

Poetry.

Times.

"Good times, and bad times, and all times, pass
over."
Then cheerily bend to the oar;
Through depth and through shallow, through calm
and through tempest,
The bark is still nearing the shore
O'er "times" we can neither foretell them nor rule
them;
Let us face them, however they come;
Pray God for one true hard to clasp through the
hours,
Till night brings us haven and home.
—*Trinity's Magazine.*

"What Can It Matter?"

BY THE HON. MRS. GREENE.

PART II.

Mary had a fair share of bodily strength, and a great deal of determination where anything of principal or duty was involved, and rather than leave the gate of Farmer Stock's pasture ground open, she was determined to exert both these attributes to the utmost. But it was all of no avail; the gate swung back every time she thought she had fastened it, and Willie was already half the field in advance of her. She bruised all her shoulder in trying to press it into the holdfast, and worried and heated herself so much a pitch that was most unusual for so placid a mind; and at length, sorely against her will, she was obliged to give it up, and follow Willie's footsteps across the meadow.

"Well, you shut it, didn't you?" asked Willie, not deigning to look back as he heard Mary panting up behind him. "You ought to be Farmer Stock's own daughter, so you ought; you're so particular about trifles."

Mary did not answer him. She felt her temper was troubled, and she had no wish to quarrel, or to spoil all the pleasure of their expedition by wrangling; so that she walked on beside her brother in silence, trying to grow calm again, and to recover from the great exertions which had made the muscles of her arms and back ache again.

Sprat had the happiest knack of diverting people's attention to himself, by tricks and exploits of all kinds; and now, as if sensible of the silence existing between his young master and mistress, he seemed bent on attracting their notice.

The grass, which had neither been grazed nor cut since the autumn of the previous year, was now a good height—so high, that the blades came up to Master Sprat's shoulder; but instead of walking through it like a sensible dog, he suddenly began leaping and bounding in front of them, raising his whole body from the ground, and seeming to fly over the intervening spaces, while the ripe dandelion-heads sent off clouds of feathery dust, as he knocked them hither and thither.

But presently Master Sprat came to a standstill, and, pointing with his nose towards the ground, seemed all at once as if turned to stone. Not a muscle did he move, nor even wag his little stubby tail; but waited, with his eyes fixed on one spot low down in the grass, till his master should arrive.

"What is it, Sprat? Good Sprat! lie, seek it out!" cried Willie, fancying it was a field-rat or a hedgehog, or some such animal.

But Sprat made no movement in advance, and as Willie drew nearer to examine the spot for himself, a bird rose up from the ground with a harsh frightened scream, and mounting into the air above Willie's head with a whirring sound, continued, with shrill notes of terror, to express her sense of alarm.

"It is a partridge, Mary! just come here; we have actually lighted on a partridge's nest in the grass. I know the eggs well. I say, what a rare piece of luck; and ain't they beauties, just?" And Mary having joined her brother, they both stood for some minutes, thoroughly enjoying the excitement of the new discovery.

From this moment out all remembrance of the gate or their temporary quarrel passed from the children's minds. They took one egg, only one, from the nest, and full of new-born zeal for the expedition, pressed forward, and crossing the gate at the far end of the field—which was not so high or so impracticable as one as the other—they were soon on the borders of the glen.

It was now about the hottest part of the day, and the shade of the trees, when they reached the proposed end of their journey, was most refreshing. Willie revelled in it even more than Mary, for her large straw hat kept her head cool, and sheltered her eyes from the sun, while Willie had been obliged long ago to remove his, in order to place the partridge's egg in safety; nor could he grumble over this deficiency, as Mary had implored him, on setting out to take the basket with him for this very purpose.

The cool green atmosphere under the trees looked so inviting, Willie and Mary rested themselves awhile before prosecuting their egg hunt, and both being in high good humor, Willie rallied his sister on her obstinacy about the gate, while she snubbed him for his carelessness and general want of method and order.

"It is always the same cry with you, Willie," she said, as she tickled her brother's ear with a long blade of grass; "what does it matter? or, 'what can it matter?' or, 'why should it matter?' and then, in the end, it generally does matter a great deal, and some one or some thing comes to grief."

"I never say anything of the kind," replied Willie, laughing. "Besides, even if I do, I'm quite right to say it; for what can it matter whether one puts the kettle on the right hob or the left, or puts their spoon into the right hand corner of their mouth, or the left? and yet, if you saw me doing either the one or the other, you'd shout at me, just as if I was making the most awful mull in the world. No, no, you'll find out in the long run, Mary, that my plan is the best, and the less one worries and fidgets themselves over such trifles the longer one will live."

"Unless you live for a hundred years

longer than I do you will never convince me of it," cried Mary, laughing.

"And pray, supposing I were to outlive you by so many years, how am I to convince you of the fact when you will have been dead and gone for a century? But that's the baaze of your reasoning, Mary—a compound of old women's saws and logic!" and Willie, yawning, lay back upon the mossy turf, while Mary still pursued her occupation of tracing lines upon his brow, nose, and ears, with the feathery tip of a ripe blade of grass.

But by-and-by the workmen's bell in Farmer Stock's yard could be heard booming across the fields, announcing to the labourers that it was one o'clock, and time for dinner, and bidding the wives in their cottages look sharp and see that everything was ready for the good man, when he came home for his mid-day meal.

When Willie and Mary heard it, they sprang to the ground, and looked into each other's faces with dismay; so much time had been lost in crossing the fields, and looking after the partridges' nests, the morning had slipped by without their knowing it, and now they would only have time to make a hurried search for the treasures which lay concealed in the thicket of "old Stock's glen," as Willie irreverently called it.

He had "spotted," as he had told Mary already in the cottage, several of these prizes beforehand, and consequently, they were not long in finding and taking possession of some really rare and pretty specimens of the genus "egg," all of which were now placed in Willie's hat, both for security and convenience, and in addition to these, many other new nests were found; for the glen was not a common resort for egg-hunters, and the birds had, until now, built their nests and reared their young in comparative safety and seclusion.

It seemed to the children as if ten minutes had scarcely gone by, when the bell, from the farm swung out its summons again, and Willie knew he had now barely time to cross the fields and get home, so as to go with his father to the dairy fields, where forty or fifty cows had to be milked, and the cans full of the white frothing fluid to be driven home to Farmer Stock's dairy.

"What a bother to have to stop now, just when I was in the very thick of nests of all kinds!" cried Willie, testily, as he clambered over the rim of a branch, and let himself swing down to the ground. "If you had not lost so much time over that confounded gate we'd have had another half-hour to spend here. It's too bad! I wish you'd be satisfied to do as I tell you, and not always fight up for your own opinion."

Mary did not answer. She had sense enough to know that in Willie's present humor anything she said would only add fuel to his wrath, so she busied herself wrapping the eggs round in soft dry moss, and placing them again in the deep crown of her brother's hat.

Still, they had not done a bad morning's work. They had secured the much-coveted egg of the golden-crested wren, besides many other good and valuable specimens. And as Willie counted them over, and found they had a total of fifteen, his brow somewhat relaxed, and, whilst for Sprat, who had been chasing rabbits in a neighboring furrow, to follow him, they went out of the glen, and crossed over the gate which led them back into the pasture-field.

"Well, Mary, where is the bull?" asked Willie, as, having helped his sister over the bars, he turned to survey the field. "Like all your other so-called predictions, it has ended in smoke, and a nice chouse it would be now if we had to force open that gate a second time; why, father would have started for the dairy field without me, and I should catch it pretty hot for my pains. Come now, Mary, confess you were wrong: what could it matter?"

Mary shook her head, but still sought safety in silence; for, though Willie's arguments sounded plausible, she knew they were unsound and hollow, and that she had right on her side, though she could not at the moment make it appear so.

And yet the moment was near at hand which was to prove its truth to a demonstration, and give to her "girl's logic," as Willie had so contemptuously called it, a weight which even Willie himself would be forced to recognize.

Meanwhile, Willie pressed forward towards the open gateway, carrying the precious hat in his hand which contained the spoils of the day; his face was flushed with excitement, and his whole carriage exultant and triumphant. Mary followed closely at his heels, a little less triumphant, but still well pleased with the day's success, till they both reached the gate, which still remained open as they had left it, and through which they passed again, Mary making one more ineffectual effort to close it as she went through.

The pasture from this out was free of check or hindrance, nothing save rows of stately beeches marked one field from another; across whose stems, when necessary, an iron railing could be temporarily fixed to separate the grazing grounds. It was a picturesque pasture also, for the sward was undulating and close, and dips and hollows gave shady nooks, where the sheep could huddle together on sunny days, or in stormy or uncertain weather.

Willie began to lag a little in his pace as he drew nearer home, for the sun was beating down on his uncovered head, and making him feel faint and giddy.

"Run on, that's a good girl," he cried to his sister, "and fetch me out the basket from the house, for I cannot stand this heat longer; it is making me as sick as a dog; and for goodness sake call in Sprat, for his barking would drive a saint mad!"

Mary turned, as her brother spoke, and looked in his face, for she was afraid he might be feeling more ill than he said, at the same time calling to the dog to come.

"What can he be barking at! he is down somewhere in the hollow, and does not hear me. Sprat! Sprat!" she cried, pausing, and looking across the field.

At this moment there was a strange sound like the muttering of distant thunder, and Willie paused too, and looked round, while his face grew whiter than before.

"It could not be the bull?" he said, quickly; for the sound was not unfamiliar to his ear, and the suggestion of his heart found vent in sudden words of terror.

"Oh no, Willie! how could it!" cried

Mary, running a few steps forward, and trying if it were possible to catch a glimpse over the brow of the meadow.

"Come back! come back! I am you a mad-woman?" cried Willie, almost fiercely as again the muttering sound rose distinctly on the sultry afternoon air, followed almost immediately by a loud and brazen roar of anger.

"Good heavens! if it is the bull we must cut and run for our lives," said Willie, in a tone which sounded to Mary so strange and unlike himself, that she looked at him for a moment in unbelief and terror-stricken surprise.

But in another instant all doubt on the subject was removed, as the huge black bull belonging to Farmer Stock came round the corner of the hillcock, tearing up the gravel with his feet, and bellowing forth his anger and defiance.

"Sprat, Sprat, you brute! come here, sir!" roared Willie, furiously; for the dog was leaping up at the animal's nose, and evidently driving it to desperation. But it was no use to shout or whistle; Sprat was far too excited to hear or see any one; besides, there was the danger of attracting the bull's fury to themselves. So Willie, turning, measured with his eye the distance between his home and the spot where they stood.

"If the bull takes it into his head to give us chase we are lost," he said, turning, with white lips, to his sister; "we must only make for home as fast as ever we can, and trust to our legs to save us."

But even while he spoke there was a loud yell of pain from the unfortunate dog, and looking to the corner of the field, they saw poor Sprat tossed high into the air above the horns of the furious animal.

The cry of horror uttered spontaneously by both Willie and Mary, as they heard their favorite's yell of pain was perhaps the worst and most unfortunate occurrence that could have happened, for the bull seemed instantly to become aware of their presence, and, in this discovery, to lose sight of all other surroundings, and to concentrate all his fury on the human occupants of the field.

"Run, Mary! run for your life! he has seen us!" cried Willie, catching his sister by the tippet and dragging her forward. "If we could only reach the stile we would be safe!"

Not another word was said by either of them, but, distracted with fear, both children fled for their very lives. Mary was fleet of limb, and unencumbered by the precious capful of eggs, she soon distanced her brother, and was making good speed towards the haven of safety.

But Willie, already sickened by the intense heat of the sun, and still unwilling to part with his much-prized treasures, strove vainly to keep up with his sister. His legs trembled and bent beneath him, and the sky and fields and the flying figure of Mary, all sped round and round before his eyes. At last he ventured to look over his shoulder, and saw, to his horror, that the bull was close upon him; it was coming up at a furious gallop, at every step tearing up the grass and mould, and snorting threateningly.

Away went the capful of eggs—the oval and spotted trophies of the day—flying and hopping over the field in reckless disorder. For one brief moment this action was of service to the boy, for the animal, blind with rage, seemed for a time to imagine that in Willie's broad-brimmed straw hat his enemy lay at his feet.

Willie, who at every step stumbled and fell in the giddiness and terrible anxiety of his flight, heard Mary's voice call to him from the stile. She had reached it, while he—her elder brother, and superior in strength and courage—was panting hopelessly to overtake her. Why did she not come to his help? Why did she not call some one to save him from this dreadful death?

"Willie, Willie, make haste, make haste!" she cried; "a few steps more and you will be safe. Father is running up the road, and will be in the field in a moment!"

But all the fathers in the world could not save Willie now, for the bull was actually at his heels, and the scattered mould and clay were rattling sharply about his ears; he looked up and saw Mary standing on the stile, her arms stretched out to save him, but in the next moment he was driven with terrific impetus, and dashed headlong against the high laundry wall!

Mary gave a yell as she saw her brother thrown forward, almost at her very feet, impaled, as it seemed certain to her, against the stone facing of the wall; but happily this was not the case. He had been dashed against it, it was true, but the horns of the bull had missed their aim, and instead of plunging into poor Willie's body, they had struck the wall above, and Mary saw that before her brother could receive the necessary coup de grace, the bull would have to recoil a step or two into the pasture behind. She never stopped to reason; indeed she never knew exactly why she did it, but in this critical moment of extremity, Mary seized the lace dress, which was hanging on the wall beside her, and flung it hastily down upon the head of the infuriated bull.

The aim was a good one, for the curved horns caught the linen fabric as it fell, while the stones which had held the dress in safety above rattled down upon the animal's neck and shoulders. In his rage he leaped aside, tossing his head aloft to rid himself of the unlooked-for encumbrance, but by this movement he only succeeded in entangling himself worse, for the dress still clinging tightly to the point of his horns, now fell over his eyes, and dangled down in front of his legs to the very ground.

Again he recoiled, moving backward step by step, to shake himself free from the blinding hindrance which now covered his whole head, while muttering with an awful but suppressed anger.

"Willie, Willie, make haste! if you can only get up here and cross the stile you are safe. Here, here, I will pull you across," cried Mary wringing her hands hopelessly, as she saw her brother lying stunned and motionless at the foot of the wall beneath. What was she to do now? Another moment, and the golden opportunity might be lost. She gathered up her skirt in her hand, and, brave girl as she was, made ready to leap into the field again, and face the danger she had so happily escaped,

when all at once a strong hand pushed her aside, and some one jumped heavily from the top of the stile into the field beneath.

It was her father, and in another moment Willie was lifted up and partially helped partially dragged over the wall into a place of safety on the other side.

The bull, who at every fresh moment became more entangled in his linen noose, was soon secured, and a chain having been fastened into the ring into his nose, he was led away across the meadow to his own pasture field.

Meanwhile Willie was slowly becoming aware that he was safe, and that his safety was not owing to his own prowess, or his own skill, but to Mary's ready wit and dauntless bravery. He said little then; indeed he scarcely spoke all that long evening, but lay on the settle in the kitchen, staring into the fire, and sighing heavily to himself.

But that night, when Mary crept into his room in the dark, to bring him a cooling drink and to wish him a comfortable and restful night, he stretched out his hand, now hot with fever from the shock of the past danger, and drawing her down close to him, said into her ear, "Mary you are the bravest and truest little brick in all the world; if it was not for you and your 'girl's logic,' I should be dead and gone now. I'm sorry I have nothing to give you in return, though know you don't mind that; but this much I'll promise you, old girl, that with God's help I'll never worry you again with that most foolish of all my foolish sayings, 'What can it matter?'"

(Concluded.)

A Japanese Opinion of Foreigners.

A Florence correspondent tells of a curious translation of a Japanese description of Yokohama, with a detailed account of the manners and customs of the resident foreigners. Written with such naïveté, it was evidently intended for popular instruction. In the author's opinion, swinging forms a regular part of a European boy's education, in order that, having to seek his fortune in distant lands, he may not suffer from seasickness. The Japanese writer also states that the foreigners, although good men of business and excellent horsemen, entirely neglect that philosophical and literary culture so much esteemed by his own countrymen. He is kind enough to add that they are as clean in their person as the Japanese, and gives a minute description of their dwellings and domestic life. Jealousy, he says, is an unknown passion among them, and so much affection exists between man and wife, that it is quite a common occurrence to see a European couple walking arm-in-arm in public.

Wood Books.

In the museum at Hesse-Cassel, Germany, is a library made from five hundred European trees. The back of each volume is formed of the bark of a tree, the sides of perfect wood, the top of young wood, and the bottom of old. When opened, the book is found to be a box containing the flower, seed, fruit, and leaves of the tree, either dried or imitated in wax. At the Melbourne International Exhibition of 1866, Colonel Champ exhibited specimens of Victoria wood converted into small boxes of book form, according to a design adopted by that gentleman at the Victoria Exhibition of 1851, and then suggested by Baron Ferd. Mueller. Nothing could be more interesting than a library (to speak allegorically) of such imitation books, representing the different timbers of various countries which could be systematically, or alphabetically, or geographically arranged. Australia alone could furnish of such a collection over a thousand volumes. At the Paris exhibition of 1867, Russia showed a similar collection of wooden books cleverly designed, showing the bark as the back binding, and lettered with the popular scientific names of the wood. Each book contained samples of the leaves and fruit of the tree, and a section and shaving, or veneer of the wood.—*American Educational Monthly*

Photography and the Transit.

The plan to be pursued in applying photography to the observation of the transit consists in taking a succession of photographs at short intervals, say every minute, during the progress of the transit. Each of these will show the bright disk of the sun with Venus as a little black dot on it. This dot will appear in the successive photographs to occupy points which, taken together, will form the path traversed by the planet. From these photographs, or from enlarged copies of them, measurements are to be made with suitable micrometers, of the distance and direction of the planet from the sun's centre. These will give the path of the planet, and the length of this path compared with the solar diameter. This length is to be compared with similar measurements made at the stations selected for comparison.

Great hopes are entertained of the superior accuracy of this method. It has one great advantage over the usual methods. They can only be applied when it is possible to see either the beginning or ending (or both) of the transit. A passing cloud, a misplaced eye-piece, or a bungling assistant, may destroy the labors and preparations of months. But in the photographic method it is possible to derive the path of the planet from a portion, and any portion, of the photographs. Of course the success of the plan will depend upon the skill with which the photographs are taken,—the precision with which all errors arising from refraction, from expansion of tubes and plates by heat, and from irradiation on the photographic plates, may be detected and allowed for.—*David Murray; Scribner's for Dec.*

A hour life is made up of a number of small things. Little words, not eloquent speeches or sermons; little deeds, not miracles, nor battles, nor one great, heroic act, or mighty martyrdom, make up the true Christian life. The little constant sunbeams, not the lightning; the waters of Siloah, "that go softly" in their meek mission of refreshment, not the waters of "the river, great and many," rushing down in torrent noise and force, are the true symbols of a holy life.—*Donar.*

Scientific and Useful.

WALK IN THE SUN.

Complete exposure of the person to sun-light invigorates and increases the activity of the cerebro-spinal nervous system, makes a person feel strong, active, lively, cheerful, elastic, buoyant. In all diseases, therefore, where the mental faculties are involved, as in insanity, melancholy, despondency, dullness, confusion of ideas, etc., it is a powerful auxiliary, and, in many cases, a necessary concomitant to a cure.

WHOOPIING COUGH.

A writer in the *Medical Journal*, London, states that in cases of whooping cough in the last stage—that is, after the third week—he has had one ounce of the strongest liquid ammonia put into a gallon of water in an open pan, and the steam kept up by means of half a brick made red hot throughout, and put into the boiling water containing the ammonia, the pan being placed in the middle of a room, into which the patients were brought as the ammonia steam was passing off. This method, he says, was used in the evening, before bedtime, and it proved so efficacious in abating the spasmodic attack, and after three or four days terminating the malady, as to establish, beyond doubt, the value of this mode of inhaling ammonia as a therapeutic agent in tranquilizing the nervous system in the whooping cough.

TO CLEAR A ROOM OF MOSQUITOES.

Take of gum camphor a piece about one-third the size of an egg, and evaporate it over a lamp or a candle—taking care that it does not ignite. The smoke will soon fill the room and expel the mosquitoes. One night, not long since, I was terribly annoyed by them, when I thought of and tried the above, after which I neither saw nor heard them that night, and next morning there was not one to be found in the room.

TO CLEAN CLOTH GARMENTS.

Wet a sponge in warm water, and squeeze it out till nearly dry; then sponge one place after the other until all the garment has been cleansed. All the dust and soil will be absorbed by the sponge. But if the garment is very much soiled, wash the sponge in clean water several times, squeezing it as dry as possible by wrapping it in a piece of black alpaca. This method of cleaning is more effectual than a hand-brush, and many spots will disappear by the use of pure water.

FARMING PAYS.

A correspondent of the *New England Farmer* finds no cause to be dissatisfied. He says: "I invested my capital in a farm seven years ago, and owed four hundred dollars more than I was worth. I have cleared the farm of debt, increased my stock four-fold, have added fifteen thousand feet of store-room to my barn, and filled both the old one and the new one with the best of hay. I have repaired buildings to the amount of two hundred dollars, supplied the farm with necessary tools, and within the last year paid something more than one hundred dollars for education, and have more money due than I owe. I have attended to no other business. Farming does pay."

HOW TO WATER PLANTS.

Men combining both science and practice are settling down to the conclusion that the common practice of watering plants in a drench in slight sprinklings daily is, to put it mildly, not the best way. It merely wets and hardens the surface without reaching the roots, closing up the pores on the earth, thus preventing access of the moisture-laden atmosphere to the roots, at the same time affording a medium for the ascension and evaporation of the water in the soil. To show that they are forming similar conclusions on the other side of the Atlantic, we quote from some sayings of the celebrated Mr. Mechi: "The sum of our experience in watering amounts to this—that thorough soaking of the ground two or three times a week is much better than the same amount of water applied in dribbles daily, only sufficient to wet the upper surface, but not the under strata of each contiguous to the roots. Cold spring water should, before applying it to a heated soil, be allowed to stand exposed to the sun and air for a few hours. The colder the water is, and the warmer the soil, so is the necessity of applying it in abundance; for it is evident, though we cannot explain it, that the result produced upon plants by applying cold water to the soil, when at a high temperature, unless so copiously applied as to saturate the soil completely, is fatal to tender or weakly plants, and often less or more injurious to strong or healthy ones."

PREPARING POULTRY FOR MARKET IN FRANCE.

In the vicinity of large towns in France, millions of fat chickens or capons are sent to market every year, an enormous supply going constantly to England. When the fowls are put up for fattening, they are fed almost entirely on crushed millet, or barley, (or a mixture of the two), kneaded into a tough dough, to which a little butter or lard is added. Their drink is usually pure milk, slightly sweetened with sugar; and milk with sugar is frequently substituted. By means of this nourishing diet, the fowls acquire a delicate, white, and savory meat, and become fat in an incredible short time—often in ten days. Fat poultry is never sent alive to market. Capons, chickens and pigeons, are bled at the throat, hanging head down until all the blood has escaped. Geese and ducks are killed by a stab in the nape of the neck. The feathers are picked off with great care, to avoid injury to the skin, and after the fowls have been washed clean, they are well rubbed with whey or bran, which whitens them; the butchery is done at night, and they are hung up in a few raw truffles in each body. In the morning these are removed, having given a delicate flavor to the flesh.

His Highness Dhuhoop Singh has made his usual annual contribution of one thousand pounds to the Presbyterian Mission in Egypt. For more than ten years this gift has been regularly received.