

THE PROFESSOR AND THE WHITE VIOLET.

The Professor.

Tell me, little violet white,
If you will be so polite,
Tell me how it came that you
Lost your pretty purple hue.
Were you blanched with sudden fears?
Were you bleached with fairies' tears?
Or was Dame Nature out of blue,
Violet, when she came to you?

The Violet.

Tell me, silly mortal, first,
Ere I satisfy your thirst
For the truth concerning me—
Why you are not like a tree?
Tell me why you move around,
Trying different kinds of ground,
With your funny legs and boots
In the place of proper roots.

Tell me, mortal, why your head,
Whore green branches ought to spread,
Is as shiny smooth as glass,
With just a fringe of frosty grass.
Tell me—why, he's gone away!
Wonder why he wouldn't stay.
Can he be—well, I declare!—
Sensitive about his hair?

—St. Nicholas.

OUR FATHERS: OUR MOTHERS.

HOW ARE THEY CARED FOR?

They who were once the children, cherished, petted and beloved; who were, later on, the honored and respected heads of families, ruling their own households well, and giving in turn the same loving care to their flock which they received in their own childhood and youth; they who were once useful and active members of society, whose opinions were sought and deferred to, whose words had weight, and whose influence was felt throughout the whole community,—what shall be done with them?

A change has come over them. Time in its onward march works ravages with the body and mind. The once strong hands and willing feet are weakened by the infirmities of age. The active, fertile brain works more slowly and less clearly. Little by little work and care are given up, till the man and woman come to realize that they are no longer capable of a place in the working world; that they must step aside for rest, and roll their burdens upon younger and more able shoulders.

Happy they who know how to grow old gracefully, and who fall into kind and loving hands as they journey toward the land of immortal youth.

What shall we do with the old folks? For somehow there doesn't seem to be a superfluity of willing hearts and ready hands to assume their care.

Often it is the case that no one quite wants them. Some members of the family can't possibly "take them."

One has a wife who says, she ain't used to old folks, and they'd worry the life out of her in a year, sitting round in the way and doing nothing; and then, of course, they'd be sick, old folks always were, and she don't know anything about sickness. She wouldn't have married Jack at all if she had had the least idea that he was going to take care of his father and mother.

So Jack, who is really a good boy, though weak, falls back on the Bible where it says, "A man shall leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife."

Another young man has the western fever. No friends, no persuasions, no money can hold him. He is young, and he can't sacrifice all his prospects in life, he must provide for his own household, he who doesn't is "worse than an infidel." He's sorry for the old folks, he is truly, but he don't see how he can stay.

Another don't like living on a farm. It's a dog's life anyway, and the old folks never would be contented to leave their old home.

Here is a fine young man who has a call to preach, and he longs to make his life one great sacrifice. So he goes and leaves the altar of home that was waiting for and needed just such an offering as he, and he only, perhaps, could have laid thereon.

But alas! no one has a call to take care of the old folks. As with the sons so with the daughters. They go away from home to teach, to work in factories, to tend counters, to become type-writers and telegraph operators, to be trained as nurses, to become lady physicians to teach the

freedmen, to go as missionaries, to become wives; but, somehow, there is no nook in their abodes where father and mother can fit in.

So they stay on alone in the old home, and in their unselfishness pray for the prosperity of their children.

Do these children make themselves a greater name and more money? Perhaps so. Do they do more good and get more real soul satisfaction? Perhaps not.

And so it comes to pass that a multitude of old people—grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters—are left to be cared for by those who are not bound to them by ties of kindred.

Their kin are kind to them in one way,—they come to see them occasionally, they make them presents sometimes, they come to them if they are sick, they weep over their dead faces, and say, "How much we owe them!"

They give everything, perhaps, but just what the dear old folks most wanted,—a real home, the daily-ministration of loving hearts, and this, not as a duty alone, but a privilege.

One said pathetically of a dear old lady who had been endured, who had taken the poorest though she had done her best, "Grandma'am folded her hands, and went up to the graveyard to rest. It was the first time she'd ever had her own way since she lived with Seth's folks when they were willing."

Do you say that this is too strong? Do you say that there are comparatively but few old people who are left to actually suffer, that there is always some way provided even when it looks dark?

I admit it. God does oftentimes have a wonderful way of making up to them our deficiencies with his goodness; but where does our blessing come in?

Will he fill our cups to the very last if we are remiss in duty? Are we not growing old ourselves? How soon these active brains and busy hands will reach the maximum of their powers, and begin to decline! Are we prepared to be judged by the standard, "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again?"

What more lovely sight (for there are grand exceptions, thank God!) than to see the old and young in one family all joining to make one another happy and comfortable, where the old are young and the young old in their interests and endeavors for each other? You go out from such a home feeling as though a benediction had fallen upon you.

I know a daughter in her prime who is making the sweetest home for her aged parents and an aunt. True, she has some privations, but she has more compensations, so she would tell you, and as her sweet, satisfied face would bear testimony.

I think of another who was husband, son and daughter to her widowed mother for many years, and who now takes the greatest comfort in the thought that the dear one has reached that better world to suffer no more.

I bring to mind a dear girl who is just past the sweet prime of youth, who says, "I shall stay with father and mother now that the boys are all gone," and she is the light of that home; and also another who gave the best years of her life to the care of an invalid mother, at the expense of what the world would call "good prospects."

We do not know all the sacrifices these daughters have made. Such girls don't say much about sacrifices; in fact, they have so many compensations they don't think much about them.

We find, too, some happy examples among the young men. We know of one who is his father's only stay in his declining years in the care of a large farm, while brothers and friends have urged him to join them in more congenial business; and another who gave up for a time his great desire for an education that he might be feet and hands for an aged grandfather.

Then there was the "only son of his mother," who when her health failed and her mind became shattered, left a lucrative position and kept house for her, ministering to her wants like a daughter to the very last.

Such instances as these help us to keep our faith in filial duty. Would that they were more numerous.

These dear old folks deserve much from our hands, not only for what they have done for us and been to us in all the years

of our helplessness, but for what they are and are soon to be.

A long life brings dignity, honor and respect, and the added mystery and beauty of the life so soon to open up to them invests them with a peculiar charm and interest,—that life that is never to grow old, that home where they will no longer need our most tender and loving ministrations.

What shall we do with the old folks? Love them, care for them, work for them, sacrifice for them, give them the warmest corner at our firesides and in our hearts, and take our pay thankfully, reverently,—not in money, oh, no!—*Charity Snow in The Household.*

FINDING THE CONSTITUTION.

BY APHIA G. TILLSON.

"I am just as ashamed as I can be." A glance at the flushed face of the speaker confirmed the statement.

"Why?" and Chester Lennox, president of the Endeavor Society, looked smilingly into the eyes of the vice-president.

"Well, I made a most astonishing discovery. While looking over some old papers this afternoon, I found a model constitution of the Y. P. S. C. E. Imagine my chagrin upon learning that I have been a member of a society for two years with no knowledge of its rules. And more than that, I have been secretary, treasurer, and am now vice-president. How can I atone for the unconscious injury I have done?"

"Now look here, May Wilcox, you need not go on abusing yourself because of such a trifle," Chester interrupted lightly, for he saw that the girl's eyes were filling with tears. "You have not committed any very grievous wrong. The constitution is of little importance."

"Don't say that. It is of great importance. Our society is at a standstill, simply because we so little heed the rules that other societies live up to. May we not do something to increase the interest and influence of our society? May we not do something?"

"I don't see what," he returned in a tone of mingled indignation and indifference. "We can only be faithful ourselves. We cannot dictate to others."

"I think we can to a certain extent, but—just wait until I am president and see."

A year has passed, a year of great importance to the Christian Endeavor Society.

To-night for the first time for ten months Chester Lennox enters the prayer-meeting. He has been very ill, so ill that his friends despaired of his life; but to-night he sits in his accustomed place, thanking God that he is once more permitted to meet with the young people.

He is wholly unprepared for the changes he finds. He looks inquiringly at the young man who occupies the leader's chair. He can scarcely believe his own eyes as he recognized Luke Grey, who was such a veritable infidel. The room is fast filling now, and he glances at May with a question on his lips.

"Be prepared for many changes. I have been president, you know," she smilingly answers.

Chester's eyes opened wider and wider when the meeting began. The leader opened the meeting with a brief prayer, followed by a service of song; and Chester noticed with pleasure that the pianist merely gave the chord, then the active members rose and repeated their pledge, then a dozen sentence prayers, a few remarks by the leader, and the roll-call.

In the roll-call was the most genuine surprise of all, for, as he heard name after name called, he realized that nearly all those formerly associate members were now active. Somebody had been at work.

If I could but tell you the thoughts that flashed through his mind! When his name was called, he said, "Friends, I find my heart too full to speak to-night. When I realize better the reason of this transformation, I may do better. But after what I have seen and heard, I must reconsecrate myself to my Master's service. He has spared my life; I will use it for him."

When they stepped out upon the street after the service was over, Chester said, "Now, May, tell me how it was done?"

"Why, there is nothing to tell, it all came about so naturally. When you were

taken ill, I assumed the dignity of president. I impressed upon the mind of the Endeavorers that the constitution was not a mere string of words, I told them that it contained rules and suggestions that, followed, would make the society a grand success. Several of the others thought as I did, and together we brought the others around to our way of thinking. We held meetings of the executive committee, of the look-out, prayer-meeting, and social committees; and there was at last a genuine enthusiasm on the part of the whole society. The attendance increased; the meetings were more interesting; everyone was alert, earnest. This feeling could not be kept in the society. It went outside, and drew in the uninterested. There was a revival. Our ranks were increased two-fold. I do not wonder that you were surprised to-night when you saw Luke in the leader's chair, but that is only the beginning of marvellous things. God has been very good to us. He has heard our prayers."

"You have done as you said you would, have you not? I am glad that I was ill if I was a stumbling-block in the way of the society's usefulness. I see why I was ill, and I see, also, how unfaithful I have been in the past. God helping me, I will try to help carry on the good work, which has been so well begun."—*Golden Rule.*

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