

The End of the Play.

The Bbleiot for December contains Ballads and Lyrics by William Makepeace Thackeray. The great novelist's work is too well known to need reviewing. The closing poem is suitable for the season and will give a fair specimen of the whole. Many will be glad to have the poem in this cheap dainty form.—(F. B. Mosher Portland Maine, 5c.

The play is done; the curtain drops
Slow falling to the prompter's bell,
A moment yet the actor stops,
And looks around to say farewell.
It is an irksome word and task;
And when he's laughed and said his say,
He shows, as he removes the mask,
A face that's anything but gay.

One word, ere yet the evening ends,
Let's close it with a parting rhyme,
And pledge a hand to all young friends,
As fits the merry Christmas time.
On life's wide scene you, too, have parts,
That Fate ere long shall bid you play;
Good night with honest gentle hearts
A kindly greeting go away.

Good-night—I'd say, the griefs, the joys,
Just hinted in this mimic page,
The triumphs and defeats of boys,
Are but repeated in our age.
I'd say, your woes were not less keen,
Your hopes more vain than those of men;
Your pangs or pleasures of fifteen
At forty-five played o'er again.

I'd say we suffer and we strive,
Not less nor more as men than boys;
With grizzled beards at forty-five,
And erst at twelve in corduroys.
And if in time of sacred youth,
We learned at home to love and pray;
Pray Heaven that early Love and Truth
May never wholly pass away.

And in the world, as in the school,
I'd say, how fate may change and shift;
The prize be sometimes with the fool,
The race not always to the swift.
The strong may yield, the good may fall,
The great man be a vulgar clown,
The knave be lifted over all,
The kind cast pitilessly down.

Who knows the inscrutable design?
Blessed be He who took and gave,
Why should your mother Charles, not mine,
Be weeping at her darling's grave?
We bow to Heaven that will'd it so,
That darkly rules the fate of all,
That sends the respite or the blow,
That's free to give or to recall.

This crowns his feast with wine and wit,
Who brought him to that mirth and state?
His betters, see, below him sit,
Or hunger hopeless at the gate,
Who bade the mud from Dives' wheel,
All to spurn the rags of Lazarus?
Come brother, in that dust we kneel,
Confessing Heaven that ruled it thus.

So each shall mourn, in life's advance,
Dear hopes, dear friends, untimely killed;
Shall grieve for many a forfeit chance,
And longing passion unfilled.
Amen, whatever fate be sent,
Pray God the heart may kindly glow,
Although the head with cares be bent,
And whitened with the winter snow.

Come wealth or want, come good or ill,
Let young and old accept their part,
And bow before the Awful Will,
And bear it with an honest heart,
Who misses or who wins the prize,
Go, lose or conquer as you can;
But if you fail or if you rise,
Be each, pray God, a gentleman.

A gentleman, or old or young,
(Bear kindly with my humble lays);
The sacred chorus first was sung
Upon the first of Christmas days,
The shepherds heard it overhead—
The joyful angels raised it then,
Glory to Heaven on high, it said,
And peace on earth to gentle men.

My song, save this, is little worth;
I lay the weary pen aside,
And wish you health, and love, and mirth,
As fits the solemn Christmas tide,
As fits the holy Christmas birth,

Our Young People

Be this, good friends, our carol still—
Be peace, on earth, be peace on earth,
To men of gentle will.

Our Heavenly Home.

John 14: 1-6; Rev. 21: 1-4.

Topic for Dec 18.

We often say, after a long and tiresome journey, "It was worth while to go away to go away just to find out how good it is to get home!" Perhaps that is why our experience of this world is given us, with its sorrows and difficulties, its hard work and frequent failure, with its brightness, to be sure, but with it many dark clouds—just so that some day we shall realize how good it is to get home in heaven.

How is it that, in spite of everything, we think of heaven as a strange land and not at all as our home? We do not picture it as filled with real, solid, substantial beings such as are waiting us in our homes on earth; but in reality the inhabitants of heaven are even more real than the inhabitants of earth, and not a particle ghostly.

When we think our homes, we think of this and that familiar object—the mantelpiece in the sitting-room, the old clock in the corner, mother's rocking chair by the mending-basket, our own little room with the book-case by the pleasant window. Would it not be a good plan to look ahead to our heavenly home and become familiar with its nooks and corners? It will do no harm to imagine all sorts of delightful things, for we know that the actual picture will far overpass in joyfulness whatever we can imagine.

The way to heaven is along the line of just such continual, happy, eager thought of heaven, just as such thought is the way to our earthly homes. No one goes home on earth that cares nothing for home, takes no thought for it, does not plan with ardent longing for the home coming, count the days that must pass before he can be there. Are you counting the days before your heavenly home-coming? Do you long—really long—to be there?

Thoughts to Ponder.

We are to live forever with God in heaven, and any work we do that does not fit us for living in heaven forever is dangerous work. We need never do such work; but do we not do it every day?

No one ever reached heaven by living a careless, listless life. As Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, "To reach the port of heaven, we must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it, but we must sail and not drift, nor lie at anchor."

When a man who has been accustomed to living among mountains is brought down to live on the plains, he becomes terribly homesick for the hills. And so it is that every Godlike soul is homesick for heaven. Christ has been born in Him, and Christ's home is heaven.

God is preparing heavenly mansions for our souls, and at the same time He is preparing our souls for the heavenly mansions. In both of these works He is all the time showing His love for us. He wants to make every one of our days a preparation for heaven.

One of the saddest of all sights is the coming of an immigrant to a strange country, with no one to welcome him, the busy throngs passing him by carelessly on the streets. But Christ has told us that He has prepared a place for us in the country to which we are going, and he will be there to give us a welcome.

One way to get ready to enjoy heaven is to enjoy the earth. If we do not see beauty in the woods and the fields here below, how can we expect to see beauty in the trees that are for the healing of the nations, and the smiling fields of Paradise?

For Daily Reading.

Mon., Dec. 22.—Who are in heaven? Heb. 12: 22-24.
Tues., Dec. 23.—Who are not there? Matt. 25: 41-46
Wed., Dec. 24.—How to get there. Ps. 73: 23-28.
Thurs., Dec. 25.—What to do there. Rev. 7: 9-17.
Fri., Dec. 26.—Heavenly joys. Ps. 16: 1-11
Sat., Dec. 27.—Heavenly glories. 1 Cor. 2: 9-16
Sun., Dec. 28.—Topic. *Our heavenly home, and the way.* John 14: 1-6; Rev. 21: 1-4

It requires a well kept life to do the will of God, and even a better kept life to will to do his will. To be willing, is a rarer grace than to be doing the will of God. For he who is willing may sometimes have nothing to do, and must only be willing to wait; and it is easier far to be doing God's will than to be willing to have nothing to do—it is easier far to be working for Christ than it is to be willing to cease. No, there is nothing rarer in the world today than the true willing soul, and there is nothing more worth coveting than the will to will God's will. There is no grander possession of any Christian life than the transparently simple mechanism of a sincerely obeying heart.—Professor Drummond.

Gratefully Rejoicing

Robert Moffat, the great missionary to Africa, tells this story:—

Not long ago a woman came to me, having travelled fifteen miles, and said that she wished for a new Testament. I said to her, "My good woman, there is not a copy of it to be had."

"What! Must I return empty?"

"I fear that you must."

"Oh, said she, "I borrowed a copy once, but the owner has come and taken it away, and now I sit with my family sorrowful, because we have no Book to talk to us! Now we are far from anyone else. We are living at a cattle outpost, and have no one to teach us but the Book. Oh, go and try to find a Book! O my elder brother, do go and try to find a Book for me! Surely there is one to be found; do not let me go back empty."

I felt deeply for her, for she spoke so earnestly, and I said, "Wait a little, and I will see what I can do."

I searched here and there, and at last found a copy and brought it to the good woman.

Oh, if only you could have seen how her eyes brightened, how she clasped my hands and kissed them over and over again!

Away she went with the Book, rejoicing, with a heart overflowing with gratitude.