

For Friday Afternoons.

THE IRON GATE.

O. W. HOLMES.

Where is this patriarch you are kindly greeting?
Not unfamiliar to my ear his name,
Nor yet unknown to many a joyous meeting
In days long vanished,—is he still the same?

Or changed by years, forgotten and forgetting,
Dull-eared, dim-sighted, slow of speech and thought;
Still o'er the sad, degenerate present fretting,
Where all goes wrong, and nothing as it ought?

Old age—the graybeard—well indeed I know him,
Shrunk, tottering, bent, of aches and ills the prey,
In sermon, story, fable, picture, poem—
Oft have I met him from my earliest day.

In my old Æsop, toiling with his bundle,
His load of sticks, politely asking Death—
Who comes when called for would he lug or trundle
His fagot for him? He was scant of breath.

And sad "Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher,"
Has he not stamped the image on my soul
In that last chapter, where the worn-out teacher
Sighs o'er the loosened cord—the broken bowl?

Yes, long indeed I've known him, at a distance;
And now my lifted door-latch shows him here;
I take his shriveled hand without resistance,
And find him smiling as his step draws near.

What though of gilded baubles he bereaves us,
Dear to the heart of youth, to manhood's prime,
Think of the calm he brings, the wealth he leaves us,
The hoarded spoils, the legacies of time.

Altars once flaming, still with incense fragrant,
Passion's uneasy nurslings rocked asleep,
Hope's anchor faster, wild desire less vagrant,
Life's flow less noisy, but the stream—how deep!

Still, as the silver cord gets worn and slender,
Its lightened task-work tugs with lessening strain;
Hands get more helpful, voices grow more tender—
Sootho with their softened tones the slumbering brain.

Youth longs and manhood strives, but age remembers—
Sits by the raked-up ashes of the past;
Spreads its thin hands above the whitening embers
That warm its creeping life-blood till the last.

Dear to its heart is every loving token
That comes unbidden ere its pulse grows cold;
Ere the last lingering ties of life are broken,
Its labors ended and its story told.

Ah! when around us rosy youth rejoices,
For us the sorrow-laden breezes sigh,
And through the chorus of its jocund voices
Throbs the sharp notes of misery's hopeless cry.

As on the gauzy wings of fancy flying
From some far orb I track our watery sphere—
Home of the struggling, suffering, doubting, dying—
The silvered globule seems a glistening tear.

But nature lends her mirror of illusion
To win from saddening scenes our age-dimmed eyes,
And misty day-dreams blend in sweet confusion
The wintry landscape and the summer skies.

So when the iron portal shuts behind us,
And life forgets us in its noise and whirl,
Visions that shunned the glaring noonday find us,
And glimmering starlight shows the gates of pearl.

I come not here your morning hour to sadden,
A limping pilgrim leaning on his staff—
I, who have never deemed it sin to gladden
This vale of sorrows with a wholesome laugh.

If word of mine another's gloom has brightened,
Through my dumb lips the heaven-sent message came;
If hand of mine another's task has lightened,
It felt the guidance that it dares not claim.

But O my gentle sisters! O my brothers!
These thick-sown snow-flakes hint of toil's release;
These feebler pulses bid me leave to others
The tasks once welcome, — evening asks for peace.

Time claims his tribute, since now is golden;
Let me not vex the too long-suffering lyre;
Though to your love untiring still beholden,
The curfew tells me—cover up the fire.

And now, with grateful smile and accents cheerful,
And warmer heart than look or word can tell,
In simplest phrase—these traitorous eyes are tearful—
Thanks—brothers, sisters, children—and farewell.

Educational Notes and News.

Mrs. Quiney A. Shaw now supports at Boston 22 free kindergartens, with 42 trained teachers, and 1,200 children in attendance.

Mr. R. K. Row has been appointed to succeed Mr. Van Slyke as principal of the Ingersoll Public Schools.

Mr. Knox has been appointed to the position in the Wallacetown school recently held by Mr. James O. Black.

The Ontario School of Art re-opened at the Toronto Normal School on the 12th inst. Arrangements are being made to provide more commodious apartments.

The Windsor School Board is again wrestling with the question whether to maintain a separate colored school or allow colored children to attend the Public Schools.—*St. Thomas Journal*.

Mr. W. L. Wickett, teacher at Yarmouth Centre, has passed successfully the first year examination in Toronto University. This is another example of what young men of industrious habits can accomplish.—*St. Thomas Journal*.

The schools at Shedden and Clachaw have outgrown their buildings and the capacities of their present teaching staffs of one each, consequently the buildings are to be enlarged and assistant teachers employed.

Mr. Louis N. Thibaudeau, teacher, of Little Current, Algoma District, has been elected member of the Municipal Council of Howland. This is an evidence that teachers are beginning to be thought something more than peripatetic instruction machines.

The total number of pupils on the roll of the Perth Collegiate Institute for the month of September was 104, of whom 39 were non-residents of the town. Average at the Public School for same month, 355.

Dr. Tassie, of the Peterboro' Collegiate Institute, complains of the irregular attendance of pupils, who absent themselves with permission of parents, but against the wish of their teachers, during the latter days of session, when examinations are approaching.

The Peterboro' School Board has passed a resolution to the effect that \$3 and \$5 per day, respectively, be deducted from the salaries of teachers who are absent from their duties without the written sanction of the chairman. The principals are instructed to report.

There are about 400,000 persons engaged in the instruction of 10,000,000 of the children and youth of the United States. The teachers outnumber the other learned professions united about two to one.

A Saturday class for the benefit of the county teachers reading Mathematics and English for first-class certificates has been formed in the Woodstock High School. Seven teachers have already joined it, and others are expected.

We observe that Mr. Head, Modern Language master in the Lindsay High School for the past five years, passed in all subjects at the recent Queen's College examination at Kingston. Mr. Head stood high especially in English, French, German, and History.—*Victoria Warrier*.

In the recent Senior Matriculation Examination of Toronto University, Huron county has come notably to the front. Out of four first class honors and two scholarships, Seaforth High School won three first class honors and one scholarship. The remainder were