The Family.

FATHER, TAKE MY HAND

The way is dark, my Father! Cloud on cloud
Is gathering thickly o'er my head, and loud
The thunders roar above me. See, I stand
Like one bewildered! Father take my hand,
And through the gloom
Lead up to light
Thy child!

The day goes fast, my Father! and the night
Is drawing darkly down My faithless sight
Sees ghostly visions; fears a spectral band
Encompass me. Oh, Father! take my hand,
And from the night
Lead up to light
Thy child!

The way is long, my Father! and my soul
Longs for the rest and quiet of the goal,
While yet I journey through this weary land,
Keep me from wandering. Father, take my hand;
Quickly and straight
Lead to heaven's gate
Thy child!

The path is rough, my Father! Many a thorn
Has pierced me: and my weary feet, all torn
And bleeding, mark the way Yet the command
Bids me press forward Father, take my hand,
Then safe and blest
Lead up to rest
Thy child!

The throng is great, my Father! Many a doubt
And fear and danger compass me about,
And foes oppress me sore I cannot stand
Or go alone Oh, Father, take my hand,
And through the throng
Lead safe along
Thy child!

The cross is heavy, Father! I have borne
It long and still do bear it Let my worn
And fainting spirit rise to that blest land
And, reaching down,
Lead to the crown
Thy child!

—*Anon.*

KEEPING YOUNG.

Mrs. Granger looked in the glass one autumn morning and sighed.

"I am growing old," she said. "I resented John's telling me so yesterday, but it is true. Men have so much to fill their lives and keep them interested and bright! Oh, dear!" and the lady sat down, drew her basket to her side, and began working at her "crazy quilt." Blue and pink and white and green and garnet brocade and velvet, every color in the rainbow. The materials were ample, and Mrs. Granger cut and trimmed and sewed, the scowl all the while deepening in her forehead, and discontent becoming more and more visible at the corners of her lips. An hour of cutting silk into bits and sewing these bits into a solid piece again, and much had been accomplished. Just at this juncture Mrs. Atwater came in, looking bright and rosy and young, though as homely a woman as the town could show. "Homely, but very attractive," was the dictum of her friends, and her friends were many. After the usual ceremonials with which all calls are prefaced, Mrs. Atwater remarked, apropos of the crazy quilt: "Pretty! You do all kinds of fancy work beautifully. Wish I could get time. I began a crazy tidy for grandmother as a Christmas present, but I was obliged to hire Cousin Em to finish it, or not have it done in time."

Mrs. Granger raised her eyebrows. "You have only two children, and a girl to do your work," she said, "I should think you might find time for anything you wish to do."

"But there is so much that I wish to do. For instance, I have three courses of reading to attend to—one by myself, one with the children, one with the Literary Club that I was speaking to you about the other day You see I can't afford to let myself dry up into an old woman even if I go without fancy work."

An old woman! The words chimed curiously with Mrs. Granger's thoughts. She had been worrying secretly because she was growing old so fast.

"I suppose we shall grow old, reading or no reading, that is our fate," she said.

"Nonsense," replied Mrs. Atwater, airily "I mean to be as young at eighty as I am now, and I am only thirty-eight."

"Only thirty-eight!" echoed Mrs. Granger. "Why I am only thirty three, and I feel like an old woman already."

"Did you ever think," said Mrs. Atwater, speaking so suddenly and energetically that Mrs. Granger was startled, and spoiled a pink satin triangle that she was cutting, "that we are all the time re-creating our bodies, making them young again, when we keep our minds' growing? Why, we are," she went on, without giving her friend time to answer the question. "If the mind changes, expands, grows, the body must sympathize, and adapt itself to the new conditions of the mind. Pooh! a woman is never old so long as her mind is growing. 'Old woman!' That is a term of reproach, meaning a poor, useless limp rag of humanity. *I* won't be that kind of an old woman."

"What do you mean to do to prevent it?" asked Mrs. Granger.

"Everything. I began reading Bertie's elementary physiology yesterday. I am going to keep up with him in his course, and I'm reading history too, and two evenings in a week I read with the children. We have taken up Scott's novels and poems, when we make a finish of them we are going to take Tennyson's Idyls of the King. The children read aloud and I sew. There's no time lost. It is the organization and the regularity that counts. We let nothing interfere. If we have company they join in the listening, but my friends mostly know that my Tuesday and Friday evenings are engaged. And I *will* have music once in a while—good music. I made over my old black silk and saved the money that a new one would have cost. I call it my music money. I am going to New York at least three times this winter to attend the Philharmonic Concerts. I wish you would go with me, Mrs. Granger. One of those concerts would brighten you up wonderfully."

"I always go to New York for a visit every winter," said Mrs. Granger, "but I'm always tired to death when I get home."

"You tire yourself out shopping and sight-seeing. I go very quietly and get my music, and come home again. I call it getting tuned. We need tuning as well as other instruments. It does not take us long to get below concert pitch."

"I love music too," said Mrs. Granger. "John and I used to go to concerts very often when we were first married, but we have long since given up such extravagances."

"And taken to growing old," said Mrs. Atwater. "I think you will be the loser even in money, to say nothing of what money cannot buy. We are living our life now. I sit down sometimes and say to myself. 'This, now, to-day is life. The now will soon be the past. It will soon be all over.' I frighten myself, and I jump up resolved to try with all my might to use the now. And as money is a mighty help, I set my wits to work to see how much life I can get out of the money that is within my possibilities."

After Mrs. Atwater went away the crazy patchwork fell into Mrs. Granger's lap, while its maker had a little interview with herself.

"Yes," she said to herself, "Kate Atwater really gets something out of life, something for the soul to live upon, as she says. Why I've even dropped off the magazines. Our coal bill was so large last winter we thought we couldn't afford them. Kate would have economised somewhere else. She saves in dress-making bills, and her children wear the very plainest clothes. She sets a plain table too, no deserts nor cake as a rule. We actually had bread and butter and baked apples and molasses cookies for tea one night when I dropped in there, and as for butter, she never allows any on the dinner table. That saving would buy all the magazines."

We need not follow Mrs. Granger in her soliloquy. We have said enough to elicit the fact that Mrs. Atwater acted from reason and conscience, dared to be individual, risked being called singular, and made life a study, that she might provide not only for the fleshly tenement, but for the spiritual and immortal tenant.—*The Hearth.*

MASTER SOMETHING.

Henry Norton lived with his widowed mother in a small town in the western part of New York State. His father, when living, had lost most of his property through unprofitable investments, and died leaving his family only a few thousand dollars.

Mrs. Norton was a delicate woman, and knew that her health would never permit her to engage in any kind of business for the support of her large family. So she decided to live as economically as she could, and make the little money she had last as long as possible. As soon as her boys became old enough she would send them out into the world to earn money for themselves. Had their father lived they would have all gone to college. It grieved Mrs. Norton very much that her oldest son, Henry, could not take a college course. She was a lady of much culture herself, and had paid particular attention to the French language. Having associated a great deal with French people in her younger days, she had learned to speak their language with remarkable fluency. She now reasoned with herself.

"If I cannot send Henry to college I will do the next best thing. I will try and have him master the French language, and I know that if he has thoroughly learned some one important branch of study he will not be so far behind others in the life-race."

At this time Henry was fourteen years old. He had been studying French a year with his mother already. He attended the high-school, and his mother hoped to keep him there two years longer. She never let a day pass without giving him a French lesson.

Often he rebelled, and sometimes he thought it was too bad that he must give up a ball game or some other favourite amusement just for "that French." "What good is it any way?" he would say in his boyish, impatient way. But his mother persisted, and every day the French lesson had to be learned. After a time, when he began to read and write French well, it became very interesting, and he spent many delightful hours reading French authors with his mother She also obliged him to write her one short French letter every week.

Time passed rapidly, and almost before he knew it Henry's sixteenth birthday was upon him, and he was obliged to leave home to begin to make his own way in the world. He went to New York. An old friend of his father's had procured him a place in a large house where there were a number of clerks. Now Henry was a country-boy; and although his home was a centre of refinement, he had never been away from the small country town where he was born. His manners were very refined, but he was very diffident, and had not the confident, easy address of city-bred boys.

When he made his appearance among the clerks where he was to be employed he was greatly embarrassed, and, of course, showed himself in the worst possible light. "Country-bumpkin," whispered somebody, and for a long time his nick-name was "Bumpy."

His position at first was naturally a very humble one. He was a kind of messenger at the beck and call of all the other clerks. And a hard time of it he had! His diffidence, and an unfortunate trick he had of blushing, made him a target for all their wit. They were not intentionally unkind, but were thoughtless. And the younger clerks thought it great fun to make "Bumpy" blush and look like a girl.

But Henry bore it all in heroic silence, although many times he was greatly discouraged and thought it was useless for him to continue. His diffidence, and the consciousness that he was the butt of the other clerks, often caused him to make mistakes, and the conviction was growing upon him that he would never make a business man. But never a word of all his hard times did his mother hear. Their letters back and forth were always affectionate and cheerful. Mrs. Norton continually exhorted her son not to slight his French, and he kept it up, several evenings every week he went to the Mercantile Library reading room and read the French papers and magazines. But no one ever knew it at the counting house. Indeed, it never occurred to Henry that it was at all remarkable that he should know French so well, he had learned it all so quietly with his mother, and besides, he was a modest boy. Then, too, my young friends, what we know thoroughly we are not apt to parade; it is only the smatterers who delight in talking about what they know.

But there is an old saying that "sooner or later every one will find his niche. And Henry found his very soon. The firm that employed him had been doing business for years with a French house in Paris. The French firm employed an English clerk for its English and American correspondence, so that hitherto all business letters from that quarter had been written in good English and had caused no trouble.

But when Henry Norton had been in New York about six months a batch of genuine French letters was received by his employers. The English clerk at Paris had become ill, and during his absence the business letters were all written in French.

There was no little excitement in the counting room over these letters. No one could read them. They were immediately given over to one of the clerks who had quite a reputation among them as a French scholar. He was very fond of airing French phrases, it was "*pardonnez moi*" to this one, "*excusez moi*" to another, and "*je ne sais pas*" five or six times a day. But the letters. O, that was a different matter? While he was making excuses about the writing being undecipherable, etc., Henry entered.

One of his tormentors immediately saw that here was a chance for some capital fun. "Bumpy" should be asked to read those letters. This idea was soon telegraphed around among them, and the interest became intense. It would be a huge joke, and everybody expected to see "Bumpy" covered with confusion when the originator of the joke approached him, saying, in a very solemn manner,

"Bumpy, here are some French letters which Mr. Morse (one of the firm) left for you to translate. If you cannot do it the chances are that you will lose your position."

But now Henry's turn had come. All embarrassment fled. For the first time since he first entered that counting-room he felt like a man. Here was something he could do without blushing. Taking the letters he turned to the would-be French scholar beside him, and with a quiet dignity that those city bred clerks might have envied, said,

"Mr. Eldridge, may I have your desk for a short time?"

You should have seen those other clerks? They were so perfectly astonished that they did not even feel abashed at the failure of their joke. They watched Henry in perfect silence; no sound was heard in the room but the scratching of his pen.

It was not long before he gave the letters translated into the best of English to the confidential clerk, for both members of the firm were absent.

And then—well, he was not called "Bumpy" again, I assure you. They crowded about him, addressing him as Henry in the most respectful and affectionate manner, and some even called him Mr. Norton, which amused Henry very much.

And from that time forth the two heads of the firm were hardly regarded with more respect than was Henry Norton. When it was learned that he could answer the letters in French their respect and admiration knew no bounds. And Henry's head would have been turned by their attentive behaviour had not he inherited such a large stock of common sense from his excellent mother, who had taken care to foster this good quality in her son

Henry was glad to be sent out again with a message so that he might be alone with his new sense of freedom and feeling of manliness. His feet fairly flew over the pavement, and his controlling thought was, "My dear, dear mother! How thankful I am that she made me learn French so well!"

And what a letter he wrote her that night! He told her all the troubles of the past six months, and how often he had been tempted to give up and come home to her.

But he did not dream of what was yet in store for him. His happiness and gratitude arose from the fact that his knowledge of French had completely changed his position with the other clerks

But the two principals got their heads together and said,

"Henry must have a better position. A boy who can do such work as that ought not to do messenger work."

So they decided to promote him. The clerks, of course, told every other man they met the remarkable story; for in those days—this happened twenty years ago—a young man in business with such a knowledge of French was a rarity.

About a week after the event a prominent banker in the vicinity sought an interview with Henry and offered him a large salary to translate and write French letters for him. Henry took the position, and when he was eighteen years old he conducted the entire French correspondence of that large banking-house.

Soon after taking this position he determined to learn the banking business as thoroughly as he had learned French. He did it, and to-day he is one of the largest and most prosperous bankers in our country.

He attributes all his success to his thorough knowledge of French. for it was not only the stepping-stone to a better position and larger salary, but, what was of equal importance, the application that had been necessary to master French had so strengthened and disciplined his mind and character that he was prepared to assume greater responsibilities as they came.

In Henry Norton's case it happened to be the mastery of the French language which paved the way to his success in business. But depend upon it, my young friends, it will pay you to master anything. And, once the habit of thoroughness is established, you will master every thing you undertake, and success is sure.—*Our Youth.*

THE SHETLAND KNITTERS.

Few travellers and readers are aware that far away in the islands of the North Sea—near the Land of the Mid night Sun—there is a yellow haired, blue-eyed race descended from the ancient Norse Vikings, who live just as their remote ancestors did, and spend the long winter evenings around rude hearth-stones where burn peat fires, spinning and knitting with deft fingers the fine, fluffy wool produced by the "peerie" (little) sheep that nip the spray-moistened grass and moss upon the wild headlands of the Shetland Isles; for till within a few years tourists have not ventured upon the turbulent and dangerous waters of the Pentland Firth to visit the primitive homes of this interesting Scandinavian people, and acquaint themselves with their novel mode of living.

Those who have only seen a Shetland pony (almost always from Scottish Highlands), and those ladies who have purchased 'Shetland yarn" (invariably made from Scotch sheep), imagine Shetland to be a small island, and open their eyes with wonder when we tell them of fifty-six islands inhabited belonging to that country, with a population of thirty thousand sons and daughters, whose eyes are as blue as the heavens, and hair as yellow as the dawn.

No people in Europe are more worthy of study and praise than the peasantry of Shetland. The sturdy, broad shouldered men "follow the sea," and get their harvests from the ocean fields, while the patient, modest mothers and daughters gather the peats for their fires, and dress the marvellous wool—unlike any other in the world—taken from their flocks, into beautiful hosiery. Every woman and girl in Shetland spins and knits. Enter their cosy, straw-thatched houses, and you will instantly hear the soft hum of their little "spinney," which is just like those used in Norway eight hundred years ago, and hear the click of the wires (needles), as with nimble fingers and almost lightning rapidity, they form their silky fabrics.

Until a few years ago the worsted work manufactured in Shetland was sold on the Continent or in Constantinople, and the finer grades of lace shawls and scarfs were worn by ladies of Oriental courts and in princely families; but since Sheriff Thoms has interested himself to better the condition of the peasant class, means have been employed to make known the excellent character of Shetland goods. At the International Exhibition held in Edinburgh in 1886, and at the Glasgow Exhibition last year, the Shetland women had fine bazars, and their delicate lace work was admired by the most aristocratic and distinguished ladies from all parts of the world; but it may be presumed that the project of Sheriff Thoms to present the Queen with a Shetland Jubilee shawl has done more to extend the celebrity of these fabrics than anything known. Under the direction of this gentleman, two little fair-haired Unst sisters—the most expert knitters in Shetland—were employed to spin and knit this "Jubilee shawl" for Queen Victoria. For more than three months the nimble and trained fingers of these sisters were at the wheel, and needles carefully handling the silky lambs' wool for this exquisite fabric, and when it was finished and dressed and placed on exhibition in Edinburgh and London, the fame of these daughters of Unst was at once established. . . . . . The material from which the famous "Jubilee shawl" was made was spun so fine by hand that the skein contained thirty-three thousand double threads, and the fabric was of such delicate texture that many who saw it were incredulous as to its being made by hand. My readers will remember an article that was fashionable some twenty years ago, called a "Shetland shawl," and may be surprised to learn at this late date that they were only a machine-made imitation of the genuine hand-wrought shawls of the Shetland Isles, without one fibre of Shetland wool in them. While the imitation soon became soiled and was laid aside as "beyond cure," the genuine article can be whitened and dressed many times without injury, and will last a life-time. One thread of Shetland yarn is stronger than four of ordinary material, one reason for this is that in spinning by hand the staple of the wool is not broken as when manufactured by machinery. Many lace shawls knitted in Shetland are so fine they can be drawn through a lady's ring. There is a great variety of these beautiful goods, from the finest lace patterns to heavy wraps, called by the Shetland people "Haps." The women of the island also knit the most exquisite bridal veils and ties in silk, and win dow curtains from cotton thread. The most costly lace curtains seen in the homes of the affluent at Lerwick, the capital of the Shetland Isles, are knitted from material supplied by the owners, by the peasant women, and it sometimes requires nearly a whole year to finish the largest sizes.

. . . When it is known that the poor women of Shetland toil from fourteen to eighteen hours a day, and earn but twelve pence or a shilling, every means employed to introduce their beautiful handiwork should receive cordial encouragement.—*Selected.*

Our eyes are on the future, so we fail
To heed the little stumbling blocks along our way,
That fret our own and neighbour's feet; we say,
What do small deeds avail?

We dream of coming years that shall be fair
With fruitful harvests, though we sow no seed
Of toil and self-denial, prayer, and kindly deed;
And time goes unaware.

O dreamer, wake and work! thy place is best
For thee, the passing hour alone is thine,
Do what thou canst do, and no more repine;
Work, and so earn thy rest!

THE BIG MAN AND HIS MOTHER.

We were at a railroad junction one night, waiting a few hours for a train in the waiting room, trying to talk a brown-eyed boy to sleep. Presently a freight train arrived, and a beautiful, little old woman came in, escorted by a German, and they talked in German, he giving her, evidently, a lot of information about the route she was going, and telling her about her tickets and baggage check, and occasionally patting her on the arm. At first our United States baby, who did not understand German, was tickled to hear them talk, and he "snickered" at the peculiar sound of the language that was being spoken. The big man put his hand to the old lady's cheek and said something encouraging, and a tear came to her eye, and she looked as happy as a queen. The brown eyes of the boy opened pretty big, and his face sobered down from his laugh and he said:

"Papa, is it the mother?"

We knew it was, but how should a four-year-old sleepy baby that couldn't understand German, tell that the lady was the mother? We asked him how he knew, and he said:

"Oh, the big man was so kind to her."

The big man bustled out; we gave the little old mother the rocking chair, and presently the man came in with a baggage-man, and to him he spoke English. He said. "This is my mother; she is going to Iowa, and I have to go back on the next train, but I want you to attend to her baggage and see her on the right car, the rear car with a good seat near the centre, and tell the conductor she is my mother. And here is a dollar for you, and I'll do as much for your mother sometime."

The baggage-man grasped the dollar with one hand, grasped the big man's hand with the other, and looked at the little German mother with an expression that showed that he had a mother too; and we almost knew that the old lady would be well treated. Then we put the sleeping mind-reader on a bench, and went on the platform and got acquainted with the German. And he talked of horse-trading, buying and selling, and everything that showed he was a live man, ready for any speculation, from buying a yearling colt to a crop of hops or barley, and that his life was a very busy one, and at times disappointments and rough roads, but with all this hurry and excitement he was kind to his mother, and we loved him just a little, and when, after a few minutes' talk about business, he said: "You must excuse me, I must go to the depot and see if my mother wants anything," we felt like grasping his fat red hand and kissing it.—*Anon.*

Christianity furnishes the most satisfactory solution of all the difficult enigmas that are presented to the mind. Christianity can tell them that humanity lost itself, but that in Christ it has strength and redemption.—*Bishop of Peterborough.*

The Children's Corner.

WATER LILIES.

Yes, child, the lilies are beautiful,
And their breath is very sweet,
Thanks for your kind and loving thought—
Did you wet your dear little feet?
I know the pond where they bloom and glow
All the long summer day;
I know it well in memory,
Though I never pass that way.

Don't think me careless of your gift,
But perhaps there is some other
Who will take the sweet flowers gladly—
Dear, give them to your mother;
For the scent of the lilies sickens me,
I cannot bear their breath;
Though lovely and perfect and full of life,
They give me a thought of death.

I think I will tell you the story—
First, carry the flowers away—
'Tis a sad tale, little Gracie,
A tale of one summer day.
I had a dear twin sister once,
Years, long, long years ago—
A sweet little girl, I remember,
And oh! I loved her so.

I was so wayward and headstrong, then,
But Carrie was sweet and true,
And she always minded our mother,
A thing I was loath to do
There used to be once an old leaky boat
Tied at the lily pool;
The big boys went for lilies in that
Some nights, I know, after school

Mother had told us—Carrie and me—
Not to go near the water;
The lesson was one most faithfully
Taught to each little twin daughter.
And so I longed to go there—
A bold and wayward child—
I wanted always to have my way,
But Carrie was meek and mild.

I wanted to rock in the leaky boat
As it lay at its moorings fast,
And I disobeyed my mother,
And Carrie I led there at last.
For I could lead the darling—
Mine was always the stronger will—
Ah! my fair little sister,
I remember her sweetness still.

Well, we rocked in the leaky boat.
Though Carrie was afraid—
She always was such a gentle child,
Such a timid little maid—
But after a while we grew sleepy,
And both of us slept, they say;
For the shade of the alders was pleasant
On that hot July day.

And the boat broke loose from its rotten rope
And floated, floated away,
Away where the water lilies grew,
On that fair summer day.
They missed us—and can I tell it?—
Carrie had fallen out,
And lay at the roots of the lilies,
With lilies all about.

They found the little white body,
With lilies around its face—
Oh! I think our home that day
Was the saddest, saddest place
So the scent of the water lilies
I dread it to this day,
And that was why I told you
To carry the flowers away

Obey your mother always—
She loves you as none else will—
Though you never may feel as I did
When Carrie lay white and still.
God's water lilies are beautiful,
And their rare, sweet fragrance may
Ever bring to your thoughts this story
And the word which it speaks—obey.

—*Emily Baker Smalle, in The Pansy*

ELEPHANTS PILING TIMBER.

A Philadelphian travelling around the world, found nothing to interest him more than the celebrated trained elephants of India, which he saw at Moulmein, a seaport town on the Bay of Bengal. In writing to a friend he thus describes their wonderful intelligence:

"Here you see the trained elephants at work, piling up teak timber in the numerous timber-yards that line the river. Their knowledge and intelligence are simply wonderful. They are guided by a native called a mahout, who is perched on the neck, and who gives all the necessary orders, assisted by his heel and a sharp-pointed iron goad, very much like a small pick-axe.

"The elephants thoroughly understand what is required of them. Think of their piling up square timber to the height of forty feet, every stick of which is in line and in its proper place, each piece weighing from two to three tons.

"They carry the timber on their tusks, holding it in place by their trunk, to the place of piling. When the pile is too high for them to build upon comfortably, they build a staging for themselves out of the same material, and do not hesitate to mount it with their load.

"Mr. Findlay, owner of one of the largest yards, had his force of elephants put through their various forms of work for our benefit, such as piling up the logs and tumbling them down, as well as drawing by chain harness and pushing with their trunks and tusks from three to five of these logs, end to end, tandem fashion. When drawing the logs, the elephants, at the word of command, unhitch the chain or hook, but cannot be made to couple it.

"When pulling down the timber he had just put in place, I thought one of them cast a suspicious eye in our direc-