

The Family Circle.

SONGS IN THE NIGHT.

Here slumber steals out thoughts away
The mind is free from outward care;
Heart searchings then are opportune,
And thoughts ascend to God in prayer.
When all is still—the world shut out,
No enemy is found between;
Our weakness felt, our strength perceived;
Then true devotion marks the scene.

Faith grasps anew the sinner's Friend,
A Father's smile dispels our fear
And as no shadows intervene
The loving Lord His child is near.
The soul is bathed in heavenly light,
Fresh glories seen start tears of joy.
The trusting heart its strength has found—
This converse sweet without alloy!

The "Everlasting Arms" enfold
The one who finds that sacred place;
'Tis Bethel there in faith to hold
The Mighty God in our embrace
The faithful child finds strength renewed
His burthen all now rolls away,
His empty vessel's running o'er,
The Songs of Night are full of day.

Let our surrender be complete,
All sin confessed and all's forgiven,
Our God vouchsafes to meet us there,
And give us all fortresses of heaven
Then, sing we will our songs of night,
Our journey homeward still pursue;
All daily strength that He imparts,
Who grants this wondrous interview

His saints not always thus are blessed,
The wearied child oft sinks to rest,
And Bethel scenes come not to view.
"He knows our frame" and what is best
Assured—not here—to us are given
Those joys supreme, at his right hand,
But, trusting still His faithfulness,
We view, by faith, that better land
Oct., 1894. J. W. SHAW.

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MARJORIE'S CANADIAN WINTER.

BY AGNES MAULE MACHAR.

CHAPTER XIII.—CONTINUED.

As the time grew close, the city began to put on more and more of a holiday aspect, and multitudes of strangers arrived daily. Every time Marjorie went towards Notre Dame Street or across Dominion Square, she was sure to see sleighs containing newly-arrived travellers from east or west, north or south. Numbers of Americans, especially, poured into the city every day, and the papers soon numbered the visitors by thousands. The Windsor was a gay and busy scene, with the handsomely caparisoned sleighs constantly dashing up to the portal, or from it, full of merry groups of sightseers. The ice-palace was fast receiving its finishing touches. The clear crystal battlements and turrets, with their machicolated edges, now sparkled with dazzling luster in the sun light. Flags floated from the round towers at the entrance, and within the workmen were busy fitting up the rooms on each side of the main entrance; rooms which, however, were not to contain anything more poetical than a coffee-stand on the one side, and "Johnston's Fluid Beef" on the other, both of which Dr. Ramsay warmly approved of, as being just the thing needed in such a place and in such weather. For the cold was certainly growing keener every day. It seemed as if the ice-palace were brewing cold weather, and within its solid walls one might get a very fair idea of what Arctic cold might be like.

One night, just before the commencement of the Carnival, Alan came in, saying that they were lighting up the palace for the first time with the electric lights. The girls, he said, must come at once to see it. "Jack and Jill" were off before Marion and Marjorie could get on their wraps, and they and Alan soon followed through the keen, cold, January night, lighted by a pale but growing moon. But the moonlight seemed to fade away when they came in full view of the palace, and they exclaimed with delight as the wonderful fairy vision met their eyes. It was such a sight as is rarely seen, a sight to haunt one's imagination for a life time. It seemed a veritable palace of light, a fairy tale materialized. For battlements, towers and battlements seemed to throb and sparkle throughout, with a clear, pure

and living light, like the fair, tremulous shimmer of mother-of-pearl; the dentated outlines of turrets and battlements glittering, sharply defined against even the moonlight sky. Every crystal cube of its massive courses glittered with the white, lambent light; and yet, as they gazed, they could hardly believe that it was not a dream or an illusion.

"Why, Marjorie! this must be the work of your kind Light-spirit, taking pity on our Northern darkness."

Marjorie started from her trance of delight, and turned smilingly to greet Professor Duncan, who had been attracted, like them selves, by the wonderful and beautiful sight. With him was the clergyman whose church he and Dr. Ramsay attended.

"And does Miss Fleming keep a familiar spirit of her own then?" asked the minister playfully.

Professor Duncan explained, and gave the substance of the little story of the Northern Lights, in a few words. He seldom forgot anything that struck his fancy, which was one reason why his conversation was so entertaining to young and old.

"It's a pretty fancy," he said, "and this made me think of it at once. One beautiful thing is apt to suggest another, and this is 'a thing of beauty,' though it can hardly be 'a joy forever,' even in this Northern climate! But seriously, you know, I suppose that the Northern Lights are essentially the same in nature with the light that is sparkling through that luminous crystal pile. And, by the way, do you know what is the supposed explanation of the phenomenon of the Aurora Borealis, scientifically considered?"

None of the young people had ever heard it, and Marjorie and Millie were eager to know.

"Well, you must know, the real nature of electricity is a mystery. No one knows more than that it acts in certain ways, and is a part of that great and omnipresent energy which I, of course, regard as simply one manifestation of what Wordsworth calls the—

"Motion and the spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things."

The phenomena of electricity, you know, are caused by the meeting of two opposite states of the electric fluid, as it is called, positive and negative electricity, though just why, and under what conditions these two opposite sorts are developed, science as yet refuses to say. Now, as of course you know, electricity is readily excited by friction; and different sorts of friction, or friction under different circumstances, will produce different sorts of electricity. Now it is supposed that the friction of the earth's atmosphere against the earth, as both are in motion, develops electricity, just as does the rubbing of glass with a piece of silk. And as the earth's motion is most rapid at the equator, and slowest at the poles, positive electricity is excited in the atmosphere of the tropic and temperate zones, while at the poles it is negative. And as wherever there is an interchange between these two we have electrical manifestations, it is supposed that this interchange in the North, in certain states of the atmosphere, produces the Northern Lights, the Aurora being brightest where the interchange is most active. This is only hypothesis, but it affords a reasonably probable explanation."

"Thank you, Professor," said the minister. "I think you have made it quite clear, and it's very interesting to me; I never heard it before."

"And so, you see, out of the meeting of these two intrinsically dark and silent forces, in the regions of cold and darkness, God evolves light."

"Just as easily as He did of old," observed the minister, "when he said 'Let light be,' and light was!"

And now, continued Professor Duncan, man, by availing himself of these laws, can draw this same powerful, invisible form of Energy into the service of humanity, and in such beautiful ways as we see here, yet only as he follows its laws and keeps up the connection with the invisible power."

"I declare, my dear professor, you are outlining for me a capital sermon! You will hear it again one of these days. Talk of sermons in stones, you have struck sparks of light out of ice! I think I shall set my Bible-class to studying all the beautiful texts about light."

"It would be a most interesting study," said the professor. "You young folks had better try it, too. That parable of light and darkness runs right through the Bible."

Marjorie thought it would be a very good thing to do, and the following Sunday, after dinner, she and Marion took their Bibles and began their search. They were astonished at the number of suggestive texts they found, beginning with Genesis and ending with Revelation. There was the 'burning bush,' the 'pillar of light,' the prophetic visions, the 'great light seen by the shepherds,' and the light Paul saw in going to Damascus; besides the imagery of Revelation, and innumerable metaphorical references to light and darkness. The parable did, as the professor said, run right through the whole Bible, quite as much as did that other one of life and death, and indeed, as Dr. Ramsay remarked, the two were significantly interchangeable.

When the professor came in on Sunday evening, each of the girls had a long list to show him of the passages that had most struck them. Each of them, too, had chosen a favorite text. Millie's was, 'In Him is light, and no darkness at all.' Marjorie still adhered to her old favorite, 'The light shineth in darkness.' And Marion thought that the most beautiful of all was in the description of the heavenly city, 'Jerusalem the Golden.'

"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

"Yes," said the professor, "that is a grand hope. You see, Marjorie, the light will not always shine in darkness, and your Northern Lights won't always be needed, any more than the sun or the moon."

"No," said Marjorie, as if half-reluctant to admit it.

"But the Northern Lights won't be forgotten, nor their lonely labor of love. 'I know thy works' is the message to each of the working churches. And He does not forget! There is another text that I like to remember when thinking of the glory of the future: 'They that be wise shall shine as the brightest of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.'"

(To be continued.)

THE AUTOGRAPHS OF THE "AUTOCRAT."

I venture to think that I am not making too large a boast when I claim to possess a unique copy of the "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table." It came into my possession in the following manner:

In the month of February, 1887, through the kindness of William Dean Howells, who personally conducted me into Dr. Holmes' presence, I enjoyed the never-to-be-forgotten privilege of spending part of an afternoon in the beautiful study looking out upon the Charles River.

I well remember the current of our conversation, in which the subject of hereditary and pre-natal influence bore a prominent part, but shall not attempt to recall any of it here, interesting and characteristic as what Dr. Holmes said could not fail to be.

While taking a hurried survey of the books that crowded the room, it occurred to me that I had at home a perfect copy of what I conceived to be the first edition of the "Autocrat." It bore the imprint of Phillips and Sampson, and was embellished with a number of pictures from the pencil of Hoppin. It had been in my possession a good many years, and I always regarded it as one of the choicest of my literary possessions.

On my describing the book to Dr. Holmes he said it must be a copy of the

first edition, and in answer to my enquiry was not sure whether or not he himself had a copy.

The happy thought at once came to me that I might effect an exchange that would be mutually agreeable, and I suggested to Dr. Holmes that if he would write his favorite verse in a modern copy of the "Autocrat" I would gladly exchange my copy for it.

He demurred at depriving me of a volume I had evidently treasured, but I assured him that I would consider myself greatly the gainer by the arrangement proposed, and I came away promising to send him the book immediately on my return home.

I did not fail to keep my word, and shortly after despatching the volume received the following acknowledgment:

My dear Sir,—

I am very glad to have a copy of the first edition of "The Autocrat." I am not sure that I have one with the imprint of Phillips and Sampson, and even if one should be found upon my shelves, I have two children, each of whom would be much pleased to own a copy of that edition.

I will send you a more recent edition with the verse in it which you ask for, and which I shall be pleased to copy for you, leaving me still your debtor for a kind and thoughtful service.

Believe me, Dear Sir,

Gratefully yours,

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

A little later there came this note, showing the careful nature of the man:

I have the volume of the "Autocrat" all ready, but I want your exact address which I have lost sight of, your letter being misplaced. Please send it on a postal card and much oblige,

Yours truly,

O. W. HOLMES.

In due time the eagerly awaited volume arrived, and great was my delight on opening it to find within the following inscription:

J. M. DONALD OXLEY,

With the kind regards of

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES,

and that most exquisite of his verses,

And if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree
In the Spring,
Let them smile, as I do now
At the old forsaken bough,
Where I cling,

with the poet's signature appended, but also a perfect photograph of his shrewd, kindly, winsome face, with his name in full beneath.

Having carefully inserted both the first letter and the photograph in the book, I need hardly say that I have ever since regarded my copy of the "Autocrat" as a possession of peculiar preciousness.

Some years later I contributed to the columns of the *Sunday School Times* an article on "The Children in the Library," which was, in the main, an expansion and application of the "Autocrat's" remark with regard to what constitutes a gentleman, "Above all things, as a child, he should have tumbled about in a library. All men are afraid of books who have not handled them from infancy."

Thinking that possibly Dr. Holmes might be interested in my development of his doctrine, I sent him the article, whereupon he promptly responded:

My Dear Sir,—

I thank you for your "sermon," which I have read with much pleasure. I am much gratified that you have honored me by making use of some words of mine as a text worth enlarging upon.

Believe me, My Dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

In every case the hand writing is the "Autocrat's" own throughout, and now that he has passed away from us as sweetly and gently as he lived, my brief correspondence with him must always remain one of the most dearly treasured experiences of my life.

—J. Macdonald Oxley, in *The Week*.