand now. May God bless you, my boy; yes, I think you will become a preacher." Some few years ago there returned to London from Africa an aged missionary. His name was spoken with reverence. When he went into an assembly the people rose; when he spoke in public there was a deep silence. Princes stood uncovered before him, nobles invited him to their homes. He had added a province to the church of Christ on earth, had brought under the Gospel influence the most savage of African chiefs; had given the translated Bible to strange tribes; had enriched with valuable knowledge the Royal Geographical Society, and had honoured the humble place of his birth, the Scottish Kirk, the United Kingdom and the universal missionary cause. It is hard to trust when no evidence of fruit appears. But the harvests of right intention are sure. The old minister sleeps beneath the trees in the humble place of his labours, but men remember his work because of what he was to that one boy, and what that boy was to the world. "Only a boy!"

THE CONFIDENCE OF CHILDREN.

THERE is no surer way to prevent a child from giving its confidence than to seek to compel it to do so. Let children have their own little secrets, their own little plans, their own little possessions, and respect and defend them. I once knew the mother of a large family of sons and daughters, who in a most unusual degree was made the confidant of her children. From the little one of six, who always wanted to hide his treasures in her bed, to the eldest, who, in his father's wardrobe, hid his first love letter, she would search every corner, and every one confessed his joy or his grief to "mother." One incident that I witnessed in her house gave me the key to the secret of this influence and taught me a lasting lesson. Two of her boys came to her one day with a childish quarrel on hand. One complained, "Mother, Harry has kept the door of the big barn closet locked for ever so many days; he stays in there by himself and will not let any of the rest of the boys see what he is about; he has been writing notes and putting them in the post-office, and we think you ought to make him tell what he is doing." The mother looked at Harry, who stood wanting to defend himself and his little secret if necessary. She saw no sign of guilt or embarrassment in his face, only a questioning as to whether she would suspect him as his brother had done. She asked, "Has Harry any of your playthings in there?" "No." "Were any of you using the room before Harry took possession of it?" "No." "Well, then, let Harry alone; he has a right to it, and he has a right to have a little secret all to himself if he wants to." After the boys had gone I said to her, "Are you really not afraid that some mischief may be brewing in that big barn closet?" "No," she replied; "there was no guilt in Harry's face, and if there had been I should not have compelled him to divulge his secret just then. By and by, when he is ready, I know he will tell me all about it." And sure enough, in a day or two, I saw Harry piloting his mother, all by herself, out to his barn closet to confide to her preparations he had been making to have a little circus, to which he had invited several boy companions, which explained the notes sent to the post-office. He had wanted to surprise his brothers, and through his mother's confidence in him he was enabled to carry out his plan. How much surer way was that to win and retain a boy's confidence than to have manifested suspicion and distrust and compelled divulgence of what proved to be only an innocent, boyish secret. Speaking afterwards with this mother on this subject, she said, "I never compel my children to tell me about their own little affairs. I am always ready to listen and to sympathize with them, and they know I love to have them tell me of their thoughts and doings, but I never suspect them. I never open their letters nor ask to see those they write, nor look in their private drawers or boxes. I let them know that I regard their private affairs and possessions as sacred, although I show them that I appreciate and enjoy any and every confidence they place in me. As a consequence, I feel that I am

made the recipient of their most sacred confidences whenever the time and their hearts are ripe to give them."—Helen E. Starratt, in Interior.

WHAT EMERSON BOUGHT.

WHEN I bought my farm I did not know what a bargain I had in the blue birds, bobolinks, and thrushes which were not charged in the bill. As little did I guess what sublime mornings and sunsets I was buying, what reaches of landscape, and what fields and lanes for a tramp. Neither did I fully consider what an indescribable luxury is our Indian River, which runs parallel with the village street, and to which every house on that long street has a back door which leads down through the garden to the river bank, where a skiff or a dory gives you, all summer, access to enchantments new every day, and all winter, to miles of ice for the skater. Still less did I know what good and true neighbours I was buying; men of thought and virtue, some of them men known the country through for their learning, or subtlety, or active or patriotic power, but whom I had the pleasure of knowing long before the country did, and other men, not known widely, but known at home—farmers, not doctors of law, but doctors of land, skilled in turning a swamp or a sand bank into a fruitful field, and, where the witch-grass and nettles grow, causing a forest of apple trees or miles of corn and rye to thrive. I did not know what groups of interesting school-boys and fair school-girls were to greet me in the highway, and to take hold of one's heart at the school exhibition. —Emerson, in Cabot's Memoir.

WHAT SAVED HIM.

ONE Christmas morning, many years ago, a young reporter on a daily paper had occasion to call with a message at the office of one of the foremost editors and publishers in the country. The young man was a sickly country lad, of keen sensibility and nervous temperament, who, finding himself homeless and friendless in a great city, had yielded to temptation, and had fallen into the habit of drinking and gambling. The publisher, as he listened to the message, noted the lines which dissipation had already left on the boy's face. He was a man who made it his work in the world to help others. No man touched his hand in passing, who did not gain from him new courage and hope in life. He answered the message which the reporter brought, and then, holding out his hand cordially, said: "Let me wish you a Merry Christmas, my lad." He took from a shelf a book, containing sketches of the lives of the great English, French and German authors, with extracts from their works. "Here," said he, "are some friends of the new year. When you spend an hour with them, you will have noble company." The surprise of the gift and the unexpected kindness from the man whom he regarded with awe, had a powerful effect upon the lad. He spent all of his leisure time in pouring over the book. It kindled his latent scholarly taste. He saved his money to buy the complete works first of this author, and then of that; he worked harder to earn more money to buy them. After a few years he began to gather together and to study rare and curious books, and to write short papers upon obscure literary subjects. Men of similar taste sought him out, he numbered some of the foremost scholars and thinkers of the country among his friends, but he never forgot the lonely, friendless lad who had been sinking into a gambler and a drunkard until a kind hand drew him back, and he, in his turn, sought out other lonely, friendless boys in the great city, and gave them a helpful hand out of the gulf. So, year by year, his life widened and deepened into a strong current from which many drew comfort and help. He died last winter. The sale of his library gathered all the collectors of rare books in the sea-board cities. During his illness, the newspapers spoke of him with a sudden appreciation of the worth which had so long been hid in obscurity. "A profound scholar, with the heart of a child," "A journalist who never wrote a word to subserve a base end," they said. He reads these eulogies with a quiet smile. The actor who has left the stage forever cares little for the faint plaudits of the crowd in the distance. One day he put into the hands of a friend an old, dingy volume. "When I am gone," he said, "take this to Mr. —, and tell him that whatever of good or usefulness there has been in my life, I owe to him and this Christmas gift of his thirty years ago." The little story is absolutely true. We venture to tell it because there is no one living whom it can hurt, while there are many whom it may help to hold out friendly hands to their brothers who have stumbled into darker paths than they.—Youth's Companion.

WINGS.

THE fall thou darest to despise— Maybe the angel's slackened hand Has sufficed it that he may rise, And take a fitter, surer stand, Or, trusting less to earthly things, May beareth learn to use his wings. —Albion's Annals.

The Children's Corner.

THE SIN OF OMISSION.

It isn't the thing you do, dear, It's the thing you leave undone, Which gives you a bit of a heartache At the setting of the sun. The trundle word for potter, The letter you did not write, The flower you might have sent, dear, Are your haunting ghosts to-night. The stone you might have lifted, Out of a brother's way, The bit of hazardous counsel You were hurried too much to say, The loving touch of the hand, dear, The gentle and winsome tone, That you had no time nor thought for, With troubles enough of your own. These little acts of kindness So easily out of mind, These chances to be angels Which even mortals find, — They come in night and silence, Each child, reproachful wraith, When hope is faint and flagging, And a light has dropped on fatig.

"LITTLE JACK."

THERE was a very sorrowful funeral at the Highgate Cemetery on Tuesday morning. A bereaved father, who is an African missionary, and representative of three missionary societies, stood around the grave of a little fellow of seven summers, who had been himself a true missionary of Christ in the heart of Africa. "Little Jack," as he was lovingly called, was the son of Captain Edward C. Howe, of the London Missionary Society, and went out with his father and mother when he was a baby of three months. There, far away from any white people, Jack learnt to speak in the native language, and until he returned with his parents to England in October last, he knew but a very few words of English. He was taught in the mission school with the black children, and had these for his only playmates. Young as he was, Jack had a deep sense of religion. He was present at all the mission meetings, and the winsome little fellow was petted and loved by children and their parents alike. He was himself an extraordinary attraction, and gave by his very presence a wonderful impulse to the work of his father and mother. But his influence was by no means confined to this. Little Jack would talk seriously and affectionately to the children, with his arm around their necks or their waists, of the good Father in Heaven, and the good Jesus, who died to save them from their sins. "Even the Arab slave-trader loved him," said the stricken father to the present writer. An Arab, cloth presented to Jack by one of these men was used as his funeral pall. The station at Lake Tanganyika was an exceptionally healthy one, and Jack from a delicate child grew well and strong. There was no symptom of illness on his return to England until a few days before his death, when he caught a fatal chill.—Christian World.

WHAT JOY REMEMBERS.

"REMEMBER, dears, don't go to the meadow-lot to-day." That is what Joy's mother said as she kissed her and Robert good-bye. Isn't it queer that as soon as she had gone both these little people wanted to go to that very lot? They went to the swing in the barn, but they kept thinking what beautiful dandelions grew in the meadow. Pretty soon Joy said, "I know a lovely way to tell the time with dandelions." Robert ran to pick some great yellow beauties. "These are not the kind," said Joy. "You can't do it! Less they are all feathers. There are some right down in the meadow-lot. Maybe there are some on this side the fence." When they got to the fence they found all the dandelions as yellow as gold, but on the other side, just out of reach there were some of the silver balls. "Robbie, you stay here, and I'll just climb through and pick a few. Mamma wouldn't mind, I'm sure. So though Robert wouldn't be left alone, so through the fence they both went. "Now watch, Robbie, said Joy when they had picked their hands full. "What time is it? One." But before she could blow the silver feathers there was a strange sound. Was it thunder? What made that pound ing noise? The children sprang to their feet and saw a great black creature coming straight towards them. They never knew how they climbed through the fence just in time to escape those cruel horns, nor how they managed to drag their trembling little selves up the long hill. Joy and Robert are grown up now and have little children of their own, but they remember just what their mother said to them as she tucked them into bed after their bread-and-water supper that night: "Remember dears, there is always a good reason why, there is a must not, whether you know what the reason is or not."—The Sunbeam.