

FIRST FLOWERS OF SPRING.

Oh ! pretty little flowers of spring,
True happiness to us you bring.
Your blossoms laden with perfume,
Scatter all our fear and gloom.
You warn us too, that winter is past,
That things of earth can never last.

Oh ! summer is coming, beautiful, sweet ;
That makes so many joyous feet.
Oh ! blossoms you should happy be,
In bringing light from sea to sea.
What would we do, this many a year,
If the little blossoms were not sent here ?

Oh ! beautiful flowers, pure and fair,
You teach us faithfulness, so rare.
How many homes you help to cheer,
That by winter's cold, were made so drear
O ! lovely flower, may we learn from thee,
Pure, faithful and holy, ever to be.

— Eunice E. Knowles.

THE GREATEST NEED OF THE
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

A need I perceive in the Society of Friends is to go out and meet the prodigal who is yet afar off. In that Bible parable Jesus gave : "The father went while the son was yet a great way off, went out to meet him and had compassion on him, and kissed him, and ordered the best robe to be brought and put on him, and put a ring on his hand, and ordered the fatted calf to be killed, and that they eat and be merry."

And why all this ? Because this son had been fond of gaities, and these had led him into riotous living. But on his return the father meets him, not only out upon the path, but also meets out unto his gay desires, with the best robe and a ring, and at the festal board, when the son who had remained with the father heard, he was angry and would not come in, for he had not wasted his portion nor transgressed the commands of his father, and no kid was ever given him to make merry with his friends.

He had been content heretofore in serving the father, and the father went out to meet him with entreaties, and makes answer : Son thou art always

with me and all that I have is thine.

There had not been the necessity to go out to search for this one that had ever been with him. And while the father did go out in form to meet the wayward son we do not read that he transgressed the true law of principle. But in form he went out so far as to restore to his own household that which was lost from it.

Now, could not the Society of Friends go out in form and meet the prodigal and restore many to these little meetings, numbers of those who are yet a great way off.

We remember days when these same meetings were not so small. When we question this cause of decrease the reply comes : Many fathers and mothers, substantial and influential members of our Society, have been called away from this life, and our meeting sustains their loss. Then where are their families ? and the reply comes : Many of them have gone far out into the world, and many have been gathered to some other fold of religion.

Has Society then gone out in their form into the world and tried to restore its own. Or has it set its own house in order, in form and mode of worship, and then sat down and awaited the prodigal's return, which other societies have been gathering into their churches until there has been cause to enlarge, their numbers being so great. If we ask why, they would tell us they had to go out into the world in their form and mode of worship to reach the needs of the people of the present age and the ones they were seeking. And in this way many who were yet a great way off have been gathered into the bosom of the church while their doctrine remains unchanged.

When we see this decrease in the Society of Friends, and mid-week meetings laid down, and some meeting laid down altogether on account of this decrease this thought suggests itself : Are they as a Society going out into the world to meet the prodigal who is yet