

MINNIE MAY'S DEPARTMENT.

Chats Upon the Porch—II.

"Now, in the matter of books," said the City Woman, looking thoughtfully down the lane, "I think every farm should have its household library, and every farm settlement its little lending library."

"Two miles from here is Cross Corners, with its post office, store, church and school. Twice a day the train stops there to throw off the mail. Every evening the farmers in the immediate vicinity gather at the store for some bit of barter, a little purchase, and a good deal of gossip. Now, why should there not be a small lending library in the general store, or up-stairs in the wee best room above it; one belonging to the dozen farmers in the neighborhood? It might be confined to half-a-dozen good monthly magazines, and as many illustrated weekly papers, or it might consist of the works of the standard novelists and poets."

"For a young man or woman to have read all of Dickens, Thackeray, Scott, Shakespeare, and the chief modern poets, means a fair degree of cultivation. To read and re-read until every character and situation has become familiar, and the words of the writers drop in unconscious phrasing from our lips, means both strength and breadth of thought and polish of language."

"With such books for a standard, and the incoming magazines and papers to keep the thoughts freshly circulating, and hold their readers in touch with the outside world, the Cross Corners library would be sufficiently well-equipped and an 'unmeasured boon.'"

"What about the cost of it?" queried the farmer, dubiously, as he pressed the tobacco down into his pipe-bowl with a brown finger-tip.

"The cost of it," echoed the City Woman. "Well, the works of the standard novelists and poets may be had for very little. There are cheap editions. They are given away with pounds of tea, and newspaper subscriptions," she laughed. "But I should advise for your library well-bound volumes, clearly printed and finely illustrated. One derives much of conscious pleasure and unconscious education from good editions."

"Now, don't you think," she continued, persuasively, "that a social or strawberry festival, or a winter concert, such as you country people can so successfully arrange, would provide sufficient funds to start your library, while such an entertainment repeated annually would yield the ten or twelve dollars for the magazine subscriptions?"

"For I do believe in books. Man cannot live by bread alone; but with bread and books—the words that proceed, you know—he can get along very nicely. Have books, I say—the best books, if possible; but if not, the next best. Isn't it Oliver Wendell Holmes who says: 'Foolish books are like boats upon the sea of wisdom; and some of the wisdom will leak in, anyhow.'"

"Mary and I have the egg money and the berry picking. We might manage a book every month or so," said the house mother, thoughtfully. "Maybe we have made a mistake in saving it all up. What books would you advise, now, for us? We haven't much learning. We'd just like something pretty and restful like, to read in the afternoons, after the work's done up."

"First, have books with laughter in them," answered the City Woman, smiling. "Out here, on the farms, you grow altogether too grave. Jerome's Three Men in a Boat; Barrie's Thrums, and Auld Licht Idylls; Mark Twain's Tramp Abroad, and Tom Sawyer; Kipling's Plain Tales From the Hills, and every other book of this brilliant writer."

"And for sweetness and womanly ways, all of Mrs. Whitney's books, Mrs. Burnett's Kate Douglas Wiggin's pretty stories; even any of the Fanny books, by Mrs. Alden. These are very simple, yet pretty, womanly writers."

"A trifle deeper are the 'Autocrat,' by Dr. Holmes; 'Prue and I,' by Curtis, and Drummond's Essays. Yet these to me come before any other. And any one of these may be had for fifty cents."

"I do not suggest any novels of the day," said the City Woman. "They are too pessimistic. Out here in the heart of the fields and the forest trees you want only romance, and fun and nobler gentleness of thought."

"That's all I want anywhere," she broke off, emphatically. "I hate morbidness and sentimental pessimism."

"Don't you like poetry?" enquired Mary, timidly. "Mary's great on rhyming," chaffed Tom, who had paused with an arm of empty milk pails to listen to the talk. "She tries her hand at it sometimes; writes about 'bliss,' and 'kiss,' and 'heart,' and 'part,' and all that sort of stuff, you know."

"You are very glad I do, when you want to send a valentine, and can't find a word to rhyme with Lucy," retorted Mary.

The group upon the porch laughed. Tom changed his pails noisily, and went off down the lane, while the City Woman took up the question:

"Like poetry? Of course I do—only I want it in homeopathic doses. I should like you to have Longfellow, Tennyson, Mrs. Browning, Jean Ingelow and James Whitcomb Riley; Lowell, too, if you choose."

"These would do very well to start on. Poems are like confections, you know—meant to be taken between whiles as dainty bits of flavoring for everyday food; or, like music, or blossoms, or any other fair thing, they are as the interludes of life."

"My little girl," and the City Woman laid her hand caressingly upon the warm, tangled hair of the young girl near her. "My little girl, be very sure that I would not urge this matter of reading, as I do, did I not realize how much it means of culture, of advancement in high thought and lofty purpose."

"You have such favorable conditions for learning. Out here, you have nature in her happiest mood."

"Books will open your eyes to see her in all her workings. Good books will make you tender and true; aye, and full of gentle laughter. They will bring you in touch with the great world. They will teach you, all unconsciously, what life is, and how to live."

"Don't chafe because of your limitations and lack of opportunity; farm life is wholesome and sweet; but, in your endeavor to save money, be careful neither to overwork your body nor starve your mind."

Aurora.

FROM THE ORIGINAL PAINTING BY GUIDO RENI.
(ETCHED BY E. RAMUS.)

Closely related in nature, as in a fable, are Helios and Aurora. At sunrise the god of day does not abruptly appear upon the eastern horizon; as befits his royal state, his coming is duly heralded. The darkness of night is first displaced by the pale, exquisite flush of the dawn, which grows brighter and brighter, till at last the great golden disc of the sun begins to mount above the hilltops, or, it may be, to rise out of the sea:—this is the king himself, in his chariot of gold, starting forth upon his diurnal course athwart the heavens. In the poetic mythology of the early ages the dawn and the sunrise could not fail to hold a conspicuous place. Aurora, who personified the dawn, was sister to Helios, the sun. At the close of the night she rose from her chambers in the East to announce the coming of the day-god. Her delicate radiance had scarcely risen upon the world ere her resplendent brother came after in his blazing chariot drawn by those high-mettled steeds which foolish Phaeton vainly attempted to drive, and attended by the beauteous, circling Hours. Commonly, Aurora also is represented as swiftly coursing in a beautiful chariot, and in the Homeric poems she not only heralds Helios, but accompanies him in his daily journey.

Guido's picture was painted for Cardinal Borghese on the ceiling of what is now known as the Rospigliosi Palace, in Rome, and it is by many regarded as his masterpiece. "There is," says Taine, "a joyousness, a complete pagan amplitude about these goddesses, with their hands interlinked, and all dancing as if at an antique fete." It might seem that the picture would more appropriately be entitled "Helios," than "Aurora;" yet, as it is the early sunrise that is depicted, and as the brother follows so closely after his herald-sister, there is not much fault to be found with the title. Aurora, arrayed in luminous, buoyant robes, is appropriately relieved against dark clouds, suggestive of the lingering shadows of night; while Helios is bathed in splendid light, which seems to interpenetrate his very person. This portion of the picture especially is of surpassing beauty.

Guido Reni was born in Bologna in 1575. His first master was Denis Calvart, but at the age of twenty he became a pupil of Lodovico Caracci. He is a prominent representative of the Eclectics, and is thought to have realized some of the maxims of the founders of that school—the Caracci—with a success greater than their own. He is said to have been dismissed from the Academy of Lodovico by reason of that master's jealousy. His art activity was divided chiefly between Bologna and Rome. In the latter city he experienced the enmity of Caravaggio and other artists of the Naturalistic School, but his genius gave him everywhere a success which was only marred by his lamentable passion for gaming. He died at Bologna in 1642.

Life is not so short but that there is always time enough for courtesy."—N. W. Emerson.

THE FORCE OF HABIT.—Commercial Traveller (popping the question): "Oh! Fraulein Anna, may I offer you my heart?—extra quality—durable—indestructible!"

"What had the prisoner in his hand when he struck the prosecutor?" asked the magistrate of a policeman.

"I saw nothin' in his hand but his fist, sor," was the reply.

Big Man (turning round): "Can't you see anything?"

Little Man (pathetically): "Can't see a streak of the stage."

Big Man (sarcastically): "Why, then, I'll tell you what to do. You keep your eye on me and laugh when I do."

EARNST PRAYER.—An old Covenanter who ruled his household with a rod of iron is said to have prayed in all sincerity at family worship: "O Lord, hae a care o' Rob for he is on the great deep, an' thou holdest it in the hollow o' thy hand. And hae a care o' Jamie, for he has gone to fight the enemies o' his country, an' the outcome of the battle is wi' thee. But ye needna fash yersel' wi' wee Willie, for I hae him here, an' I'm cawpable o' lookin' after him mysel'."

UNCLE TOM'S DEPARTMENT.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS AND NIECES:—

In announcing the prize-winner in the word competition, I must express my pleasure at hearing from so many of you, and I only wish it were in my power to reward each one who has labored so diligently. The lists are excellent, a great many of them containing over 500 words, while there are six lists of over 1,000 words. Of these, the most correct is sent by Miss Kate Telfer, Telfer, Ont., who has 1,007 after a careful revision. Those entitled to prizes for the best answers to puzzles during April, May and June are: 1st, Geo. W. Blyth; 2nd, Henry Reeve; while the special prize offered in my letter of April 1st is awarded to Thos. W. Banks.

The Telegram.

"Is this the tel'graph office?"
Asked a childish voice one day,
As I noted the click of my instrument
With its message from far away.
As it ceased, I turned—at my elbow
Stood the merest scrap of a boy,
Whose childish face was all aglow
With the light of a hidden joy.
The golden curls on his forehead
Shaded sweet eyes of blue.
As if a bit of the summer sky
Had lost in them its hue.
They scanned my dingy office,
From ceiling down to floor,
Then turned on mine their eager gaze.
As he asked the question o'er:
"Is this the tel'graph office?"
"It is, my little man,"
I said. "Pray tell me what you want;
I'll help you if I can."
The blue eyes grew more eager,
The breath came thick and fast,
And I saw within the chubby hands
A folded paper grasped.
"Nurse told me," "that the lightning
Came down the wires some day,
And my mamma's gone to heaven,
And I'm lonely all the day;
For my papa's very busy,
An' hasn't much time for me;
So I fought, I'd write her a letter,
And I've brought it for you to see.
I've printed it big, so the angels
Could read out quick the name,
And carry it straight to my mamma
And tell her how it came.
And now, won't you please to take it,
And from it up good and strong
Against the wires in a funder shower,
So the lightning will take it along!"
Ah! what could I tell the darling?
For my eyes were filling fast;
I turned away to hide the tears,
But cheerfully said at last:
"I'll do the best I can, my child,"
"Twas all that I could say."
"Thank you," he said; then scanned the sky:
"Do you think it will funder to-day?"
But the blue sky smiled in answer,
And the sun shone dazzling bright,
And his face, as he slowly turned away,
Lost some of its glad some light.
"But nurse," he said, "if I stay so long,
Won't let me come any more;
So good-bye; I'll come and see you again,
T'night after a funder shower."

Puzzles.

1—CHARADE.

My FIRST is spread over my SECOND,
And then my WHOLE is perfect reckoned;
But I'll tell you more clearly—now guess if you can,
From his birth to his death I'm the history of man.

2—CHARADE.

My FIRST we all require to do,
Would we our pennies save;
My SECOND is myself, no matter
Whether gay or grave;
My THIRD, oh! never, never say
To want and woe 'twill lead,
And should ne'er be used by anyone
Who would in life succeed.
My TOTAL, SECOND, THIRD oft said,
Which left him in that state,
Let us beware lest similar
Should also be our fate.

ADA ARMAND.

It moves backwards and forwards, and upwards and downwards,
Earthwards and heavenwards, towards and on wards;
'Tis of silver or gold, or a metal much baser;
It regulates time and keeps thieves in their place, sir;
It has wards, though no guardian, save of yourself,
And it takes care of all things excepting itself.

4—DIAMOND.

My FIRST is in a sweet plum,
My SECOND is in Uncle Tom,
My THIRD is a man who drinks quite free,
My FOURTH is pleasing to everybody,
My FIFTH is a fruit delicious and sweet;
A boy did my SIXTH when he got it a treat,
And my SEVENTH is in bread which we eat.

THOS. W. BANKS.

5—ANAGRAM.

Sammy B would a great man be,
Started out this world to see;
With politicians he fell in,
Soon he hadn't any tin.
As a vag he was pulled,
Fore a beak severe was hauled,
When for sentence he was called,
Requested he was by his friends all
To be sure and not to squeal.
But alas! his couraged all oozed out,
And, "NAY, I REPEAT IT," he did shout.

HENRY REEVE.

Answers to June 1st Puzzles.

1—S C R A G 2—A F I O U
C H Y L E 3—A lie.
R V D E R 4—Consonant.
A L E R T 5—Master-piece.
G E R T Y

Answers to June 15th Puzzles.

1 The letters, which changes words into words.
2 D R A M A 3 Notable.
R A T E S 4 A book.
A T L A S E 5—A crown.
M E A S E
A S S E T