

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

PLAYING BIRD KINDERGARTEN.

Kate.—Let's all play bird a little while,
Now all our tasks are done;
I'm tired of playing our other plays,
And this is the prettiest one.

All.—O, yes! we will play it gladly,—
Let's put our books away,—
We haven't played this for ever-so-long,
So we'll play it again to-day.

May. I'll be a thrush of the meadow,
And sing you my sweetest song,
And have my nest where the lilies blow,
And the brooklet glides along.

Tot.—And I'm such a little creature,—
O! I'll be a little wren,
And sing all day till the sun goes down,
And the world gets dark again.

Jenny.—And I'll be a crow in the corn field,
And the farmer's corn I'll pull,
And that will let some of the mischief out,
For of mischief I am full.

Johannie.—I'll be a great, proud eagle,
And my home shall be the sky,
And I'll go soaring and sailing
The clouds and the mountains by.

Josie.—I'll be an owl of the night-time,
And sit in the old oak tree;
And all the rest of the little birds
Shall be so afraid of me!

Julie.—I'll be a lark of the morning,
And sing at the break of day.

Georgie.—And I'll be a hawk that higher flies
And frightens the lark away.

Frank.—I'll be a man, you children,
A man is the finest sight;
And a man knows more than all the birds,
Now don't you think I'm right?

The Eagle.—If there is a man among us,
Lark, owl, crow, thrush, and wren,
I think we'd better all fly away,
For birds are afraid of men.

All make flying motion with arms, and scamper away, the MAN running after them.

"EVENING HOURS."

AN ESSAY READ AT THE CLOSING EXERCISES OF THE
BRANTFORD YOUNG LADIES' COLLEGE, BY MISS
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HOW changed everything becomes as the evening creeps stealthily on, spreading her airy mantle around us! A deep silence then pervades the whole earth which, but a few short hours before, was filled with bustle and confusion. Every object too, which before glared with light, now appears with softened lustre, thus giving rise to an universal solemnity. The sun resplendent in its setting glory sinks to rest in the distant horizon, and the moon appears to take its place. Little birds that have carolled their happy songs all day, now seek rest in some shady tree; or nestle snugly in their downy beds. The striking of a great clock and the pealing of bells are at any time impressive but they become doubly so in the solemn stillness of the dewy evening. All these things are calculated to inspire us with pensive thoughts, however much our social hours may have been lightened with innocent pleasantries and amusements.

How eagerly does the weary labourer await evening's approach—when resting from his toil, he can by his humble fireside, enjoy home comforts prepared by loving hands. If all our people's homes were thus pleasant how happy would many hearts be; but alas! we very frequently find them the reverse. The husband sometimes prefers to spend his nights among rough companions, and his family finding home unpleasant, perhaps neglect their household duties, and choose rather the society of the gay and thoughtless. Many,

however, can picture to themselves happy homes associated with "Evening Hours"—where all were gathered round the cheerful hearth, discussing the topics of the day; the younger members building airy castles, and imagining that their prospects will be easily accomplished—little dreaming, as they while away the "Evening Hours," that their joys may be blighted and their hopes crushed. The older members talk of the many associations formed at school, and the father speaks some words of encouragement, while the mother expresses her anxiety for the advancement and future welfare of the beloved ones around her. Their thoughts may also wander to absent ones, whom they miss at all times, but more especially when the shades of night descend upon the earth. This is but one of the many happy homes we might picture to ourselves, but we frequently observe unhappy ones also,—where the sweet "Evening Hours" find only weary and broken-hearted wives, and neglected children.

Many of us when we have completed our college course, and have gone to our respective homes, will have the pleasure of spending our "Evening Hours" in telling friends of our many associations formed there, and of the manner in which we have employed our time. We may also speak of this the night of our graduation, when we must bid adieu to study and to those with whom we have had sweet fellowship during the time we have been here, some of whom, we may never meet again on earth. Such may be some of the suggestions and occupations of "Evening Hours."

But the evening of the day naturally leads us to think of the evening of life, when, laying aside our cares, we think of the labours of the past, and realize our need of rest. We know not how near this may be. Our sun may suddenly darken even while it is only in its meridian, and we may suddenly disappear from view. It may, however, be brilliant in colouring and lasting in effect. To all there is an evening of life—a time when life here is ending, when the darkness begins to draw its sombre colouring around, and to obscure all that is bright and beautiful on earth. But old age is the certain evening of life. Active cares are then ended, and we may sit down to enjoy the result of our previous labour. It is also a season of waiting—waiting for the hour when we must leave infirmities and anxieties, for the glorious resting of the righteous, and the blessed.

ROSE, SHAMROCK, THISTLE, AND LEEK.

THE *Rose*—The intestine wars which so long devastated England were carried on under the symbols of the Red and White Rose. The adherents of the House of Lancaster chose the red rose as their mark of distinction, whilst those of York chose the white. This fratricidal war continued until the union of the roses by the marriage of Henry VII. with Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV., in 1446, since which time the rose has continued to be the emblem of England.

The *Shamrock*—When St. Patrick landed in Ireland to convert the Irish, its pagan inhabitants were ready to stone him. He requested to be heard, and endeavoured to explain God to them as the Trinity of Unity;

but they did not understand him until he plucked a trefoil, or shamrock, from the ground, and said, "Is it not as possible for the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to be one, as for these three leaves to grow upon a single stalk?" "Then," says Brand, "the Irish were convinced, and became converts to Christianity; and in memory of that event they have ever since worn the shamrock as a badge of honour."

The *Thistle*—When the Danes invaded Scotland, on one occasion, they resolved to adopt a stratagem, and in order to prevent the Scots from detecting them they marched barefoot. The Danes thought they should reach the camp in a few minutes, when, on a sudden, a man who went forward was wounded by a stout Scotch thistle, so that he could not help crying out loudly with pain. This noise roused the camp; the Scots flew to arms, and the Danes were vanquished. The thistle was afterwards adopted as the insignia of Scotland.

The *Leek*—On a certain occasion King Cadwall met a Saxon army. In order to distinguish his men from the Saxons he placed a leek in each of their hats; and having gained a decisive victory over their enemies, the leek became ever after the badge of the Welsh.

EASTERN SHEPHERDS.

IN the lands of the Bible the shepherd does not drive his sheep before him as our shepherds do.

He goes before them, and the sheep follow him. Often, too, he calls them by name, and they go to him.

Near the city of Damascus there is a large public sheep-fold like this at the present day, and into it great flocks of sheep, belonging to different shepherds, are often put at night.

Once a traveller was there early in the morning. The sheep had no marks to distinguish one flock from another.

When he saw them all mingled together, he wondered how it would be possible to separate them, so that each shepherd should get his own.

But he soon saw how it was done. One shepherd stood near the gate, and, one by one, he called his sheep by name. They knew his voice, and went after him.

Another shepherd did the same; and in this way all the flocks were separated, and each shepherd then led his own sheep away to the green pasture-fields.

LET us keep our scorn for our own weaknesses, our blame for our own sins, certain that we shall gain more instruction, though not amusement, by hunting out the good which is in anything than by hunting out the evil.—*Kingsley.*

THE day had been dark and gloomy, when suddenly, towards night, the clouds broke, and the sun's rays streamed through, shedding a flood of golden light upon every thing. A sweet voice at the window called out in joyful tones, "Look, papa! the sun's brightening all it can!" "So it is," answered papa; "and you can be like the sun if you choose." "How, papa? Tell me how!" "By looking happy and smiling on us all day, and never letting any tearful rain come into the blue of those eyes. Only be happy and good, that is all."