

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

ALICE CARY'S SWEETEST POEM.

Of all the beautiful pictures
That hang on Memory's wall,
Is one of a dim old forest,
That seemeth best of all;
Not for its gnarled oaks olden,
Dark with the mistletoe;
Not for the violets golden
That sprinkle the vale below;
Not for the milk-white lilies
That lean from the fragrant hedge,
Coquetting all day with the sunbeams,
And stealing their golden edge;
Not for the vines on the upland
Where the bright red berries rest,
Nor the pinks, nor the pale sweet cowslips,
It seemed to me the best.

I once had a little brother,
With eyes that were dark and deep—
In the lap of that olden forest
He lieth in peace asleep;
Light as the down on the thistle,
Free as the winds that blow,
We roved there the beautiful summers,
The summers of long ago;
But his feet on the hills grew weary,
And, one of the autumn eves,
I made for my little brother
A bed of the yellow leaves.

Sweetly his pale arms folded
My neck in a meek embrace,
As the light of immortal beauty
Silently covered his face;
And when the arrows of sunset
Lodged in the tree-tops bright,
He fell, in his saint-like beauty,
Asleep by the gates of light.
Therefore, of all the pictures
That hang on Memory's wall,
The one of the dim old forest
Seemeth the best of all.

NEATNESS.

"I'm real glad I didn't live in old times,
Old Testament times," said Daisy.

Little Mag looked up from her work inquiringly.

A basket of clothes to be mended was upon the chair between the two little sisters, and beside each was a small work-box.

"You see," continued Daisy, "it says, 'he rent his clothes,' or, they 'rent their clothes.' It seems to me that whenever they had anything to trouble them in Scripture times, instead of crying as we do, they just went about in a frantic way and tore their clothes. Wasn't it silly?"

"Perhaps they didn't have to mend them afterwards," was Mag's reply. She did not mind the rents half so much as the repairing.

"Dear me, what a flutter of rags they must have been in, then," said Daisy, looking with dismay at a dress with the pocket half torn off; mother had laid it upon the top of the basket to be mended.

"Do you suppose they made their little girls mend 'their garments,' or did they go about with the rags fluttering in the wind like old Nance Smith?"

Daisy made no reply for the good reason that she was thinking of something else. Not hearing what Mag said the little girls of Old Testament times did not receive the sympathy which under the circumstances she might, as a fellow-sufferer, have offered.

Mag answered her own question. "They didn't have needles and thimbles and spools of cotton in those times. If those children only knew what it saved them not to have such things!" and Mag looked longingly out of the window towards the swing in the garden, where the neighbour's children were waiting for the two sisters to join them.

"What are you thinking about, Daisy?"

inquired Mag, seeing her sister laugh without an apparent cause.

Daisy was leaning over the half-darned stocking she held over her small fist, quite convulsed with laughter, and was for some time utterly unable to reply. Then she straightened herself up again, and tossing back the hair which had fallen over her eyes, running the semi-circular comb once or twice through it before it was fastened to suit, she looked up at Mag.

"I'll tell you what let's do!" she said, her eyes full of merriment.

"Well?"

"The next time we don't like anything, instead of crying let's tear our clothes."

"You little goose! Mamma'll make you mend them. That's all you'll get by it."

And disgusted at finding no better proposition, when she had expected to hear "something funny," Mag snipped off her thread from the finished work with as much energy as if she meant it to express the disappointment she felt.

"I think Benny must have come to grief when he tore this apron!" she exclaimed, picking up next from the basket a check apron torn almost across.

There was a tap on the window from a small switch held by a hand on the ground below.

"It's Bessie White. You're nearest the window, tell her we'll soon be there," said Daisy.

Mag leaned over the window-sill. "We'll soon be through," she said.

"There's an organ-man and a monkey coming!" said the child from the garden below.

"It's a shame that we have so much mending to do. Whoever tears clothes ought to mend them. I'm going. Good-bye."

Daisy threw down the half-finished work, and Mag followed her example. Both children ran out to see the monkey. They thought no more of the work-basket nor the neglected work.

Mother, who came in soon after this, finished the mending and put away the clothes. Mother also put away the two work-boxes.

A week after this, Daisy was gathering blackberries and tore a long rent in her over-skirt, and Mag, who had a fall about the same time, caught her foot in the hem of her dress and tore off the facing, but the work-boxes with which to repair the injury were nowhere to be found. Strange to say, they could not find their other school dresses, and dared not venture upon wearing their best.

They pinned up the rents, and said nothing about the matter. Mag, who was always tripping over something or catching her dress on some obtrusive knob, being a little girl who was fond of romping, began to look before the close of the week, as she had said of others, "like a flutter of rags," but mother made no remarks on her appearance.

Happening to see "Nance Smith" pass along the road, the two girls looked down at their own torn dresses and then at the miserable, shiftless beggar-woman, and they both blushed. Things were beginning to look serious.

"This is the man all tattered and torn," shouted little Benny, quoting from "The house that Jack built."

The girls thought he was pointed in his remark, but Benny had not even noticed their dresses.

"Daisy, my dear, you have torn your dress," said the school teacher, noticing the unusual appearance of the little girl who was generally so neat and tidy.

Daisy blushed and said nothing in reply. "O, Mag, I'd give anything if I could find needle and thread to mend this rent. If the Israelites felt as badly as I do over their torn garments it must have been real sorry that they felt, both before and after the act," she said to her sister.

Their mother took them on her round of visits among the poor that day, and shewed them the results of habits of indolence and negligence. They saw wretched, dirty, tattered children, they saw men and women in torn and ragged clothing. Everywhere they noticed the effect of—"poverty," they said, but mother corrected them. "It's not poverty," she said, "the poor are not necessarily ragged and dirty. It is the result of idleness and negligence."

Their mother took them after this to abodes of poverty, but where at the same time everything was neat, clean and tidy.

That night this wise mother and her two little girls talked over the matter together. She shewed them how unjust she would be to their best interests if she allowed them to grow up with habits of indolence; if she neglected to teach them how to sew and mend, and have a knowledge of all the little things which make our homes pleasant.

As these were sensible little girls they saw the force of what was said; and, sorrowful for having pained this good mother, they promised to do better in the future.

When their mother brought out their work-boxes from the high shelf on which she had hidden them, they sat down to mend their dresses with a willingness which a week before would have seemed to them impossible.

If there are any little girls among our readers who are not willing to learn to sew and to mend, we advise them to observe the tattered children in the street, and ask themselves how they should like to present such an appearance. But you say, "We do not have to mend our own clothing."

It would be well for you to learn how to do it, for then you might teach some poor street child. If God has so blessed you—all the more, as a debt of gratitude, should you help those who are poorer and more ignorant than yourself.

Even if you are not obliged to mend your own clothes, it would be wisdom on your part to learn, for there will probably come some time in your life when you would be very glad of the knowledge.

THE blessings of health and fortune, as they have a beginning, so must they have an end.—*Sallust*.

THE best security for civilization is the dwelling; it is the real nursery of all domestic virtues.—*Lord Beaconsfield*.

THERE is no creature which creepeth on the earth but God provideth its food; and He knoweth the place of its retreat, and where it is laid up.—*The Koran*.