Jubilate.

REV. CHARLES H. SPURGEON.

EXODUS 15: 1-2—"Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him."

This is the first song unto the Lord which is recorded in holy Scripture. In Jacob's blessing of his children there are verses which may be regarded as songs; but they are mere fragments, and can scarcely be said to be sung unto the Lord. There are other couplets in the Book of Genesis, but this is the first connected song upon record. I should think that Abraham often sang unto the Lord; but we have no record of it. We can hardly doubt but that Isaac had his quiet psalm, as Enoch had, and Noah, and others who called upon the name of the Lord; but none of these hymns are left to us. This is the very first of those sacred songs preserved in Scripture, and in some respects it is first in merit as well as in time. At any rate, its august occasion lifts it into the highest place among patriotic hymns.

The song of Moses appears to have been chanted by an exceeding great multitude. Miriam, the prophetess, took her timbrel and led the strain, all the daughters of Israel going forth with her with their timbrels and dances, and the whole multitude of the people taking up the strain. Never had the holes of the Red Sea, or any other sea, heard such a song. There were at least 600 000 men, besides women and children. What an assembly! Millions made up that choir! Though their voices were little tuned to music, yet as they lifted them up, each one throwing his whole strength into the strain, it must have sounded like the noise of many waters, especially when they repeated the refrain, "Sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

SINGING WHEN SAVED.

I. It will be instructive to notice THE TIME OF THE SINGING OF THIS SONG.

It was first of all at the moment of realized salvation. "The Lord saved Israel that day out of the hands of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore; and Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses. Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord." There was no singing in Egypt; sighing, and crying, and groaning, and lamentation abounded there, till the Lord said, "I have surely heard the cry of my people." There was no singing that I know of even at the celebration of the paschal supper, on that dreadful night when they ate the lamb in haste with their loins girded, and their staves in their hands. Its first observance was upon a night almost too solemn for song. I do not read that they sang when they came to Succoth, or reached their first encampment; I doubt not that they sang anthems of songs when they found themselves free from their daily tasks, and from the Egyptian rod. No doubt there were individual songs, but the masses did not unite in concerted music; they were too worried and too much in fear of pursuit. No port, as yet, had arisen to write a lyric in which all would join. The hour of their complete deliverance had not yet struck. They marched on steadily, but they had hardly reached the time for triumph. When they had crossed the sea, and the waters thereof rolled between them and the house of their bondage, "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord." Their previous lives had been one long-drawn sigh, or one discord of anguish and fear and woe; but when their slavery was altogether a thing of the past, then sang Moses. The depths have covered the Egyptian host; there is not one of them left; "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord."

You will have noticed, perhaps, in reading the previous chapter, that Moses had said to the people (14: 14), "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." But now that God has fought for them, they are not commanded to hold their peace any longer. The battle is fought, and the victory is won, and "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord." How could they help it? Surely if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."

HOW THEY SANG.

II. Notice, secondly, THE TONE OF THIS SONG. "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord."

Note, first, that the tone is enthusiastic. There is not a dull line, there is not a dreary sentence, all through; it is full of force, life power; it is Luther's Old Hundredth Psalm, and more; it rises to a height of intense enthusiasm which cannot be excelled. The words are, "I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously;" and the singers endeavored to sing gloriously, too.

The tone is also congregational, being intended for every Israelite to join in it. Though Moses began by saying, "I will sing unto the Lord," yet Miriam concluded with, "Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously." This is a hymn for every child of God, for all that have come out of Egypt. Should not there be praise from every one of you? You in the back settlements, you that bear the mark of Egypt's lash, and smart from wounds still unhealed; you that remember well the task-master, and the iron furnace; yet sing ye unto the Lord. From Egypt lately come, sing ye unto the Lord! There should be sent up unto God by his church a perfectly unanimous harmony of praise. "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness!" Let all the redeemed of the Lord say so. "O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation." Let the song be enthusiastic and unanimous.

Yet please to notice how very distinctly personal it is. It is strikingly so. "I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously. The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation; he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him." Do not lose yourself in the throng. It is no egotism to resolve that if nobody else will sing, you will say with David, "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live." The fact is, that unanimity cannot become fact if each mind is not active in praise. We cannot have a perfect accord unless each child of God feels that he must make his own distinct music melodious in the ears of the Most High. I tell you, brethren, if you will not praise the Lord this day, I will. Do you not say the same? Does not each brother and sister here say, "If so others feel bound to gratitude, yet I have such reason for thanksgiving that I will praise the Lord while I have any being?" In my case the Lord hath "triumphed gloriously," and if others will not take him to be their God, yet this God is my God forever and ever; he shall be my guide even unto death. I like the personality of this song, and would urge you to follow it. Some of you cannot sing unto God because you have no personal enjoyment of grace from him, and do not know God for yourselves. Oh, if this be your case, do not let you sun go down until you do know this God, and so can offer your own peculiar song to him.

Note, too, all through, that this song is immeasurably joyous. The Israelites were slaves enjoying new liberty; children let out to play. How merrily did they disport themselves! They did not know how to be glad enough. Let us give to God our unhinged joy. David said, "God is my exceeding joy." I know of no greater word than that word "exceeding;" because, however far you go, if your joy is "exceeding," it is above the highest; and however brave the description, if your joy be "exceeding," it surpasses all language. Believers ought to be unutterably happy. Men redeemed with the precious blood of Christ ought habitually to be almost too happy to live: men that are children of God, and heirs of the covenant, and are soon to be where Jesus is in the ineffable splendor of Jehovah's light, ought to feel their souls overflowing with delight. The pulse of the believer should beat hallelujahs; every heaving of the lungs should raise a *Te Deum*. Oh, if our minds could but rise into the heavenlies, where we ought to be, we should not only be happy as the days are long, but we should enjoy the days of heaven upon the earth!

OF WHOM THEY SANG.

III. Notice, the song is all of God; there is not a word about Moses. Read this song through, and neither Moses, nor Aaron, nor Miriam are in it. God is all in all: "I will sing unto Jehovah." That is blessed praise when self lies with the Egyptians at the bottom of the sea, and when everything that is in us that is commendable is traced to the grace of God, and the Lord is magnified for it. Oh for the glorification of Jesus, and none but Jesus! Brothers, we spoil our music by diverting our thoughts to man. Let us forget men, forget earth, forget time, forget self, forget this mortal life, and only think of our God. The song shall be all for thee, O Lord, for thou art all in all; and if we have one note that is determined to go astray, we will this day bind it with cords, even with cords to the horns of thine altar, O Jehovah.

Observe, the song dwells upon what God has done: "The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." There is nothing concerning the deeds of Moses and Aaron, or the pride of Pharaoh, or the craft of Jannes and Jambres. No, the whole is consecrated to the doings of the Lord. Let us trace all the mercies we get to our God, for he hath wrought all our works in us; he hath chosen us, he hath redeemed us, he hath preserved us, he hath sanctified us, and he will protect us in Christ Jesus. The glory is all the Lord's. Let us sing of what the Lord has done. When you read human history, read it to see the finger of God in it; trace all along through human story the silver line of covenant working; observe how the Lord casts the horse and its rider into the sea when they come out against him or his people.

The song also declares that the Lord will yet do. It is not about what evil men are doing, or what we are afraid will happen through their malice; but of what the Lord alone will do. He says, "Thou wilt surely bring them in;" he practices the whole affair finished, and Israel settled in the Promised Land, and this is his song. Come, brethren, let us sing the music of future, the music of what God will do. Do you believe that the Lord will be defeated in the long run? Do you fear that at the end Jehovah's everlasting purposes will fail—that Christ will have died in vain? Think you the eternal truth promulgated in this book will be driven out of the earth by modern thought? or that our old Christianity, for which our fathers bled, will become extinct? By no means. We shall conquer yet in the great name of Jehovah. Therefore let us take heart of hope to ourselves, and sing of what the Lord hath done so often; for again and again, "The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

Note, once more, that as Moses said, "He is my strength, my song, my salvation, my God," now he adds, "*He is my praise.*" The text in the Old Version is, "I will prepare him an habitation." This jars a little on my ear; it rather sinks the majesty of the infinite for Israel to think so soon of Jehovah as One for whom she could prepare a habitation. Building a habitation was rather the idea of David in his hour of decline, than of Israel in the day of her astonishment and victory. The Revised Version of the Old Testament renders it: "This is my God: I will praise him." The fact is, there are two words so nearly alike that it is hard to tell which is correct—"habitation" or "praise." Some of the oldest versions of all have it, "He is my praise." I never like meddling with the Old Version, however; so we will take them both, and make sure that we do not miss the meaning. Doth not the Lord inhabit the praises of Israel? We will prepare him a habitation of praise. As soon as Israel got rid of the Red Sea, clear of Egypt, clear of Pharoah, by the power of Jehovah, then she said, "I will praise him." O God, it shall be the business of thy people henceforth to praise thee! We have no bricks to make, but we will praise thee; we have no whips to fear, but we will praise thee freely; we are not slaves now but we are bound to thee forever, and we will praise thee. Then the people seem to say, "we will praise the Lord by regular and abiding worship." Inasmuch as in order to worship a place is needed, the thought comes up, "We will prepare him a habitation." We will habitually praise our God for this great deliverance. Let us build our God a house of praises; let us lay the deep foundations in love, set up the pillars with gratitude, and roof in the whole with joyous hallelujahs.

The thought of care comes before me in the Authorized Version: "I will prepare him an habitation," as if Israel said, "I will take pains to praise God, I will do it intelligently, and with my best powers; he shall have the best I can give him. My best is poor compared with his deserts, but the preparation of my heart shall be his; I will lay myself out that everything shall be done decently and in order for the praise of this Most High God. I will prepare him an habitation of praise. Does it not look as if Israel said, "The Lord hath come hither to this Red Sea to fight my enemies, and I pray that he may abide with me. I will prepare an habitation that he may remain. Lord, be not as a wayfaring man that tarrieth but for a night; let thy presence be ever with me, and I will praise thee always."

Three Ruffles and a Plaiting.

BY ESTHER CONVERSE.

My story begins when Miss Pillsbury came into the room wearing a black dress. Miss Pillsbury was my nurse. Patiently and tenderly she had watched over me through a dangerous illness, and now during the weary days of convalescence, she was untiring in her attention to an invalid's capricious fancies. I had so often watched her spare, erect form as it moved quietly about the room, that every peculiarity of outline, feature and dress were familiar. When she fastened her collar with a grim bow instead of the old-fashioned pin, I noticed the change. I knew the cuffs with the square corners, and the cuffs with the round corners; the gray dress with the scanty ruffle and plain over-skirt, and the quaint double gown with its odd colors and large figures; but this black dress I had never seen, and my languid mind was aroused to something like real interest in the new article of apparel.

I counted the ruffles, then the shirrings, and in a vague way tried to estimate the number of times the needle-woman had stitched her weary way around the skirt. It was too much for my weary nerves, and with an involuntary "Oh dear!" I closed my eyes.

Instantly Miss Pillsbury was by my side.

"What is it?" she asked; "is it the sinking feeling or the numbness?"

"It's neither; it's that dress. You didn't do it yourself?"

"Every stitch of it. I ain't proud of it neither; seems it'll never will wear out."

"How could you?" I asked faintly.

"Well, I don't wonder you ask. I wonder myself. But the thing has been a means of grace to me, it 'twa'n't all misspent time."

"Tell me about it, please. I like to hear you talk," I said, coaxing her with this bit of flattery.

"Do you know I" she asked, smoothing down the ruffles. "'Tain't much to tell, and it ain't much of a dress, though it cost so dear. Yes, it's cashmere, seventy-five cents a yard, double width; and I paid thirty-seven cents for the buttons and about a dollar for the other fixings. That wa'n't what I meant; a good black cashmere's about the cheapest dress you can buy, for it holds its color, and dyes as good as new time and again, and you can generally match it anywheres, which is a great help to folks who try to keep step with the fashions.

"Yes, I'm just going to begin. I bought it down to Porter's, and when I opened out the bundle to home it looked just as good as Mis. Square Harwood's silk. I s'pose that's what made me think on't, and I said right out to Mandy, 'I've a good mind to put on three shirred ruffles and plaiting.' 'You'd be a fool if you do,' said Mandy, kind of snappish, and that riled me. I was tired and fretted over my trading, and without waiting to consider, I set right down and cut 'em all out. I had yard upon yard of ruffle, and being bias, I had to hem 'em all by hand with split silk. I wouldn't ask Mandy to help, and she wouldn't offer, and the time I set over 'em is passing belief. This was a Thursday, and Sunday I got near enought to Mis. Harwood to see that she had four shirrs into hers; but I'd started mine with six, so I went on. I got up early and sat up late, and left everything flying about the house. A Monday night Deacon Pearce come for me to go to his house and help awhile; he said Mis. Pearce was ailin', and suspicioned she was going to be hard sick, but I made out to him that I was so drove I could't go anyway till Thursday, and he went off disappointed enough.

"My dress was pretty well along by Wednesday, and when the prayer-meetin' bell rung I was real glad for an excuse to get up, for I'd set there the whole endurin' day. We was a little late going in, and just then they broke out singing,—

'One more day's work for Jesus.'

Land! It came home to me like a shot, and I began to remember things that I'd neglected for that sewing. There was the dress I'd offered to make for that little Jones girl; the poor child had come twice to see about it, and I'd sent her off in a hurry; and the man I'd refused a mouthful of bread that day, because I didn't want to stop sewing; and I remembered I hadn't even fed my poor hens shut up in the coop, to say nothing of Deacon Pearse's wife, who'd been my bosom friend in my young days. All these things started up in my mind, and by the time they sang,—

'One more day's work for Jesus,
How sweet the work has been,'

I was fit to drop. I don't know what possessed Parson Hoyt that night, but if he'd 'a known my circumstances he couldn't have selected hymns that would 'a broke me down quicker. They went on to 'Go work in my vineyard,' and ended with 'Where hast thou gleaned to-day?' Mandy nudged me when they sang, 'Toiling on, labor till the Master comes,' so I knew she was putting it all onto me. I went right up to Deacon Pearce's after meetin', and I found I'd come too late. The Doctor said if she'd 'a stopped before she got to the bottom of the hill, she might 'a picked up again, but she was so delicate he didn't see no chance, and there wa'n't none. She lingered a week, and I stayed till after the funeral and left things orderly for the poor distressed family before I went home. I couldn't help feeling 'twas my fault, and I didn't have much heart to go on with my dress; but the ruffles were all basted on, and it had to be finished, and there I sat with a lap-board on my knees a whole livin' day a sewing on these ruffles—six times around the skirt two and a quarter yards wide for every ruffle! I was cramped all over, and I s'pose I took cold.

"Well, the next day I was down with rheumatism, and 'twas two months before the dress was finished; and when I put it on to wear to Parson Hoyt's donation party, I didn't feel much set up by the notice it 'tracted. Why didn't I take the ruffles off? I couldn't bear to seem to waste the cloth; 'was all cut up so 'twa'n't no use. I've worn the dress nigh on to five years, and it's good's new now. Folks talk about the vanity and extravagance of the rich, but when we poor folks try to imitate 'em, we do a deal worse. I heard afterwards that Mis. Harwood paid twenty dollars for having her dress made, and some poor body earned that money in an honest way; but I hadn't time to waste on such folly, and the good Lord punished me for my wicked waste of time."

"By sickness do you mean?" I asked.

"Yes, and other ways," answered Miss Pillsbury evasively.

"Tell me, please," I said. "I want to hear it all."

"Do you, now? You're sure you don't feel a bit tired?" she asked.

Being assured, she continued: "You see when I was a girl Joseph Holt used to keep company with me some, and after his wife died it kind o' seemed as if he was coming round again; but after that donation party he stopped coming our way, and pretty soon he married over to Stoughton. His wife's a weakly kind of a woman that looks like a bit of washed-out ribbon; it's passing belief that Joseph should 'a married such a woman; but his sister's a great friend of mine, and 'twas a disappointment to her, and she told me that he said he liked me better'n anybody, but my dress at Parson Hoyt's party indicated an unsuitableness that was convincing; he wouldn't 'a believed I would indulge in such extravagance and vanity.

"There, now, it's past time for your drops and I've been runnin' on until you're all tired out."

My faithful nurse shook my pillows, arranged the coverings, and left me to enjoy my nap while she went to afternoon service at Parson Hoyt's. When I awoke she was by my side in her usual gray dress, and the story I had heard seemed a dream until I saw in the reddened eyes and tear-stained face that something had occurred to disturb the usual cheerful bearing of patient Miss Pillsbury.

The Prayer-Meeting.

"Is there anything more appalling than apathy in a prayer-meeting?" said Ellis, putting her arm in mine on our way home.

It seemed to me that there was. The meeting had been more than usually Quaker-like. The minister had read and remarked; two prayers and two hymns, with pauses between, concluded the exercises. Nobody else had taken part, nobody orally, I mean. The gentlemen made no response, and, of course, no one else did. Ellis called it "appalling apathy." Not necessarily. Coming from the hurries and preoccupations of the day, it often takes a little while to get *en rapport* with the subject and spirit of the hour, and if one has nothing to say, it is best not to say it. Nothing can be more unprofitable. Silence surely does not always mean apathy. The silent prayer of believing hearts is the real power of the prayer-meeting. A restful sense of God in his human fellowships, caught from sitting with his people, is fertilising to the soul as dew on the dry leaves. There is often a lifting up of the soul in song too shy and delicate immediately to shape itself in words.

The weekly prayer-meeting, breaking in upon our busy life, sometimes comes like an ill-timed visitor, which we would gladly avoid, but somehow cannot escape from. If some easily forget it, rarely plan to go, and so never go, others accept excuses for staying away which acknowledge the duty of going. For there it is, an institution in our church life almost as much as the Sabbath services, which would be robbed of some of their practical power without it. It keeps alive church fellowship, and gives an opportunity for personal committals and suggestions very helpful to Christian character and growth. But a prayer-meeting is more than this.

"Yes, if we could have a live prayer-meeting!" cried Ellis.

"What do you mean by a live prayer-meeting?" asked another who had joined us. "Where people start up to speak with no point, only to hear themselves speak?"

"No," said Ellis; "but where the heart is full of some new or an old Christian experience freshened up, I like it to come out. People do not ordinarily talk to each other with much point as you say, but their talk may still be helpful and quickening. I meant rather live subjects, things that are happening."

"For instance."

"For instance," said Ellis, "there was that pitiful suicide last week. I would have had at our prayer-meeting something upon the sacredness of human life, the guilt of self-murder, that suicide means impatience, despair, ignorance of God and his care for us, and that the frequency of suicide shows an eclipse of faith in the public mind."

"Yes, a grand subject; but we cannot have suicides every day."

"There was election week. Is not that a time, when our minds are alive about the country, to talk about its dangers and its needs, duty and patriotism? Our young men need to have clean and clear notions of what Christian citizenship means. Then prayer for our country would mean something. Heaven knows how much need there is of it!

"Yes," continued Ellis, "things are constantly happening to make moral and spiritual truth vital and vivid, and where can it be better explained and brought home to us than at the prayer-meeting? Questions asked and questions answered, hints and suggestions given, people lifted up from rats, hearts opened to new inspirations, prayer with a real something to ask for."

Ellis is right. Such a prayer-meeting would never be dull, or prayer vague, reaching hardly beyond the ceiling. For prayer is prayer, not revery, not a mental fiction, not a duty which somehow benefits the heart with some obscure good, one hardly knows what or how, but a power which God has put into the very soul of his moral government whereby we may move his will, actually move it. Over or above or below the divine decrees of fate or the unalterable working of the laws of the universe the revealed idea of prayer is that it is a reality, a power as sure and individual as light and heat, that we may use it and get something for the using.

"In the China Inland Mission," writes a friend, "the work in many places seemed particularly discouraging, but in one native church under the care of a native pastor there were always inquirers, conversions, and additions to the church. This was so remarkable as to excite the attention of many of the workers in China. One of the missionaries on going home to England was met by a gentleman from Bristol, who invited him to his house and surprised him by asking the most careful questions, showing a remarkable acquaintance with the work. In the course of conversation it was found that the Bristol gentleman had undertaken some time previous the support of this native pastor on condition that the pastor would send him regular and full accounts of the work. The missionary said he understood the native pastor's success when he heard this gentleman pray. He prayed for the young converts by name, for the inquirers, for their various difficulties, for the pastor and the native Christians. He prayed with faith, as one speaking to a dear and tried friend, and now comes an answer, for he was answered. God had honored that man's intelligent and believing prayer. I could not keep back my tears. We want just such a blessing for Jaffna." Yes, for our own churches everywhere.—*Christian Weekly.*

Giving and Taking Offence.

Everybody admits the sinfulness of giving offence, because he can do that while still thinking of his neighbor. But comparatively few reflect upon the impropriety of taking offence, because to do that would involve self-condemnation. Yet they are kindred faults, and commonly also near neighbors. He who is slow to put a wrong construction on the words or actions of another will generally be tender in his dealings with his fellow-men. But the man who rides rough-shod over the feelings of others, will be the first to make an outcry if one wounds his sensibilities.

The root of both evils is self-conceit. In giving offence, the man is so enamored of his own way, and so determined to have it, that he is, unconsciously it may be, yet utterly, oblivious of the right of others to have opinions of their own, and to set them forth with as much earnest zeal as they can command. It may be true that his way is the best way; but if they are members of the association equally with him, they have a right to be consulted, and they need to be persuaded. Mere dogmatism is not persuasion, and dictation is not one of the most approved methods of convincing; and so, when a man expects that the mere putting through of his scheme is all that is to be cared for, he cannot but give offence all around. He has forgotten what was due to others in the exaggerated estimate which he has formed of the value of his own project.

This is a form of thoughtlessness which is far too common in all societies and is not by any means unknown in our churches. The apostle indeed has said, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others," but so far as our observation goes his words are very generally ignored. The last thing men think of is how another will be affected. They must carry their point. If they can do that without hurting any one, well; but if any one is hurt, that is his own affair, they have nothing to do with it. They are driving an express train, and all meaner things must get off the track, or be knocked over. Now this may be very smart, but it is not Christianity; and the man who is guilty of it has need to sit down and study the Saviour's words, "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." The rule which Paul has laid down for ministers is good for all, "Give none offence in anything." By our nonconformity to the world we make emphatic protest against its evils, and we need not and ought not to add to the offence which they give by making it in an inconsiderate manner; while in our intercourse with our fellow-Christians, we should see to it that even when we are compelled to differ from them we treat them with courtesy, and that we frankly accord to them the rights which we claim for ourselves. We are not responsible for all that they may say, or for any perversion of our words which they may make; but we are responsible for our own disposition and our own expressions, and therefore we have this apostolic injunction, "If it be possible, *as much as lieth in you*, live peaceably with all men."—*Christian at Work.*

Charles Dickens with his Children.

The eldest daughter of Mr. Dickens has lately given in an English magazine, some interesting recollections of her father's life at home, with his own little ones around him. He was very fond of his boys and girls, and took special pains with them, writing little prayers for them, as soon as they could speak, giving them prizes for good behavior, for perfect lessons, and for clean and neat copybooks. Indeed, many of you know that the charming Child's History of England, which is a favorite with thousands of young folks, was written by Mr. Dickens for the delight and profit of his children.

Mr. Dickens was always bright and merry at home, and the children were never so happy as when they were with him. They were taught to tiptoe past papa's study, and to speak softly when in its neighborhood, because papa was not to be disturbed when he was writing. But when work hours were over, papa was their most delightful playmate, coming out strongly in the telling of funny stories and singing funny songs, with a child on each knee, and the rest clustered closely around him. Charles Dickens was very fond of acting, in which he excelled, and he often arranged little plays for his children, with parts adapted to each, himself teaching and training the little company, until every member understood his part perfectly. Sometimes he would perform for them as a conjurer, and again he and his friend John Leech would dance with the little girls, who had taken immense pains to instruct their tall partners in the act of dancing the polka.

If papa promised one of the children a present, punctually to the hour and the day the gift for that child would arrive. Once a little daughter had been told to expect a watch on her birthday, and when the day came Mr. Dickens was ill and in bed. But the child was sent for, and from under his pillow the kind father having pished her many returns of the day, drew forth a case containing a gold watch with an enamelled back, and the little girl's initials thereon. It was almost a passion with him to surprise his children with some rare pleasure. Not to speak of drives, and walks, and rambles to gather flowers, when the furnishing of a house or a room was in question Mr. Dickens took great pains to please the taste of each occupant, not forgetting the children. Thus, on the removal to Tavistock House, the two daughters were promised a very lovely bedroom, for which they were allowed to choose a bright wall paper with a pattern of wild flowers, while they were not allowed so much as to peep at the apartment until it was entirely ready for their use. When ushered into it at last there were two little beds, two little tables, two, in fact, of everything, just the right size for children, and all as dainty and delicately finished as could be found in London.

The Dickens household was fond of pets, and had them in great variety. A canary named Dick was a privileged character, permitted to hop about the breakfast table and eat from people's plates as he chose. He would even give Mr. Dickens a bath in his saucer now and then. Dick loved his place dearly, and would come to her on call from any part of the room. Sometimes, when she had been away on a visit, her first act on her return would be to open the door of the room in which Dick's cage hung and put her head in. This was always observed by the bird, who would immediately fly to the corner of his cage and sing the sweetest song. When poor Dick died he was buried under a rose tree in the garden at Gadshill, and Mr. Dickens wrote his epitaph.—*Margaret E. Sangster.*

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Infants Magazine "	"	"	[illegible]
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