

OUR HOME CIRCLE.

BROKEN FLOWERS.

I gave her a half-blown rosebud,  
My darling of three years old,  
Its plant green stem was thornless;  
Its petals yellow as gold.

One moment her red lips kissed it  
Inhaling its perfume rare;  
One moment her bright eyes sparkled  
To find it so fresh and fair.

Then, ruthless, the lady-fingers,  
Unheeded by my look of pain,  
Were scattering all the petals  
Like a shower of golden rain!

O, it was a pretty pastime!  
And she shouted with baby glee  
Till she came to the hard green calyx  
And stole a shy glance at me.

"Is it 'all gone' my baby,  
The beauty, the sweetness, the grace?  
A quivering grief in answer  
Steals over her speaking face.

As she stoops for the scattered petals,  
While her eager hands implore  
Each radiant bit of color  
To stand where it stood before!

In vain! At her childish sobbing  
My own eyes fill with tears,  
As I ask: Will she pull to pieces  
The flowers of her later years.

Or learn, from this spring-time sorrow,  
What marvels of sweetness and grace  
We willful and heedless mortals  
May destroy—and can never replace?

Ah, baby, when next my fingers  
Round a thornless blossom close,  
Shall I mark it forever and ever,  
Or cherish it fondly? Who knows!

—C. M. Harris, in *Ch's Union*.

IT IS ALL WRONG.

What is all wrong? Why, the constant and unequal struggle of too many people to follow the fashions set by their neighbors. If fortune smile upon a few persons (not many are thus blessed), and they have an abundance of worldly goods, which they have honestly obtained—let them enjoy their plenty as seems to them best, only let them carefully and prudently refrain from putting stumbling-stones in the way of their less fortunate neighbors. By some law or other it happens that in every community a few persons gain recognition as leaders, and whatever they may do or say, whether right or wrong, becomes the topic of remark and the criterion for their neighbors. This may be regarded as natural enough, as in every flock of birds, or sheep, or herd of animals, there is a recognized leader, and the same law obtains in communities and nations; and how fearfully responsible is the leadership of the people! But alas! how lightly is this great responsibility regarded! and how few persons seem to care what kind of an example they set. Favorable circumstances or doubtful means may have brought the few into power, and it too often happens that they have influence only because they have money. Brains or moral worth enter but slightly into the account. A handsome house, beautiful and elegant surroundings—finery, finery, finery—sets the admiring multitude in a flutter, and there is an unquenchable thirst, an eternal longing, to be like, to look like, and to do like the rich and powerful; and this naturally enough leads to extravagance in dress, in the style of living, in everything, so that troubles untold follow hard upon the track of those who undertake to live like the rich and fashionable without the means to support such style. The strong language of "Sacred Writ" may be applied to such as have an unholy ambition to be rich. "They that will be rich, fall into temptations and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition."

How often is the remark heard, "One had just as well be out of the world as out of the fashion." And how much better off are those who entertain such sentiments than the Chinese? In that vast empire, hoary with age and full of worldly pride, the feet of tender babes must be bandaged and kept bound so closely that they cannot grow, or the hapless children will be looked upon as barbarians. The children must be deformed and crippled for life, just to be in the fashion! And are not many of the children here in our great nation, in this young, growing practical country of ours being injured in life by the unseemly haste to get into fashionable society? A sensible business man remarked the other day that he knew young girls who have not yet finished their course in school whose health is permanently impaired by the style of dressing for fashionable parties. To what extent this crying evil is carried can not be definitely known, but that it is alarming, if not positively shameful, few of the thoughtful and sober-minded portion of the community will deny.

And what do Christian fathers and mother think of the character of the children's parties which

are becoming so common in our country? No one would think of putting old heads on young shoulders; nor should the innocent enjoyment of the young be abridged. But when children are encouraged to dress like fashionable young ladies, and to remain at dancing parties until late at night, or early in the morning, the question is raised as to whether the enjoyments on such occasions are innocent. All the leading churches in Christendom have taken strong ground against such entertainments, and the most pious and consistent members of all the churches condemn them. Are there not pitfalls and gins enough to catch the unwary without placing these beguiling temptations before our children? A children's party is given simply to meet other children and spend a pleasant evening together, which is turned into "a hop," and thus are young children in some instances induced to attend such entertainments as their parents would not patronize. This is all wrong—an evil which should be corrected as speedily and thoroughly as possible. And the enmities, jealousies and rivalries bred and born of such occasions, can not but be regarded as evil and only evil continually. One chance to be dressed in better and handsomer style than the rest, or one has come not having on fashionable party attire, the one exciting jealousy, and the other calling forth hurtful criticism. And then the happenings of the occasion furnish fruitful themes of remark for days and weeks to come. Thus the minds of the children are filled with unprofitable subjects, and their attention is so diverted as to preclude the possibility of continuous application to study, which is so absolutely essential to their proper training for the realities of life. It may be justly said, too, that such entertainments cultivate a taste for the light and frivolous which enervates the rising generation, and unfits them for the grave responsibilities which must soon devolve upon them.

The theme grows as it is contemplated and suggestions come crowding into the mind, which it might be well to present; but enough perhaps has been said for this time. Will the leaders of society think of these things? And will parents earnestly consider the best interests of their children both for time and eternity? And let all remember the words of divine inspiration: "Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out."—*Journal and Messenger*.

A CHINESE FUNERAL.

It is a great disgrace for a Chinaman to die away from home. If the old man, the aged woman, the little child, the son or daughter, is stricken down outside the family roof, no matter how far away, now matter how prostrate by disease, the first thing to be done is to convey the sufferer with speed back to the shelter of home, there to die enjoying "the good will of the relentless gods. As soon as the breath leaves the body the mourning begins. This mourning consists of low crying, loud screaming, and wild howling, all commingled in a hideous tumult that grates repulsively on the ear of refinement. It is as true of heathen countries as of Christian, that the ignorant and uncultured are more noisy and uncontrolled in their griefs or joys than the educated and refined. Very often the grief of these mourners is genuine, while it lasts, but it soon wears itself out. In many instances mourners are hired in China to do the howling, and the louder they wail the better pleased are the friends with their bargain. While no country can produce more elegantly finished coffins for its rich than China, no country has a humbler chamber for the ashes of its poor. The coffins of the very poor in China are great cumbersome things, made perfectly round, with one end bulged and flaring. The wood of which they are made is light-colored, resembling pine, always unpainted. After the body is placed in the coffin it is suspended by long ropes fastened to coolie sticks. Four or six coolies lift these sticks or poles to their shoulders, and with the coffin swinging back and forth between them, they start off with the customary grunt. On the top of the coffin is fastened a queer-looking bird, supposed to represent a rooster. It is made of white paper, excepting the comb which is red. On this,

rooster rides the departed spirit. Before the friends leave the house they place a small paper of nuts and dried fruits upon the ground near the door for the use of the spirit. All day long idol money is burned throughout the house. This idol money is nothing more than very thin strips of bronze or silver paper. As the body is borne to its last resting place, the money is scattered along the streets. This money has no commercial value, but it is used in all heathen worship to please the gods. A boy heads the funeral procession, ringing a bell, and men follow, beating gongs and filling the air with discordant noises, all for the blind purpose of frightening away any evil spirits that might be near. Before the dead body some member of the family walks carrying a long branch covered with green leaves. And thus, amid so much superstition, the dead is laid in his shallow grave.

Owing to the immense population, many bodies are buried in the same grave, one above another. China is one vast grave-yard, especially the hill-sides. This does not seem strange when we remember that in one city alone dwell three million souls. The mode of burial, above described, does not prevail in all parts of China. Different circumstances produce different modes. It must be remembered that a vast territory is covered by the Chinese empire, and that the people who live in one province can not even speak the dialect of the adjoining province. They do not wear the same style of clothing or worship in the same manner, and many of their customs are entirely different.

BABY'S GRAVE.

"Only a baby's grave!  
Some foot or two at the most  
Of star-daisied sod, yet I think that God  
Knows what that little grave cost!

"Only a baby's grave!  
Strange how we mourn and fret  
For a little face that was but such a space—  
O more strange, could we forget!

"Only a baby's grave!  
Did we measure grief by this,  
Few tears were shed on our baby dead—  
I know how they fell on this!

"Only a baby's grave!  
Let often we come and sit  
By the little stone, and thank God to own  
We are nearer heaven for it!"

SONGS.

Composers seem to be as little capable of judging of the merits of their musical offspring as outsiders.

Of a set of eight pieces which Dr. George F. Root once sent to the publisher, the various members of his family, himself included, such as in their opinion would "go," one piece in particular was made conspicuous by neglect. No one seemed to care for it or to place it among the favorite ones. The author himself hardly cared to write it out to send with the others. It was issued, however, and became almost at once the most popular of the eight. This song was the well known "Rose-lie, the Prairie Flower." Another in the same set was the beautiful "Hazel Dell," which had such a remarkable success.

"The Shining Shore" is another case in point. The words were handed to Dr. Root by his mother, who remarked that "possibly he could make something out of that." He glanced at it carelessly; put it aside; took it up again; wrote the music to it; laid it away, thinking it might work in somewhere. So it has. It has worked in everywhere the world over.

Publishers, also, are quite unable to foretell the manner in which a piece will be received by the public. Some of the most popular songs ever published have in MSS. gone the rounds of the music publishing houses, and been returned to the writer "respectfully declined." Such was the case, we believe, with S. C. Foster's "Old Folks at Home" and it certainly was so with Will Hays' "Evangeline." This is due not so much to the want of discrimination on the part of the publishers as to the fickleness of the musical public.

Again, some have fallen flat upon their first publication, but after remaining upon the shelves for months, and in some cases for years, have taken a sudden start and sprung into life, running over the country like wild fire. Such was the case with "Seeing Nellie Home," by John Fletcher, which was published seven years before it came into notice. It has been attributed to P. S. Gilmore, but was written by Mr. Fletcher while a music teacher in Trenton, N. J. —*Church's Musical Visitor*.

AN OLD LEDGER.

An old ledger and its contents! What a horde of memories come back to me as I turn over its dusty and long unused pages. As I fill the leaves I see names that I met with a variety of emotions—some with pity, some with sorrow, and many, far too many, with indignation. How great had been my trustfulness in human nature, and how sorely I was deceived, these old pages bear a silent witness to. And yet, if I were again in business, the faith I have in my self would probably lead me into doing many of these acts over again—so little are men inclined to benefit by their own experiences. We are wise while reviewing the past or considering the future, but often foolish in the living present.

As I turn the leaves of my old volume, and see account after account in an unsettled condition, I cannot help but think that if there ever is a final settlement day for all things, there will be a great many merchants who will receive recompense for merchandise which has long been charged to the columns of profit and loss. I know this is poor consolation for present and substantial losses, but the little sweetness should not be lost on account of the greatness of the bitter.

But it is not my purpose to write a moral homily on lost accounts, but to sketch as near to nature as possible some of the individuals whose names appear in this old volume. As in all nature there exist types of plants and animals, a description of which will answer for a multitude of individuals, so here a description of certain types of individuals will answer for people found in every hamlet in all the land. Human nature, in its main characteristics, is ever the same, yet its details appear in infinite variety.

But where shall I begin, and whom shall I render first immortal by consigning to unfeeling print their past misdeeds or their meritorious acts? I turn to a page at random. Ah, well do I remember, and though not exactly in the bleak December—it might as well have been, for all the profit and comfort the trade of this man gave me. It is hardly right to call the matter trading, as he took the goods and did justice on his part, towards having the sign of equality between the two sides of the ledger. Yes, this man Jacob Reeder owes a balance of a goodly number of dollars, though he came to my store highly recommended. His clothes were good and well-fitting, his gold watch and chain added dignity to his appearance, and to see him in the church choir on the Sabbath—well, a little credit to such a man would not be unsafe. Besides, he was running a planing mill, and if money was hard to get, something from the mill would make matters all right. And so I gave him credit on the strength of appearances. I had often read that "appearances deceive, and this one maxim is a standing rule," men are not what they seem," but my reading of it did not prohibit me from doing just the contrary. Slowly, but surely, the account of Mr. Reeder grew in amount until efforts must be made to have it settled. In the meanwhile my customer was wearing better clothes than myself, could go to theatres, festivals, and excursions when I felt too poor to enjoy such things. Now I can see how he spent my money, and a right good time he had with it. But when I pressed him for payment I soon found out what a big sham he was—a sham in property, a sham in honesty, but a stern reality in knowing how to avoid paying debts. All his affairs were put in such a shape that the law could make no seizures, and his safety was thus assured. Had he made as great efforts to pay his debts as he had to avoid payment of them, he might be to-day an honorable and self-respecting man. Strange commentary on human nature that men will expend more labor to secure things without paying for them than would suffice to earn money to pay for the same. Perhaps Mr. Reeder may be still in existence, and if he reads this he may recognize himself; and possibly a thousand people, could they but read these lines, would think I meant them. But the grocers who can have a chance to see this sketch will say, "Tis such and such a man that is described; would that he could see it for himself."

IF I SHOULD DIE BEFORE I WAKE.

"Mother, every night when I go to bed I say 'Now I lay me'; and do you know, mamma, though saying it so often, I never thought what it meant until Fanny Gray died? I asked nurse if Fanny died before she waked, and she said, 'Yes; she went to bed well and had a spasm in the night, and died before she knew anything at all.' Now, mother," continued Rena, "I want you to tell me about 'Now I lay me,' so that when I say it I may think what it means."

"Well, Rena," said her mother, "I shall be glad to tell you. What does it mean when you say, 'Now I lay me down to sleep?' " "O, that means, mother, that I am just going to lie down in my bed to go to sleep till morning." "Well, then, as you lie down to sleep what prayer do you offer to God?" "I pray the Lord my soul to keep." "I want the Lord to take care of my soul while I am asleep, and take care of me all over, mother. But, mother, if I should die before I wake, would the Lord be taking care of me then? Now, it seems to me when Fanny died that God did not take care of her that night and so she died."

"Oh, no, Rena! God did take care of her. The little verse says, 'If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take,' so you see God took little Fanny's soul to himself, and when she awoke she was in the arms of the blessed Jesus. Now, Rena, when you say 'Now I lay me' I want you to think in this way. Now I am going to bed and to sleep, and I want the Lord to take care of me. If I am not a good child, and do not pray to God, ought I

SILENCED.

A dancing professor felt it his duty to try to win one of his many associates to Christ. "O—," said he, "I long to see you a Christian. Do come to Jesus, won't you?" "For what?" was the blunt rejoinder. "Why for salvation. Don't you want to be saved?" "Yes I do; but what particular sins do you want me to be saved from?" "Why, we are all sinners, you know." "Yes, I know; but I do not cheat, steal, lie, swear, nor use tobacco. What lack I yet?" "Do you pray?" "No, do you?" "Yes," said the "Name-to-live," "I pray for you." "For me! when, I'd like to know? Monday night you were at the dance; Tuesday night I met you at the ball, and we didn't get home you know, until four o'clock in the morning; Wednesday night I saw you at the social, and like the rest of us you 'carried on like sixty'; Thursday night I don't know where you were; but if cards could testify, they would tell what you and I were up to until two o'clock Friday night, and now it is Saturday, and for the life of me I can't tell what time you've had for prayer this week, or when you could have felt like it. Oh, I forget. Your church holds a prayer-meeting every Thursday evening, does it not?" "Yes." "And was that where you were last Thursday night?" "Yes, certainly." "Did you pray for me there?" "I tried to," was the faint response.

"Well, I don't want to hurt your feelings; but for conscience sake don't do that again. If you pray for anybody, pray for yourself. You claimed when you were converted to have had more happiness in one hour than you had had in your whole life before, and if that had been true, I should have been a Christian long before now, but as far as I can see, you seek your happiness just where I do,—in the world; and if it is right for you it can't be wrong for me." So saying, he departed, leaving his friend to ponder upon his ways, and wonder how effectual and fervent the prayers of one could be who was trying faithfully to serve God and mammon, or how much such prayers would avail in the salvation of lost souls.—*Christian Secretary*.

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

THE DANDELION.

Little gypsy dandelion,  
Dancing in the sun,  
Have you any curls to sell?  
"Not a single one!"  
Have you any eggs and cheese  
To go a marketing?  
"I have neither one of these,  
For beggar or for king."

Little idle Dandelion,  
Then I'll mow you down.  
What is it you're good for,  
With your golden crown?  
"Oh, I gild the fields, afar,  
In the pleasant spring,  
Shining like the morning star,  
With the light I bring."  
—St. Nicholas.

The school boy who is only quiet when the teacher's eye is upon him; who will get the answers of his problems by the "key," or from another boy's slate, instead of working them out himself; who will break rules whenever he can do so without being punished; or who will spend the day in the street playing truant when his parents think he is at school; is laying a bad foundation. The girl who is careless and untidy as to her dress, who is in too much haste to set her room in order neatly and thoroughly, is laying a bad foundation. Worse still, the boy or girl who is ill-tempered or sullen, when asked to assist at home, to fetch a pail of water or a stick of wood, to amuse the younger children or rock the cradle; the boy or girl who says, "I don't want to," when such little services are needed, or goes grumbling to do them, is laying a bad foundation. The boy who is tempted by the open shop on Sunday to spend his missionary money and yields; who is tempted on a bright day to take a walk, a ride, or a sail, instead of going to Sunday-school, and yields, is laying a bad foundation. The boy who turns over for another little nap after he is called in the morning; who thinks "it will do just as well to-morrow" when there is anything unpleasant to be done, forgetting that to-morrow never comes, is laying a bad foundation. All these boys and girls are builders, and character is the structure they are rearing. Ah, there are thousands who make sad mistakes; idleness, delay, want of resolution, dishonesty in small things, Sabbath-breaking, drinking, falsehood, theft, these are all laid in the foundation. Fatal errors they often prove. Later in life, what should be the strong and noble character of a man, beautiful to contemplate, falls with a sudden crash that buries him for ever from the respect of good men, and leaves his soul a wreck for eternity. Little builders lay the foundation firm and sure and strong. Look well to the little weak places; make them secure. Ask daily help from God, and He will aid you to build a good and true character, such as even His pure eyes may look upon with pleasure.

to ask him or expect him to take care of me? Let me lie down feeling that I am in the Lord's care, and if I should die before I wake, that I am still the Lord's child; and I pray that he may take my soul to dwell with him.

"O, mother! I will try and remember. Why, I used to say it slow and clasp my hands and shut my eyes, and yet I did not think about it. Thank you, mother, dear. Please hear me to-night when I go to say my prayers." Ah, little children, are there not a great many who, like Rena, say their prayers without thinking what they mean—mere words without any meaning in them? God cannot listen to such prayers. They are not for him unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid. Think of what I have written about little Rena when you say "Now I lay me" to-night; and pray that God may watch over you, waking or sleeping.—*Baptist Courier*.

A BAD FOUNDATION.

Passing along the street the other day, I saw a crowd collected around an unfinished building. I stopped and learned that the side wall of the house had fallen, killing two men and wounding several others. The question passed from lip to lip, "How was it?" "Why did it fall?" "Who is to blame?" "The cause is plain enough," said a man, evidently a builder, pointing to the base of the building, "It had a bad foundation—too weak by half for such a wall."

I passed round to the front, it was tall and stately, of beautiful red brick, with white marble capings and ornaments—altogether a fair and noble house, and but for the terrible gap, pleasant to look upon.

With a sad heart I went on my way—Two souls gone to their last account, and wounded sufferers left to drag out weary days and nights, all because somebody laid a bad foundation. What folly, nay what guilt, thus to endanger human life; Ah! yes, it is not only a thoughtless, but a wicked thing to lay a bad foundation, and yet how many every day are guilty of it!

The school boy who is only quiet when the teacher's eye is upon him; who will get the answers of his problems by the "key," or from another boy's slate, instead of working them out himself; who will break rules whenever he can do so without being punished; or who will spend the day in the street playing truant when his parents think he is at school; is laying a bad foundation. The girl who is careless and untidy as to her dress, who is in too much haste to set her room in order neatly and thoroughly, is laying a bad foundation.

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