

The Home Circle.

I AM DYING.

The husband who can read the following without feeling the mist fast gathering in his eyes, is simply harder-hearted than we are :

Raise the pillow, husband dearest—  
Faint and fainter comes my breath,  
And these shadows stealing slowly,  
Mute, I know, be those of death ;  
Sit down close beside me, darling,  
Let me clasp your warm strong hand,  
Yours that ever has sustained me  
To the borders of this land.

For your God and mine—our Father,  
Thence shall ever lead me on,  
Where, upon a throne eternal,  
Sits His own and only Son.  
I've had visions and been dreaming  
O'er the past of joy and pain ;  
Year by year I've wandered backward  
Till I was a child again.

Dreams of girlhood and the moment  
When I stood your wife and bride,  
How my heart thrilled with love's triumph  
In that hour of woman's pride ;  
Dreams of thee and all the earth-cords  
Firmly twined around my heart—  
Oh ! the bitter, burning anguish,  
When first I knew we must part.

It has passed—and God has promised  
All thy footsteps to attend ;  
He that's more than friend or brother,  
He'll be with you to the end.  
There's no shadow o'er the portals  
Leading to my heavenly home—  
Christ has promised life immortal,  
And 'tis He that lifts me come.

When life's trials wait around thee,  
And its chiming billows swell,  
You'll thank heaven that I am spared them,  
Thou'lt then feel that "all is well."  
Bring our boys unto my bedside,  
My last blessings let them keep—  
But they're sleeping—do not wake them—  
They'll learn soon enough to weep.

Tell them often of their mother,  
Kiss them for me when they wake,  
Lead them gently in life's pathway,  
Love them doubly for my sake.  
Clasp my hand still closer, darling,  
This, the last day of my life,  
For to-morrow I shall never  
Answer when you call me "wife."  
Fare thee well, my noble husband,  
Faint not 'neath the chastening rod ;  
Throw your strong arm round our children,  
Keep them close to thee—and God.

A PATHETIC SCENE.

Sir Richard Steele says :—The first sense of sorrow I ever knew was upon the death of my father, at which time I was not quite five years of age ; but was rather amazed at what all the house meant, than possessed with a real understanding why nobody was willing to play with me. I remember I went into the room where his body lay, and my mother sat weeping by it. I had my battle-door in my hand, and fell to beating the coffin and calling papa ; for, I know not why, I had some slight idea that he was locked up there.

My mother caught me in her arms, and, transported beyond all patience of the silent grief she was before in, she almost smothered me in her embrace, and told me, in a flood of tears, "Papa could not hear me, and would play with me no more, for they were going to put him under the ground, whence he could never come to see us again." She was a very beautiful woman of a noble spirit, and there was dignity in her grief and all the wildness of her transport, which, notwithstanding, struck me with an instinct of sorrow, which, before I was sensible of what it was to grieve, seized my very soul, and has made pity the weakness of my heart ever since. The mind in infancy is, methinks, like the body in embryo ; and receives impressions so forcible that they are as hard to be removed by reason, as any mark, with which a child is born, is to be taken away by any future application. Hence it is, that good nature in me is no merit ; but, having been so frequently overwhelmed with her tears before I know the cause of her affliction, or could draw defenses from my own judgment, I imbibed commiseration, remorse, and an unmanly gentleness of mind, which has since ensnared me into ten thousand calamities ; and from whence I can reap no advantage, except it be, that, in such a humor as I am now in, I can the better indulge myself in the softness of humanity, and enjoy that sweet anxiety which arises from the memory of past afflictions.

SYMPATHY.

Sympathy is a delightful thing to receive when one is sick or in trouble. Some people require more sympathy than they can expect to receive. For every little ache or pain they require sympathy ; if they are too hot, they must be sympathized with ; they tell all their griefs and disappointments, and if they do not seem so serious to their hearers as they do to themselves, they complain that they can get no sympathy.

A lady said to her husband the other day,— "Oh, my dear, I have such a fearful pain in my head."

"I know it, my love," answered her husband (a "brute," of course), "and you have a pain in your back, and in your side, and you think you are going to be sick."

"You have no sympathy for me," indignantly replied the wife.

"My dear," said her husband, "I had an immense fund of sympathy, but you have overdrawn your account ; I have used up all the sympathy I could raise, on your terrible aches and pains, and now I have none left."

Before breakfast was over, the headache had quite gone, and, perhaps, the lady reflected that there was a little truth in her husband's remarks.

If you ask people for sympathy too often, and on occasions which are not serious, the supply of the real article is sure to run out, and they give you a bogus substitute which is unsatisfying. They say, "I'm sure I'm very sorry," "Dear me," and that sort of thing, and think, "Confound the woman, she is always complaining."

On the other hand, those who rarely complain, can, in most cases, find some one who will give them real sympathy in their troubles, and, what is better, put them in a way to remove them.

Children are spoiled by being sympathized with ; they become querulous and peevish. It is better if a child comes to you to show a scratch on its finger, to say, "That's nothing ; it will soon be well," than to mourn over it and say, "mamma's baby," and to kiss the finger and say "it's dreadful bad." By this course you bring up children to be cowards. Call for sympathy when the occasion requires it, but be careful not to make your calls too frequent, lest you overdraw the account.

THE VALUE OF KEEPING ACCOUNTS.

By all means let us admit that the habit of saving has a dangerous side to it ; that to save merely to keep is quite a different thing from saving that we may give away ; and that where pride, stinginess, or covetousness, are at the bottom of it, it is but selfishness in a specious form. No one is rich who lives beyond his income, but every one may be said to be so who lives within it. The habit of keeping accounts to some people seems the only possible way of saving themselves from waste and debt, while others pool-pool it as a piece of useless pedantry. And it is quite true that if the money is spent, writing down in a book how it is spent, will not get it back again. It is also true that for private individuals, at the end of every year, at the risk of their own temper and the comfort of their family, and the loss of much precious time, to insist on balancing their accounts to a halfpenny, is a kind of financial prudery which (all respect to Charles Simcoe notwithstanding) good sense will usually repudiate as utterly needless. But admitting all this, there is still, however, a real advantage in the regular keeping of accounts which is quite worth a certain amount of small trouble, and if not pushed to an extreme, is a valuable help to conscientious persons. Those who are methodical enough to apportion definite amounts to the various items of their expenditure, and who would be honestly distressed if the allotment, say to personal expenditure, were seriously augmented to the injury of other claims, have an easy way of ascertaining from their private record how far they are fulfilling their own intentions.—*Sunday Magazine*.

CURIOUS STATISTICS OF MARRIAGE.

To people of a statistical rather than a sentimental turn, the mathematics of marriage in different countries may prove an attractive theme of meditation. It is found that young men from fifteen to twenty years of age marry young women averaging two or three years older than themselves, but, if they delay marriage until they are twenty or twenty-five years old, their spouses average a year younger than themselves ; and thence-forward this difference steadily increases, till in extreme old age on the bridegroom's part, it is apt to be enormous. The inclination of octogenarians to wed misses in their teens is an everyday occurrence, but it is amusing to find in the love matches of boys that the statistics bear out the satires of Thackeray and Balzac. Again, the husbands of young women aged twenty and under average a little above twenty-five years, and the inequality of age diminishes thenceforward, till, for women who have reached thirty, the respective ages are equal ; after thirty-five years, women, like men, marry those younger than themselves, the disproportion increasing with age, till at forty-five it averages nine years.

The greatest number of marriages for men take place between the ages of twenty and twenty-five in England, between twenty-five and thirty in France, and between twenty-five and thirty-five in Italy and Belgium. Finally, in Hungary, the number of individuals who marry is 72 in a thousand each year ; in England, it is 64 ; in Denmark, 59 ; in France, 57. The city of Paris showing 53 ; in the Netherlands, 52 ; in Belgium, 43 ; in Norway, 36. Widowers indulge in second marriages three or four times as often as widows. For example, in England (land of Mrs. Bardell), there are 60 marriages of widowers against 21 of widows ; in Belgium there are 48 to 16 ; in France 40 to 12. Old Er. Weller's paternal advice to "beware of the widows," ought surely to be supplemented by a maxim to beware of widowers.

THE MAN WITH THE IRON MASK.

Miss Brewster, in her letters from Cannes, says :—"Among the many stories which cluster around the "Iron Mask," there is one which I cannot resist giving you. In the early days of that dreary captivity—those days in which the prisoner, whether from fancy or memory, was thus described. "as of handsome face, middle height, brown skin, clear complexion, and beautiful voice"—there was a lovely young lady in the fortress of St. Marguerite ; she was the daughter of one of the officials, and her name was Julia de Bonaparte. The mysterious prisoner fell in love with this lady, whom he had seen from his window ; and what feminine heart could resist a persecuted, royal, and masked prisoner ? The father gave his consent—they were married at an altar erected in the dungeon, and the devoted wife cheered the gloom of the weary lifetime. Two little infant sons could not, however, be retained near the unfortunate parents, and were sent secretly to Corsica under their maternal name of Bonaparte. From them sprung the Bonapartes, who are therefore Bourbons. In the course of a conversation at St. Helena, it was mentioned to Napoleon by a gentleman present that a person had come to him to tell the above story, and to demonstrate from thence that Napoleon was a lineal descendant of Louis XIII. The gentleman had laughed at the whole story, which made the narrator very angry ; he maintained that the marriage could easily be verified by the registers of a parish of Marseilles, which he named. The Emperor said that he had heard the same story ; and that such was the love of the marvellous, that it would have been easy to have substantiated something of the kind for the credulous multitude."

PAGANINI'S PLAYING.

Enter Paganini—a shudder of curiosity and excitement runs through the crowded theatre, the men applaud, the women concentrate a double-barrel fire of opera-glasses upon the tall, ungainly figure that shuffles forward from the side scenes to the footlights, with such an air of haughtiness, and yet so many mechanical bows. As the applause rises again and again, the apparition stands still, looks round, takes in at a glance the vast assembly. Then seizing his violin he hugs it tightly between his chin and chest, and stands for a few more seconds, gazing at it in motionless abstraction. The audience is now completely hushed, and all eyes are riveted upon one silent and almost grotesque form. Suddenly Paganini raises his bow and dashes it down like a sledge hammer upon the strings. The opening of the concerto abounds in solo passages, in which he has to be left almost without accompaniment ; the orchestra is reserved for the *tutti* and slight interludes. Paganini now revels in his distinctive and astonishing passages, which hold the audience breathless. At one time torrents of chords peal forth, as from some mimic orchestra ; harmonic passages are thrown off with the sharpness and sonority of the flute accompanied by the guitar, independent phrases being managed by the left hand plucking the strings, whilst the right is playing legato passages with the bow. The most difficult intervals are spanned with ease—the immense, compass-like fingers glide up and down every part of the key-board, and seem to be in ever so many places at once. Heavy chords are struck indifferently with the point or heel of the bow, as if each inch of the magic wand were equally under control, but just when these prodigious feats of skill are causing the senses to reel with something like a painful strain, a low measured melody steals forth and penetrates the souls of all present, until some of the audience break out into uncontrollable applause, whilst others are melted to tears, overpowered by the thrilling accents. Then, attenuated as it were to a thread—but still distinctly audible and resonant—the divine sound would die away ; and suddenly a grotesque flash of humor would dart up from a lower sphere and shift the emotional atmosphere, as the great maestro too soon dashes, with the impetuosity of a whirlwind, into the final "rondo" or "moto perpetuo."—*Good Words for February*.

ANIMAL INGENUITY.

The architectural ingenuity, or rather genius, of the tarantula is a fact long familiar to naturalists. This insect has an exceptional development of the instinct which instructs all creatures which are not protected by nature with a warmth engendering hairy hide to properly house themselves. The details of the tarantula's dwelling down even to the matchless mechanism of the doors of its edifice, have excited the wonder of all interested in natural history. The most elaborate invention in locks and hinges of vaunted human skill are distanced by the venomous insect in the construction of the door which secures its privacy. But the road-runner, between which and the tarantula a deadly enmity exists, is its master, as an incident which we are about to relate will show. The road-runner is a very timorous and incredibly swift bird. It is about the size of a pheasant ; its plumage is not unlike that of the pheasant family. It has longer legs, and a slenderer neck and body than the pheasant. It trusts for locomotion almost altogether to its legs, and runs with a swiftness that would shame a rabbit or hare. It is susceptible of domestication, and in time learns to come at the call of those who have petted it. But

it is a hopeless thing for a stranger to try to approach this fowl. It is as sagacious as a swift. We were put in possession of facts about the creature by Jose G. Estudilla, which excited our wonder and admiration. As we have said, there is enmity between the road-runner and the tarantula. The road-runner is as noiseless as a mouse. It lies in wait for the tarantula, and the moment it finds its enemy asleep it approaches noiselessly with a twig of the prickly cactus. Dearly and stealthily it goes on piling the prickly prison around the devoted insect, until at last a rampart of the desired height is piled up. It then selects a specially jagged and heavy piece of cactus, and drops it on the tarantula. The latter, awakened by the shock, endeavors to rise and make its exit. It is instantly impaled upon the thorns, and the triumph of the road-runner complete.

THE MINISTRY OF LETTERS.

How welcome the kindly letter of a friend ! Wearied with routine, or sick of self, how welcome the sympathetic word, or wholesome advice, that revives the soul, as the opening of a window garies the stifling air of a room too long closed. Sometimes opportunely, just as we are undervaluing self (not too frequent a fault), comes the friendly letter, reviving self-respect and just ambition by convincing us we are worthy of affection—perhaps by being loved too well. A letter is a betrayer of character. No matter how choice the words, how accurate the grammar, how plausible the surface meaning, throughout, beneath, above, is the subtle aroma, which, unconsciously to the writer, betrays his mood, gives the lie to his fine sentiments, and stampshim as a hypocrite or a scold. Beneath the forced gaiety runs the deep undercurrent, telling the receiver that his correspondent is ill at ease, indifferent, provoked or grieved with him or somebody else, however he may hope to hide it. The great charms of a letter is its naturalness and spontaneity ; its highest praise to be "just like the writer." Egotism, the lame and bore of society, in a letter is welcome, yet even there should not usurp the place of friendly inquiry, and reference to the questions of which the letter is the nominal answer. The gay, playful, witty note has its charming nook in the ministry of letters ; but the serious (not gloomy), thoughtful, elevating strain wears the best, is the most acceptable, and is faithfully preserved. Mark when a lively friend writes with unwonted seriousness, how instant the conviction that he has had a deeper experience, and how the heart goes out to meet the novel mood, for whereas he amused, now he awakens the chords of sympathy. Such letters give pleasure both to the writer and receiver, and are beyond price.

GALLANTRY.

What is gallantry but a tribute from the stronger to the weaker ? What right has a fresh-faced, ruddy girl, abounding in strength, to plant herself in front of a weary man in a way that plainly indicates her expectation that he will yield his seat ? What right has she to take it, indeed ? Why should she not rise and give a seat to an old man, instead of accepting his ?

Now, we submit that the fault is partly with ill-bred women. They take seats as if they belonged to them. We almost always surrender to a standing lady, however weary our legs may be, and not one in six has courtesy enough to say, "thank you." A very weary and very plain woman, with none of the varnish of society, no knowledge of the proprieties and improprieties, stood in front of us the other day. We offered her the seat, and she hesitated. "I hate to take your seat," she said. She was a lady.

The very women who complain of a lack of gallantry, never give place themselves to older and weaker people. The sight of a young lady giving a seat to a feeble old man would work wonders of gallantry among men. "See that tired man !" exclaimed a lady alongside of us the other evening, and squeezing her silks, she made room for a weary and earth-soiled Irish laborer. There was gallantry.

Some men get up for pretty faces and fine clothes ; but we know a man who gives his seat to a weary washerwoman with a basket of clothes, and that whether she be Irish or African. And when we see this we say, Behold a gentleman, indeed ! The true-hearted courtesy of such a man is worth more than all the hand-kissing and bowing of a hundred knee-buckled courtiers.—*Reporter*.

Sawdust and Chips.

The feature of our age—Cheek.

Thomas Hood once admonished a gossiping Christian to be aware lest her piety should prove, after all, to be nothing better than Mag-piety. Jeremy Taylor says that "a good wife should be a looking-glass to her husband." But we think she might, and should, make him see in her something better than himself.

A lawyer engaged in a case tormented a witness so much with questions that the poor fellow at last cried for water. "There," said the judge, "I thought you'd pump him dry !"

Nobody ever stands in the horse cars at Lavenworth, Kan. When a gentleman enters a car the nearest young lady rises and offers her seat. She then sits in his lap, and both are satisfied.

A voter, deficient in personal beauty, said to Sheridan :—"I mean to withdraw my countenance from you." "Many thanks for the favor, sir," replied the candidate, "for it is the ugliest I ever saw."

A doctor and a military officer became enamored of the same lady. A friend asked her which of the two suitors she intended to favor. She replied that "it was difficult for her to determine, as they were such killing creatures."

A young man went into a florist's store the other day to buy a rosebud for his affianced. Seventy-five cents was the price asked. "Will it keep ?" inquired the young man. "Oh, yes, a long while." "Then you may keep it." Exit young man.

Tom, during his last tour to Niagara, in company with Smash, saw an Indian hewing a small piece of timber, with a view to making canes. "Pray, sir," said Smash, "to what tribe do you belong ?" "The Chip-away tribe," replied the Indian, without looking up to give his interrogator one smile.

A young, quiet, sensible, good-looking country lass was asked what she thought of "snuffing and smoking." "Well," she replied, "snuffing is abominable ; but I would like my man to be a smoker." "Why ?" was immediately asked. "Oh, because I see when my father comes home ever see cross, as sure as he gets the pipe lighted and begins a blast he's a' pleased again."

Smith had quite a small nose, and was cross-eyed, while Jones had a very large nose. Meeting one day, Jones, after looking with a comical expression at Smith, remarked, "Lucky for you, Smith, that you're cross-eyed ; for if you wasn't, you never could see your nose." "Lucky for you, Jones," instantly retorted Smith, "that you're not cross-eyed ; for if you were, you never could see anything but your nose."

The wealthy Marquis de Aliere, who died some time ago, was so parsimonious that, seeing his servant one day with a smart-looking hat, he reprimanded him for his extravagance. "But it is the old hat you gave me : I had it ironed for a franc." "Ah," said the Marquis, "but I did not know it could be restored. Here is the franc you paid—I will take the hat," and he forthwith transferred the renovated beaver to his own head.

GENUINE ESTHESIASM.—Practical person (who fondly imagines that fadles were made to be played upon)—"Well, but what sort of tone has it got ?" Real connoisseur (who knows better)—"Tone, be hanged ! What's that got to do with it ? Look at the varnish, man ! Look at the double purring ! Look at the exquisite curves of the back and belly ! Why, I could gaze at that violin for hours, and I wouldn't part with it for a hundred pounds !"

A volunteer rifle captain, desiring to cross a field with his company, came to an opening in the fence large enough to admit two persons, but no more, to pass abreast. Unfortunately he could not remember the words of command which would have accomplished the difficult task of filing through ; but his ingenuity did not desert him, and, therefore, he ordered a halt, and then said—"Gentlemen, you are dismissed for one minute, when you will fall in on t'other side of the fence."

Two legislators were recently conversing upon the subject of voting, when one of them inquired, "Well, now, but what is a man to do when he don't know anything about the matter ?" "Well," replied the other, "I have got two rules about that ; when anything comes up, I keep my eyes open, and vote as somebody else does whom I believe to be honest, or else I vote against it. I believe, as a general thing, the safest way is to vote against everything."

DIFFERENT VIEWS. Elder Sister—"Won't you be sorry, Maudie, when the boys go back to school, 'tis so very nice to have them home for the holidays." Younger Sister—"It's not nice for me—it's nasty—for they've teased my dog, and worried my cat, and they've killed a rat, and scattered some malt, and knocked down my house that Jack built, and they've eaten my pudding, and eaten my pie, and spent my money, and made me cry ; they've laughed at me and thrown a stone. I'm sorry they came, I'll be glad when they're gone."

IN A BAD FIX.—About nine o'clock an old toper who had a considerable quantity of whisky on his stomach, was discovered hugging a lamp post at the corner of King and Yonge streets. His digestive organ repelled the load, and as he leaned over, vomiting, a little dog happened to stop by him, whereupon he indulged in the following soliloquy : "Well, now, (hic) here's a con-un-drum (hic), I remember where I ate the baked beans ; I remember where I ate that lobster ; I recollect where I got the ham (hic), but I'm hanged if I know (hic) where I ate that yaller dog."

In a Western city a cabinetmaker employed two Germans as porters to deliver his furniture. One morning he loaded his cart with a bureau, and gave directions where to have it left. "And, by the by," said he to one of them, handing him a shilling, "on your way back get me a pint of peas." They stayed an unusual time, and when they did return, it was soon ascertained they had enormous "bricks" in their hats. "Why, you infernal rascals !" roared the angry cabinetmaker, "you are both drunk." "Yaw," said one of them, "you give us the shilling to buy a pint of peas, and we drank him and we are both as drunk as ter teufel !"