

The Family

LET IT PASS. Be not swift to take offense; Let it pass! Anger is a foe to peace; Let it pass! Brood not darkly over a wrong; Which will disappear ere long; Rather sing this cheerful song; Let it pass! Strife corrodes the purest mind; Let it pass! As the unregarded weed; Let it pass! Any vulgar souls that live; Let it pass! My contentment without reprieve; 'Tis the noble who forgive; Let it pass! Echo not an angry word; Let it pass! Think how often you have erred; Let it pass! Since our joys must pass away; Like the dewdrops on the way; Wherefore should our sorrow stay? Let them pass! If for good you've taken ill; Let it pass! O be kind and gentle still; Let it pass! Time at last makes all things straight; Let it pass! And our triumph shall be great; Let it pass! Bid your anger to depart; Let it pass! Lay these homely words to heart; Let it pass! Follow not the giddy throng; Let it pass! Better to be wronged than wrong; Therefore sing this cheerful song; Let it pass!

ALICE AND PHOEBE CARY.

BY LUCILLA CLARK. Probably few books will be more widely or eagerly read than the "Memorial of Alice and Phoebe Cary," by Myriam Ames. The story of these sisters lives is told by one who knew and loved them well, and among the whole host of their admiring friends, probably not one more discriminating, more appreciative, more thoroughly fitted by a long and intimate friendship, and a loving understanding of their hearts and lives, could have been chosen to this delicate and difficult work. Whatever tests the critics may apply to this book as a biography, it does not matter. It is as fresh as any romance, from the first words of the first chapter. "In a brown house, low and small," to the glowing lines of the last poem Phoebe ever wrote, which ends the book. A friend had sent her, during her last illness, a basket of fresh cut flowers, and though they found her lying on her couch, ill and exhausted, she declared, after looking at them a few moments, that she was well, and twenty minutes later had finished her last poem, of which these are the closing stanzas: "And when my soul considers these, The sweet, the grand, the gay, I marvel how we should be parted, With father robes that they. "And almost long to sleep and rise, And gain that leafless throne, And put immortal splendor on, And live to die no more." In that "brown house," so often referred to in the poems of the sisters, Alice Cary was born April 26, 1820; and Phoebe, September 4, 1824. Phoebe says of it: "The house was small, unpretending, without the slightest pretensions of architectural beauty. It was one story and a half in height, the front, looking toward the west, and separated from the highway by a narrow strip of door-yard grass. A low porch ran across the north of the house, and from the steps of this a path of blue-flag stones led to a cool, unfailing well of water, a few yards distant. Close to the well, on two sides, and pointing their strong, thrifty boughs through the little attic window, flourished several fruitful apple and cherry trees; and a luxuriant sweet-brier, the only thing near which seemed designed solely for ornament, almost covered the other side of the house." Of this dwelling Alice says, in her "Order for a Picture": "Low and little, and black and old, With children as many as it can hold, All at the window open wide, Heads and shoulders clear outside; And far young faces all ablaze— Perhaps you may have seen some day, Roses crowding the self-same way, Out of a winding, wayside bush." Robert Cary, the father of the poet sisters, emigrated with his father's family, in 1802, at the age of fifteen, from Lynn, N. J., to Ohio, living on a farm, in Hamilton County, eight miles north from Cincinnati. He afterwards married Elizabeth Jessup, and of their children there were nine—Alice the fourth, Phoebe the sixth. Their father was a man of superior mind, but limited advantages, and the consciousness of his incomplete education made him diffident and retiring. He was fond of reading, but had few books and little time to spare from his daily toil; for during many years, the shadow of heavy debt rested on his life, shutting out from it, both for himself and family, much of its brightness. The mother was blue-eyed and beautiful. Alice writes: "A lady, the loveliest ever the sun Looked down upon, you must part for me. O, if I could only make you see! The clear blue eyes, the tender smile, The sovereign sweetness, the tender grace, The woman's soul and the angel's face, That are beaming on me all the while, I need not speak these foolish words; Yet one word tells you all I would say— She is my mother. You will agree, That that rest may be thrown away." "From their father," says the author, "the sisters inherited the poetic temperament, the love of nature and dumb creatures, their loving and pitying hearts, which so large that they sufficed all breathing and unbreathing things. From their mother they inherited their interest in public duty, their passion for justice, their devotion to truth and duty as they saw it, their clear perceptions and sturdy common sense. "In 1832, by persevering industry and frugal living, the farm was at last paid for, and a new and more commodious dwelling erected for the reception of the family, grown too large to be longer sheltered by the old roof-tree. It cost many years of toil and privation, this new house. "We thought," said Alice to a friend, in the Autumn of 1869, "the beginning of better times. Instead, all the sickness

and death in our family, dates from the time that it was finished. It seems as if nothing but trouble and sorrow have been sent down to us. In 1838, November 11th, Rhoda, two years older than Alice, died; and a month later, Lucy, aged three, to whom Alice was passionately attached. "Ever since," said Alice, only two years before her own death, "some one of us has been dying. I don't like to think how much we are robbed of in this world by just the conditions of our life. How much better I might have been, if I had a better opportunity in my youth. But for the first fourteen years of my life it seemed as if there were nothing in existence but work. The whole family struggle was just for the right to live free from debt. My father worked early and late; my mother's work was never done. The mother of nine children, with no other help than their taxed far beyond her strength, and died before her time. I have never felt myself to be the same that I was before Rhoda's death. Rhoda and I pined for beauty; but there was no beauty about our homely house but that which nature gave us. We hungered and thirsted for knowledge; but there were not a dozen books on our family shelf, not a library within our doors. There was little time to study; and had there been more, there was no chance to learn but in the district school-house down the road. I never went to any other—not much to that. It has been a long struggle. Now that I can afford to gather a few beautiful things about me, it is too late. My leisure I must spend here [turning toward her pillow]. Do you know [with a pathetic smile], it seems to myself like a warm-out slip, laid up from under the rug. I may be repaired a little, but I'll never be seaworthy again."

The mother died in 1835, and in 1837 the father married again. Between the stepmother and these young girls there was no sympathy of tastes or purposes. The woman was cultured, utilitarian, commonplace. The sisters ardent, unworshipful, eager for knowledge, and aspiring to a place in the wonderful world of society and letters, of which they knew so little and dreamed so much. Kept all day long at household drudgery, and at night studying, writing poems, reading what few books and papers they could get hold of; often, when candles were denied them, by the light of a rag dropped into a saucer of lard; and so, struggling and aspiring, they passed ten long, lonely years, and then their prospects began to brighten.

They began to be heard from in the corners of newspapers; letters of appreciation and encouragement came to them from generous, discerning souls, the poet Whittier among the first. In 1849, Horace Greeley visited them, and wrote long afterwards: "I found them on my first visit to Cincinnati, early in the Summer of 1849, and the afternoon spent in their tidy cottage, on College Hill, seven miles out of the city, in the company of congenial spirits, and departed, in among the greatest company my recollection of scenes and events long since past."

In November, 1850, Alice went to New York with little money, but with a determined will strong enough to brook any difficulty or discouragement. Early in the next Spring she wrote to her sister to join her; and, in April, Phoebe and her lovely young sister, scarcely twenty years of age, went to Alice.

About her going to New York, Alice said, a year before her death: "I know I stood in the stead of courage. Had I known the great world as I have learned it since, I should not have dared, but I did. Thus I came." The sisters set earnestly to work to earn a living by their pen, and succeeded, as every body knows. Their home was very modest, first, and their living frugal, but it was a home, nevertheless. Horace Greeley says of it: "To the maintenance of this home they brought industry, frugality, and a hatred of debt. If they had money but to pay for a crust, then a crust must suffice. With their indefatigable integrity, they believed that they had no right to more till they had money to pay for that more. Thus, from the beginning to the end, they always lived within their income. They never wore or had any thing better than they could afford."

As years went on, their circumstances improved, and every body has heard about one pleasant dwelling on Twentieth Street, which is here so vividly recalled that every reader of the book has a clear photograph of it. Hall, library, parlor, and the working-rooms of the busy sisters—they are all here, with their furniture, pictures, ornaments, books, every thing. One sees the very colors of the carpets, and the bright sunshade falling upon them from the windows—hung, with lace, delicately embroidered, from which were looped back curtains of pale green brocade, lined with white silk.

One of the most interesting chapters is descriptive of their home life and habits of work. They were both early risers, Alice being often at her desk at five o'clock, usually before six; so that, at breakfast, she had frequently a finished poem to report, sometimes more than one. Their work-day was a long one, ending only at twilight, when one of the sisters went to the room of the other, where the day's work of each was reported, and where, with folded hands and subdued voices, they talked of the friends who were gone, but who were ever present to their spiritual vision, and the thought of whom mingled in all their daily work and in the dreams of the night. Late in life, Alice said: "Lucy was golden-haired and blue-eyed, the only one who looked like her mother. I was not fourteen when she died; I may fairly say, it may seem strange when I tell you that I don't believe that there has been an hour of my life, since her death, in which I have not thought of her, and mourned for her. Strange, isn't it, that the life and death of a little child, not three years old, could take such a hold of another's life? I have never lost the consciousness of the presence of that child."

Another chapter tells us of their Sunday evening receptions; of which, who has not heard? and which, who does not wish to have seen, once at least, before the doors were closed, the shutters drawn, the lights out, and the gentle voices of the sister singers hushed forever?

Sad, to make one weep, is the story of Alice's last Summer, when she found—alas! too late—that she had long needed change, and rest overtaxed nerves and weary brain; but no repentance could avail her now, though she sought relief in country air, and the dear sights and sounds of nature; and after months of intense suffering, she passed away, singing her sweet songs to the very last: "As the poor, panting hart to the water-brook runs, As the water brook runs to the sea, So earth's laughing daughters and lambskin sons, O, Fountain of love! run to thee." This was the last of all the sweet and hope-

ful strains with which she had cheered so many hearts and lives. The story of her death and burial is familiar to all, as is that of her sister Phoebe, here so pathetically told. After her sister's death, Phoebe remained to a friend: "Alice, when she was here, always absorbs me, and she absorbs me still. I feel her constantly drawing me." How very true she drew her to the skies!

The will of flesh that hid, Is softly drawn aside; More clearly I behold them now Than those who never died." So Phoebe wrote, years before, of those whose graves she had led to at this date, lonely hill in Ohio; and it is pleasant to think, as we read in this beautiful story of two beautiful lives, that they, and those who went before, have greeted one another again. "Where never a rose of the rose shall die." —Western Advocate.

THE INSIGNIFICANCE OF OUR GLOBE. The fact is, that although when contemplating our solar system we are struck by the evidence of adaptation to conceive an immediately beyond the solar system, that we are most powerfully impressed with the conviction that there are other inhabited worlds. Insignificant as our earth undoubtedly is when her dimensions are compared with the magnificent proportions of many of the other planets, and still more when considered with reference to the grandeur of the solar system itself, we have a very real sense of our insignificance when we compare the solar system with the dimensions of the sidereal system. From the nearest of the fixed stars the orbit of Neptune would have an apparent diameter scarcely equal to one-sixth of the moon's, and the orbit of the earth would be but a point. Even the gigantic body of Neptune would seem to be but a point, as seen from many of the stars which are scattered in our heavens. But the fixed stars, far off as they are from us, are quite close in comparison with the stars which come into view under the searching eye of the telescope. It has been calculated that some of the stars seen with Lord Rosse's telescope shine from such an enormous distance that the light takes upwards of 50,000 years in travelling from us to them.

Now consider for a moment the flight of a ray of light from a star at this distance on one side of our system to another as far off on the opposite side. For 100,000 years the light speeds onward—each star and systems it rushes on but far away on every hand are other stars and other systems to which it comes not near. During 300 generations of mortal men—it is one conceiving that our race could outlast that time—the pulsations of the sun, the transmitted light of the tremendous light which separates the two stars. Yet during all that time—we are to accept the opinion of those who hold that our earth is the only inhabited world—the outward rushing light never approaches a single spot where sentient beings are to be found save one tiny globe, around which it could circle eight times in the space of the seconds which make up the vast period of its flight.

"I'M HIS MAN." The death of Dr. Robert J. Breckinridge reminds us of an amusing incident in his life. Some member of a presbytery—a country brother—complained that the city clergyman dressed too well, and thus made an undue distinction between themselves and their country brethren. Dr. Breckinridge, always ready to rebuke by their pen, and successful, as every body knows, indignantly denied the charge. "In a burst of eloquent anger he declared that he was ready to change clothes with any brother on that floor. In an instant, a short, fat brother, as broad as long, waddled into the aisle, and called out wheezily: "Mr. Moderator, I'm his man!" The vision of Dr. Breckinridge's arms and legs protruding from the baggy clothes of the other, upon the dignity of the presbytery, and spoiled the eloquence of the orator.

TEMPERANCE ANECDOTES. The Rochambeau Magazine says: "Several clergymen travelling together were much annoyed by a fellow who had been drinking, but who weighed much of his drunkenness that he might more readily attack the ministers. Standing near them, he remarked: "Well, his singular, yes, it is, that I never get drunk only when in the company of ministers." He repeated something like this, "when one of the gentlemen turned upon him, asking: "Do you have the reason for it?" "No," replied the fellow; "perhaps you can tell me." "Because," said the clergyman, "when with such company you get all the drink to yourself." This recalls the anecdote of Horace Greeley, who was once met at a railway depot by a red-faced individual, who shook him warmly by the hand. "I don't recognize you," said Mr. Greeley. "Why, yes, you must remember how we drank brandy and water together at a certain place." This amused the bystanders who knew Mr. Greeley's strong temperance principles. "Oh, I see, replied Mr. Greeley, dryly; "you drank the brandy, and I drank the water." On another occasion the philosopher's wit silenced some of his office-associates. Mr. Greeley had given an account of a wine dinner, and wrote that the party had indulged in Heidsieck and champagne, these both being names for the same kind of wine. His associates laughed heartily at his mistake, which they pointed out to him. "Did I write it so?" said he, with a good-natured smile. "Well, I reckon I'm the only man in this office who could have made such a mistake."

BREAKING STEERS. A writer in the Country Gentleman says: Steers I handle and yoke up the first winter before they are a year old, and during the following summer, to accustom them to the yoke, and to walk side by side evenly together. The second winter I put them to a light sled, and put a small rope around the high end of the head, not to guide them by, but to secure them from running away from me by some sudden fright or some other cause. I then, with a light, short whip, proceed to lead them to draw, to show them, step by step, how to go. I use few words with them, and few motions of the whip, not trying to teach them too many things at once. When they are a little older, I teach them to back by choosing a piece of descending ground for that purpose, with the empty sled or cart for a load. I never try to plow without a driver till the steers are four years old.

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