

THE LADIES' JOURNAL.

experience the watcher needs no time-piece to tell the time of midnight.

The echoes from the city streets may be relied on surely and always. It is nine o'clock now, and though there is no noticeable difference in the volume of sound coming up from the pavement, there is in the quality.

The business spring and stride of the day and early evening is largely missing. More latterly, or it may be more wearily, the steps move as though the days work being accomplished, and the home resting time near, a few more moments might safely be taken in the walk hitherwards.

There are breaks in the steps too, she can tell just where they occur. The milliners shop, two doors down, attracts its own particular admirers; while in front of the book store, just above, there is a continual halt as old and young gaze on the art collection exposed within. The street-car bells have a sleepy sound, as if hinting that it was time honest people were homeward bound. The news-boys cry is gradually growing fainter, and Glode, Mail, Telegram and News are heard only in the distance, as tired little feet creep to their night's shelter, where for a few short hours the struggle for bread may be forgotten in sleep.

Ten o'clock. Lecture, concert and opera halls are giving out their crowds. Carriages roll swiftly by and pedestrians hurry past.

The throngs quickly disappear, however, and by eleven the streets have become so deserted that the policeman's tread is easily recognizable. And now the watcher arises. She has had a restful sleep and is in consequence refreshed. Medicine is administered and other kindly offices performed. When these are attended to and the fire brightened it is past twelve.

The great throbbing heart of the city is quiet at last, and silence, only broken by an occasional foot-fall, has possession of its streets and avenues.

But there are now and then sounds of unsteady footsteps, as if the feet had started from the saloon just round the corner and were trying to make their uncertain way home. But once they go in contact with the night patrol, then there came up the sound of hoarse altercation, mingled with horrible oaths and curses. There was heard the policeman's club, and some mother's boy or girl, for the first or perhaps the hundredth time, was borne away to the cells.

Another one would be herded with crime tonight, to wake up in the morning to sorrow and shame more bitter than death.

At two. The city is in a deep sleep that comes before it is to think of awakening. The electric light burns blue, shivering and starting at its own shadows.

A loitering step is heard sometimes, as of one moving simply for the sake of motion, with no home to draw in any particular direction.

The sick one wakes. "Is it nearly morning?" she asks faintly, and the nurse replies hopefully that the night is wearing away.

A strengthening draught is given, the hot pillows changed, and the nerveless hands and face receives a refreshing bath—and the failing heart beats are revived. "No night there?" the aged lips murmur faintly. "They are so long here, so long; I am so glad the Book says there is no night there, and that Tommy read it last night; no night there?" and she seemed to quietly sleep again.

It was four o'clock now. The night workers in printing and other offices were going wearily homewards. There was a perceptible stir in the streets. The city was getting ready to wake up. Passengers were hurrying to catch early trains and the business of the day was really beginning.

The newsboys were after the still damp sheets of the morning dailies, and the milkmen were starting on their rounds. It was time to draw back the curtains and open the shutters.

Crimson clouds in the eastern sky seemed to

be unfolding to let the day appear, while like golden steps there appeared a pathway leading right up to heavens of heavens.

"God is very good," the nurse said reverently, "and heaven is not afar off."

She turned to the dear one on the bed, lying with eyes wide open apparently watching the crimson dawn that she had longed so for. There was such a look of perfect peace and satisfied gladness that it was with a sharp exclamation the nurse bent over to raise her up. But there was no life left in the worn out body. She had indeed gone up the golden pathway to the eternal morning, and for her there was no more night. —S. E. Branscombe.

LOVE OF FINGER RINGS.

A ring has always been associated with marriages from time immemorable. The bard sings of his love for his "fair ladye" being as "endless as the ring." The engagement ring is, perhaps, the most genuinely interesting bit of jewelry a woman can wear, and then there is always the strong possibility of her having a variety, though as an emblem of marriage it was introduced by the Christian church as many suppose.

Before the introduction of coinage, the only circulation of Egyptian gold was in the form of rings, and the Egyptian, at his marriage, placed one of these rings of gold on his bride's finger as a token of intrusting her with all his property. In our marriage ceremony we but follow this custom.

Some of the birthday rings are wonderfully unique, the various lucky stones being set lightly on tiny wire of gold. Friendship rings are less popular than of yore, though occasionally one sees them worn by a loyal devotee of the pretty old custom. The lover's knot is the most common, being either in silver or gold and very slender.

The Fede ring presents several features of interest, being composed of two flat hoops accurately fitting, each within the other, and kept in place by a corresponding projection on either extreme edge, so that the two form, to all appearances, one body.

A name is engraved on each, or a line of a distich in old French. The idea being, should the two friends separate, each could wear a single hoop (as they are easily separated), and thus be a means of recognition when again compared.

"With joints so close as not to be perceived, yet are they both each other's counterpart."

The quaint, old-time hair rings are no longer seen; their oddity was more noteworthy than their beauty; they are "heirlooms" in every sense. It would seem odd in so small a thing as the wearing of gold rings, yet in olden days there were various laws held by the Romans as to the wearing of these jeweled baubles. Tiberius made a large property qualification necessary to their wearing; the right was given to old Roman soldiers by Severus. The only ornaments worn by the knights under Augustus were ancient rings of iron, which were later held as a badge of servitude, an express decree of the state being necessary to rightfully wear a solid gold ring.

Ambassadors to foreign missions were invested with golden circles as a mark of great respectability; these were issued by the treasury with much ceremony, not even the senators being allowed to wear them in private life.

The earliest use of rings and the form which they most generally took was of the nature of a signet, and was used to give authenticity to documents before the art of writing was known to any but professional scribes. But they soon became symbols of power and authority, and we remember the duke in "Twelfth Night" sent his ring by Viola to his mistress Olivia as a token that all power was designated to the holder of

the ring. The signet was used by merchants as their own private mark, equivalent to our trade mark, and, moreover, was the only form rings took for a very long period. A form of signets introduced in Egypt to the Etruscans was a gold swivel ring, mounted with a scarab.

A curious form of ring found in Greek tombs are for the dead, a provision never made in these days; they are hollow and light, and set with round convex pastes; many of these were so thin that it was necessary to fill them with mastic varnish to preserve their shape.

Poison was inserted in the hollow rings of the Romans. A story is related by Pliny that after the golden treasure had been stolen by Crasseus from under the stone of the Capitoline, Jupiter, the custodian, to escape torture, broke the gem of his ring in his mouth, expiring immediately from the effects of the poison secreted in it.

A curious ring of Venetian workmanship (and one which could only have been worn on ceremonial occasions) is the Jewish wedding ring of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, being an elaborate structure. The bezel bearing a conventional representation of the ark, a temple, with inscriptions in Hebrew characters on either side.

A highly elaborate form of Jewish wedding ring has projecting sockets, from which hang small rings; a very cumbersome finger ornament.

The cost of these rings must have been great, not only from the amount of metal used, but the exquisite workmanship, on which account one would have been loth to see them consigned to the melting pot, as did the women of Prussia during the war of liberation in 1813, who, in lack of other coin, contributed their wedding rings, receiving in return those made of iron, bearing the legend, "Ich gebe geld fur eisern."

The puzzle rings are ingeniously contrived, the four hoops comprising the ring being separate, and fall to pieces when removed from the finger. These were the work of the old Indian goldsmiths. Much of beauty and symbolism is shown in the peasant rings.

Innocent III., in 1194, settled the fashion of the episcopal ring, who ordained that it should be one of gold and set with one precious stone, on which nothing was to be cut. The annular finger of the right hand is the one to bear this singularly symbolic ornament, and bishops never wear more than one, though the portrait of Pope Julius II. is represented as wearing six rings.

According to Durandus, the Episcopal ring was symbolical of perfect fidelity, of the duty of sealing and revealing, and, lastly, of the gift of the Holy Ghost.

A massive ring of bronze gilt, the square bezel being set with a green chalcidony and emblazoned with St. Marks in relief, on each side of the shoulders shields of arms, represents a papal ring of the XV. century, and was given by popes to new made cardinals.

Another most interesting ring was the property of Alhastan, bishop of Sheborne, and was found at Llysfaen, in the northeast part of Carnarvonshire, in 1773. It is gold and very massive, the hoop being formed of eight divisions, alternately circular and lozenge shaped, nielloed and inscribed "Alheta."

A ring said to have been given by Charles I. to Bishop Juxon on the day of his execution has the sentiment, "Rather death than fals fayth," engraved on its bezel.

Falstaff boasts that in his youth he was "slender enough to creep into any alderman's ring," which shows that this style is dated from the XIV. to the XVII. centuries. Every one knows of the poison ring of Demosthenes, and the one by which Hannibal killed himself, with its hollow bezel filled with deadly poison.

It is well to know that a choice orange, both peel and pulp, sliced covered with fragrant hot tea, makes a beverage fit for the gods.