

Youths' Department.

GRADY SONG TO NELLY.

Little Nelly is my Nelly
With her brow so pure and pale,
Slender Nelly, thoughtful Nelly,
Quiet Nelly of the vale.

Lily, lily shyly blowing,
In thy dusky, dewy dell;
In the shade all lowly growing,
Hangs thy snowy, tiny bell.

Listen to the spirits, Nelly,
Whispering in the leafy cell.
Tell us what the angels tell ye,
Nesting in the floral shell.

Quaint and wondrous little angeling,
White-armed, floating, airy thing;
Art thou not a flower changeling,
Bolen from the elfin king?

Shut thy waxen lid so tender,
On the violet, azure eye;
Bend thy form so lithe and slender,
As dew-laden lilies lie.

Sleep, thy Saviour watches by thee,
Tender truant from the skies!
Sleep, all evil powers fly thee,
Till the dawn shall bid thee rise.

—Independent.

POOR LITTLE ROBERT.—Poor little Robert! And why is he poor little Robert? He is dressed well and warmly, and he lives in that large, handsome house, an only son, an only child. His father is rich, and loves him as fathers are prone to love only sons, and he has many friends, and enough to eat and drink. He has also many handsome toys—a rocking-horse and blocks in abundance, railroads, and steamboats, and ships; and yet, whenever I see him, I cannot help saying, Poor Robert!

See how pale he looks, and what a mature expression of sadness rests upon his face. I say, "Good morning, Robert; how do you do this morning?" I am very well," he answers, but he does not smile, and speaks with a mournful tone, as if his little heart was heavy.

I never see him playing with children, and in the street he walks with the robot, heavy step of sorrow. Almost every day I meet him wandering alone from street to street, and sometimes he comes and sits upon the door-step, especially on Sunday mornings, with his little hands clasped across his breast, and his head drooping, while his full dark eye is fixed upon the sky, or gazing upon vacancy.

Poor little Robert! Very early in the morning he is sent to school with a little basket on his arm, which contains his dinner, though the school-room is but a little way from home, and all the long noon he lingers about with a listless air, never joining in the merry sports of other children, though always gentle and kind.

"Why do you stay all day when you are so little ways from home?" ask the children of Robert.

"Mother says I must," he says, and a deeper shade of sadness overspreads his pale face.

At night when those of his own age are permitted to leave school early, because they are little ones and get weary, Robert stays, though he looks more weary than the rest.

"Come Robert, why do you not go home?" exclaims some merry-hearted boy, who is full of glee, and whose heart is bounding with joy at the thought of freedom and a happy home.

"Mother says I must stay till school is done," Robert answers, while his eyes fill with tears. And when he does go home, there is not a gleam of pleasure upon his face; he does not leap the steps with the light bound of childhood, and hesitates before he rings the bell, as if he dreaded to enter.

Poor little Robert! His mother dreads to see him enter, too. She cannot bear the noise of children, tho' it seems to me that any noise little Robert is inclined to make would not disturb a mouse. She cannot permit him to go into the parlor, because he might "put things out of place," and the room would not be in order for callers. She cannot have him in the nursery, because his railroad and steamboats make her nervous, "she is so delicate." She cannot have him in her room, because almost every night when he returns from school there are dresses, and ribbons, and laces laid out for the evening ball or opera, and his childish curiosity might tempt him to touch them. He is not allowed to go into the kitchen, because "he must not associate with servants, and acquire their vulgar ways."

His mother cannot talk with him, because "he asks

so many questions, and is so streamy." He must not cling to her, and climb upon her knee, because he mangles her collar and spoils her dresses." When it is dark his father comes, and for a little while he is petted and caressed, and he feels that he is loved; but he is soon hurried away to some scene of excitement, and Robert goes to bed alone, and cries himself to sleep.

In the morning he does not get up crowing, and singing, and whistling and making a "terrible noise," as mothers know that boys are wont to do. No; Robert rises very quietly and steals away to some corner, almost as if he were guilty, wishing his papa would come down, for in his presence he feels a little freedom. But his papa sleeps very late, because he is out late in the night; and when he does make his appearance, he is in such a hurry for his breakfast, that he may "go down town," that he has no time to devote to Robert. Besides he has no idea of the desolation of the little boy's heart. He supplies him with books and playthings, and sends him to school, and though he sometimes thinks "he is not like other boys," and "fears he is dull," the mother has no such fears, and he is left again to his solitude.

Poor little Robert! Could he only open his heart and pour out his sorrows, he might learn to skip and play, and forget them; but there is something whispering, "She who neglects and chides me is my mother; I must not tell my grief." So he hears it like a hero and a martyr. Now his spirit seems to be purified and made manly and noble by his suffering. God grant that when he is older and is driven forth by his mother's reproaches, evil ways may not tempt him, and reproaches come back to her with tenfold bitterness.

The innocent mirth of childhood is too much for delicate nerves. May she not see the neglected boy become the ruined man; may the lip which she seals to childish prattle, and chills with her icy coldness, never burn with unhallowed passion, and taunt her with worse than heathen cruelty.

Selections.

OUR HOME.

From the Lamp and Lantern.

"God made the present earth as the abode of man, but had He meant it as a mere lodging, a less beautiful world would have served the purpose. There was no need for the carpet of verdure, or the coloring of blue; no need for the mountains, and cataracts, and forests, no need for the rainbow, no need for the flowers. A big round island, half of it arable, and half of it pasture, with a clump of trees in one corner, and a magazine of fuel in another, might have held and fed ten millions of people; and a hundred islands, all made on the same pattern, big and round, might have held and fed the population of the globe. But man is something more than the animal which wants lodging and food. He has a spiritual nature, full of keen perceptions and deep sympathies. He has an eye for the sublime and the beautiful, and his kind Creator has provided man's abode with effluent materials for these nobler tastes. He has built Mont Blanc, and molten the lake in which its image sleeps. He has intoned Niagara's thunder, and has breathed the zephyr which sweeps its spray. He has shagged the steeps with its cedars, and besprouted the meadows with its king-cups and daisies. He has made it a world of fragrance and music—a world of brightness and symmetry,—a world where the grand and the graceful, the awful and the lovely, rejoice together. In fashioning the home of man, the Creator had an eye to something more than convenience, and built not a barrack, but a palace,—not a union work-house, but an Alhambra; something which should not only be very comfortable, but very fair and very splendid, something which should inspire the soul of its inhabitants, and draw forth the "very good" of complacent Deity. God also made the Bible as the guide and oracle of man; but had he meant it as a mere lesson-book of duty,—a volume less various and less attractive would have answered every end? A few plain paragraphs, announcing God's own character and his disposition towards us sinners here on earth, mentioning the provision which he has made for our future happiness, and indicating the different duties which he would have us perform,—a few simple sentences would have sufficed to tell us what God is, and what he would have us to do? There was no need of the picturesque narrative and the majestic poem,—no need of the proverb, the story, and the psalm. A chapter on theology, and another of morals; a short account of the Incarnation and the great Atonement, and a few pages of rules and directions for the Christian life, might have contained the vital essence of

Scripture, and have supplied us with a Bible of simplest meaning and smallest size. And in that case the Bible would have been consulted only by those rare and wise spirits to whom the great Hereafter is a subject of anxiety, who are really anxious to know what God is, and how they themselves may please Him. But in giving that Bible, its Divine Author had regard to the mind of man. He knew man has more curiosity than piety, more taste than sanctity, and that more persons are anxious to hear some man, or read some beautiful thing, than to read or hear about God and the Great Salvation. He knew that few would ever ask: What must I do to be saved? till they came in contact with the Bible itself; and therefore, he made the Bible not only an instructive book, but an attractive one,—not only true, but enticing.—He filled it with marvellous incidents and engaging history; with sunny pictures from old world scenery, and affecting anecdotes from the patriarch times. He replenished it with stately argument and thrilling verse, and sprinkled it over with sententious wisdom and proverbial pungency. He made it a book of lofty thoughts and noble images,—a book of heavenly doctrine, but without of earthly adaptation. In preparing a guide to immortality, Infinite Wisdom gave not a dictionary, nor a grammar, but a Bible—a book which in trying to catch the heart of man, should captivate his taste; and which, in transforming his affections, should also expand his intellect. The pearl is of great price; but even the casket is of exquisite beauty. The sword is of ethereal temper, and nothing cuts so keenly as its double edge; but there are jewels on the hilt, and exquisite inlaying on the scabbard. The sheath are of the purest ore; but even the scrip which contains them is of a texture more curious than that the artists of the earth could fashion it. The apples are gold, but even the basket is silver. In speaking of the literary excellence of the Holy Scriptures, I am aware of a two-fold disadvantage. Some have never looked on the Bible as a readable book. They remember how they got long tasks from it at school, and spelled their arduous way through polysyllabic chapters and joyless genealogies. And in later life they have only heard it sounded forth in monotonous tones from the drowsy desk, or frozen in the atmosphere of some sparse and wintry sanctuary. So irksome and insipid has every association made it, that were they shut up in a parlour with an old Directory, and an old Almanac, and an old Bible, they would spend the first hour on the Almanac, and the next on the Directory, and would die of ennui before they opened the Bible. They have got at home a set of their favourite classics, and on a quiet evening, they will take down a volume of Chaucer, or Spenser, or even Thomas Fuller, or Jeremy Taylor, or an Elzevir Virgil, or a Foulis's Homer, and read it long beyond their time of rest; but so thin the Bible is not a classic. They don't care to keep it in some tasteful edition, and they would never dream of sitting down to read it as a recreation or an intellectual treat. And then there are others in a happier case to whom that Bible is so sacred—who have found it so full of solemn import, and to whom its every sentence is so fraught with divine significance that they feel it wroth or revolting to read it with the critic's eye. They would rather peruse it on their bended knees, praying God to show them the wonders in His Word, than with the scholar's pencil in their hand ready to seize on each happy phrase and exquisite. They would rather peruse it in the company of Luther or Leighton, than along with Erasmus or Grotius. We can understand the feelings of each. But we trust that both will bear with us a little whilst we endeavour to show that if no book be so important as the Bible, so none is more interesting, and that the book which contains most of the beautiful is the one which must ever remain the standard of the good and the true. And here we would only add one remark which it is important to bear in memory. The rhetorical and poetical beauties of Scripture are merely incidental. Its authors wrote not for glory nor display—not to astonish or amuse their brethren, but to instruct them and make them better. They wrote for God's Glory, not their own; they wrote for the world's advantage: not to aggrandize themselves. Demosthenes composed his most splendid oration in order to win the crown of eloquence; and the most elaborate effort of ancient oratory—the "Panegyric," to which Socrates devoted sixteen years—was just an essay for a prize. How different the circumstances in which the speech on Mount Hill was spoken; and the farewell sermon in the Upper Chamber at Troas! Herodotus and Thucydides composed their histories with a view to popular applause; and Pindar's stately pulses beat faster in prospect of the great Olympic gathering, and the praise of