

in that lilac-bush there. If we don't make a noise, perhaps we can see mother robin on the nest. Sh—, sh—, very softly; now lift me up as father did—there, don't you see her?"

I did for a moment, and then the bird flew away on a swift, silent wing, but from a neighbouring tree the paternal robin clamoured loudly against our intrusion. Nevertheless, Zillah and I peeped in.

"Oh, the queer little things!" she said, "they seem all mouth and swallow."

"Mrs. Robin undoubtedly thinks them lovely. Miss Warren, you are not quite tall enough, and since I can't hold you up like Zillah, I'll get a box from the tool-house. Isn't this the jolliest house-keeping you ever saw? A father, mother, and six children, with a house six inches across and open to the sky. Compare that with a Fifth Avenue mansion!"

"I think it compares very favourably with many mansions on the Avenue," she said, after I returned with a box and she had peered for a moment into the roofless home.

"I thought you always spoke the truth," I remarked assuming a look of blank amazement.

"Well, prove that I don't."

"Do you mean to say that you think that a simple house, of which this nest is the type, compares favourably with a Fifth Avenue mansion?"

"I do."

"What do you know about such mansions?"

"I have pupils in some of the best of them."

"I hear the voices of many birds, but you are the *rara avis* of them all," I said, looking very incredulous.

"Not at all; I am simply matter-of-fact. Which is worth the more, a furnished house or the growing children in it?"

"The children ought to be."

"Well, many a woman has so much house and furniture to look after that she has no time for her children. The little brown nother we have frightened away can give nearly all her time to her children; and, by the way, they may take cold unless we depart and let her shelter them again with her warm feathers. Besides, the protesting paterfamilias on the pear-tree there is not aware of our good-will toward him and his, and is naturally very anxious as to what we human monsters intend. The mother bird keeps quiet, but she is watching us from some leafy cover with tenfold his anxiety."

"You will admit, however, that the man bird is doing the best he can."

"Oh, yes, I have a broad charity for all of his kind."

"Well, I am one of his kind, and so shall take heart and bask in your general good will. Stop your noise, old fellow, and go and tell your wife she may come home to the children. I differ from you, Miss Warren, as I foresee I often shall. You are not matter-of-fact at all. You are unconventional, unique—"

"Why not say queer, and give your meaning in good plain English?"

"Because that is not my meaning. I fear you are worse—that you are romantic. Moreover, I am told that girls who dote on love in a cottage all marry rich men if the chance comes."

She bit her lip, coloured, and seemed annoyed, but said, after a moment's hesitation, "Well, why shouldn't they, if the rich men are the right men?"

"Oh, I think such a course eminently proper and thrifty. I'm not finding fault with it in the least. They who do this are a little inconsistent, however, in shunning so carefully that ideal cottage, over which, as young ladies, they had mild and poetic raptures. Now, I can't associate this kind of thing with you. If you had 'drawings or leadings,' as Mrs. Yocomb would say, toward a Fifth Avenue mansion, you would say so in effect. I fear you are romantic, and are under the delusion that love in a cottage means happiness. You have a very honest face, and you looked into that nest as if you liked it."

(To be continued.)

A COMPREHENSIVE PRAYER.

Thomas à Kempis, who died just one hundred years before the German Reformation, is said to be the author of this prayer: "Give me a clear understanding against all impurity, a right faith against all doubtfulness, a firm hope against all difficulties, fervent charity against all indifference and negligence, great patience against all disturbance, holy meditation against every filthy imagination, continual prayer against the devil's assaults, good occupation against the tire-someness and drowsiness of the heart, and lastly, a devout remembrance of Thy holy passion against the wounding of the soul by vices. Assist me, O my God, with all these, Thy good gifts, and confirm me in all Thy holy words. Amen."

THE COLOUR OF FLOWERS.

At a recent meeting of the Vaudois Society of Natural Sciences, Professor Schnetzer read an interesting paper on the colour of flowers. It has been generally supposed that the various colours observed in plants were due to so many different matters, each colour being a different chemical combination without relation to the others. Now Professor Schnetzer shews by experiments that when the colour of a flower has been isolated, by putting it in spirits of wine, one may, by adding an acid or alkaline substance, obtain all the colours which plants present. Flowers of peony, e.g., give, when placed in alcohol, a red-violet liquid. If some salt of sorrel be added, the liquid becomes pure red; while soda changes it, according to the quantity, into violet, blue or green. In this latter case the green liquid appears red by transmitted light, just as does chlorophyll (the green colouring matter of leaves). The sepals of peony, which are green with a red border, become wholly red when put in salt of sorrel. These changes of colour, which can be had at will, may quite well be produced in the plant by the same causes, for in all plants there are always acid or alkaline matters. Further, it is certain that the transformation from green into

red, observed in the leaves of many plants in autumn, is due to the action of tannin which they contain with chlorophyll. Thus, without wishing to limit it absolutely, Professor Schnetzer supposes *a priori* that there is in plants only one colouring matter—chlorophyll—which, being modified by certain agents, furnishes all the tints which flowers and leaves present. As to white flowers, it has been found that their coloration is due to air contained in the cells of the petals. On placing the latter under the receiver of an air-pump, they are seen to lose their colour and become transparent as the air escapes from them.—*Times*.

"NUNC DIMITTIS."

'Tis a good world and fair,
And excellently lovely. If there be
Among the myriad spheres of upper air,
One yet more beautiful, some other where,
It matters not to me.

What can I crave of good
That here I find not? Nature's stores are spread
Abroad with such profusion, that I would
Not have one glory added, if I could,
Beneath or overhead.

And I have loved right well
The world God gave us to be happy in—
A world—maybe—without a parallel
Below that Heaven of heavens, where doth not dwell
The discontent of sin.

And yet, though I behold
Its matchless splendours stretched on every side—
Its sapphire seas, its hills, its sunset gold,
Its leafage, fresh as Eden's was of old—
I am not satisfied.

Dark, blurring shadows fall
On everything; a strange confusion reigns;
The whole creation travaileth, and, through all,
I hear the same sad murmur that Saint Paul
Heard, sitting in his chains.

Where'er I look abroad,
What blight I see! What pain, and sin, and woe!
What taint of death beneath the greenest sod!
Until I shudder, questioning how God
Can bear to have it so!

I marvel that His love
Is not out-worn; I wonder that He hath
A plenitude of patience, so above
Finite conception, that it still can prove
A stay upon His wrath.

And then—because I tire
Of self, and of this poor humanity—
Because I grovel where I should aspire,
And wail my thwarted hope and balked desire,
With such small faith to see,

That yet, o'er all this ill,
God's final good shall triumph, when the sum
Is reckoned up; that even, if I will,
I, at the least, in mine own bosom still
May see His kingdom come—

Because of this, I say,
I pine for that pure realm where turmoils cease,
Sighing (more tired of *them*, than day by day
Heart broken after heaven!) "Lord, let, I pray,
Thy servant go in peace!"

How braver 'twere to wait
His sovereign will, the how, the where, the when,
Doing what work He sets me, small or great,
Until He calls, and I make answer straight,
With *Nunc Dimittis!* —*Scribner's Magazine*.

THE FIRST DOLLAR.

The following story is true, and must please as well as counsel our young readers:

Many years ago, a gentleman from the town of Methuen, Mass., while on a visit to a prominent merchant in Boston, was asked by the merchant if he knew a boy in Methuen that he could recommend to work in his store. At first he could think of none, he knew that only a faithful, honest boy would suit the thrifty merchant; at last, however, he called to mind a boy of excellent character in his neighbourhood, but he feared he would hardly do, as his parents were very poor, and he had no education or other advantages to fit him for such a position.

But the description of the boy's habits pleased the merchant so much that he handed the gentleman a dollar with which to pay the boy's fare to Boston by stage, and requested him to send the lad to the city, and if on a personal interview, he should not prove satisfactory, he would pay his fare back home again.

The gentleman, as requested, visited the boy's parents and, stating the merchant's proposal, advised them to send the boy for trial. He then gave him the dollar which was to pay his fare to Boston, and departed.

Under similar circumstances ninety-nine out of every hundred boys would have said, "Now for a good time! I never saw a city, and never rode in the stage. Oh! there will be so much to see, and it will be such a nice ride, and here is money sent to pay my fare!" Not so with this boy.

Putting the money carefully in his pocket, he said to himself, "This is the first dollar I ever had. How I wish I could save it! It is only twenty-five miles to Boston. I can walk there in a day. I'll do it and save my dollar."

His mother patched up his clothes as well as she could, and early next morning the little fellow parted with his

father and mother at the door of their humble home, and set out on his long tramp to the great city, which he reached tired and dusty, a little before sunset. He found the merchant, who sternly asked:

"Where have you been all day? The stage came in hours ago."

The boy thought that he had displeased the merchant at the outset, and with downcast eyes and trembling tone, he answered:

"I did not come in on the stage, sir."

"Did not come on the stage! What do you mean? Didn't I send you money to pay your fare?"

The boy thought it was all up with him, sure. Through the gathering tears he managed to reply, "I am very sorry, sir. I did not mean to offend you. I thought I would walk and save the dollar. I never had one before."

Placing his hand gently upon the boy's head, the merchant replied, "My little man, you're exactly right. Come home with me and get some supper." Then, turning to a bystander, he remarked: "I would not take a thousand dollars for this boy to-day."

The boy has grown up to manhood and has since become widely known in business circles. He is now the owner of an extensive mill at Methuen, the Pemberton mills at Lawrence, a banking house in Boston, and one of the finest farms in Massachusetts.

ONLY ONE THING NEEDED.

"I wish I knew just one thing," said a little gold-haired girl as she yawned over her Sunday-school lesson.

"Well, and what is that one thing, Jeannie?" asked a young man as he seated himself by her side upon the stone doorsteps. "Tell me, and it may be that I can help you."

"Oh, I know you can, brother Robert, if you only will," said Jeannie, giving a sigh of relief. "You know everything, almost. I have been studying the story of a blind man who was told to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. Now, I do not see how he could have been cured just by washing his eyes."

"Nor could he," said Robert, "only that Jesus chose to work a miracle in his case, and so to shew to all around the power and the goodness of God."

"But Jesus could have made him see without sending him off to wash at all," said Jeannie. "Why didn't He? He might have just spoken one word, and have cured him of his blindness."

"Jesus chooses to work in His own way, and it is always the very best way," said Robert. "We may be sure of that, even when we do not understand. I think He often tests the faith and obedience of those whom He helps. Perhaps He wanted to prove whether the blind man really believed in Him."

"I do not see how it proved any great faith to do such a very easy thing," said Jeannie.

"Do you not?" replied her brother. "Remember that this blind beggar knew all the places about Jerusalem quite well. He knew that people went to this pool often without receiving any healing from the water. It is very likely that he had often been there himself. If he went then and obeyed Jesus, expecting to be cured, he must have believed that Jesus could and would cure him in that way."

"I wish Jesus would tell me to do some such easy thing as that," said Jeannie. "I know I would do it."

"He has told you to come to the fountain of all life, there to wash and be clean. Are you ready to do it, Jeannie?"

"I do not know what you mean," said Jeannie.

"You know the verse of the hymn that we so often sing," said Robert—

"There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains."

A MISSIONARY at Canton has arranged a new Chinese alphabet of thirty-three letters, by which he claims that all the words which now require so many thousand symbols can be written.

TO-MORROW may bring unexpected pleasure, if we improve the present. But if we neglect the golden opportunities of to-day, the future will hold nothing for us but remorse and pain.

THE joys of the world bring sorrow, but the sorrows of repentance are full of joy. If it be bitter anguish to know that we are sinners, is it not unspeakable joy to know that we are saved by grace?

JACOB's heart was never so full of joy as when his head lay hardest. God is often most present with us in our greatest dejections, and loves to give comfort to those who are forsaken of their hopes.

THERE are men in the world who wear a girdle of fret, as trying as any friar's, to annoy themselves. They fancy that in such experience is to be found the highest fulfilment of religious duty and the truest expression of this world's probation.—*Rev. Stephen H. Trng*.

DR. PUSEY, the old Oxford Professor whose name has been associated with the rise and progress of Ritualism in the Church of England, has entered the lists in controversy with Canon Farrar in regard to the punishment of finally impenitent men. His main argument is one which is summed up in the following words, and is clearly undeniable: "No one has yet been found to doubt that the mass of Christians have from the first believed the future punishment of the lost to be everlasting. We see it, even apart from Holy Scripture, in those close upon the times of Jesus; it was the faith of the martyrs; it was recognized as the faith of Christians by the heathen. One who searched for human causes of the first marvellous propagation of the Gospel counted this belief as one of the five causes; that the Christians believed it so energetically as to be able to impress their belief upon the heathen also. No one doubts that the millions upon millions of Christians, centuries after centuries, have believed it."