

Choice Literature.

"What Can It Matter."

PART I.

Mary, Mary! listen, I have a piece of news for you! cried Willie Leonard, as he entered the cottage door, and looked round for his sister. "An, where you are at that everlasting washing-tub! I suppose you'll say now that you can't come with me?"

"What's your news, and where do you want me to go with you?" asked Mary, raising a pleasant smiling face from the tub over which she was stooping. "If you can wait until I wring these couple of dresses out, and hang them on the wall to dry, I'll go with you wherever you like."

"Why not leave them where they are, and come out at once?" urged Willie. "What can it matter whether you do them now or when you come home? A fellow can't have a morning to himself every day in the year; and, only think, I'm almost certain I've spotted a wren's nest in the glen this morning, besides a goldfinch's and a linnet's; so I want you to look sharp and have a good egg-hunt with me. I would have stopped to hag a few of them on my way to Farmer Stack's with the dairy cart, only I was late already."

"I am quite sure you were late; you need not tell me that as news," replied Mary, laughing, as she drew a long lino skirt out of the tub, and began twisting it round and round in serpent-like coils, allowing the soapy water to stream into the wooden vessel beneath. "I'd go with you now, and welcome, only I promised mother I would not stir out of the place until I had these two skirts hung up to dry. Suppose you go and hunt for the egg-basket, Willie, while you are doing nothing, for there is no other way one can carry them safely home."

"Not I; I'm far too tired to go hunting over the place for it, or anything else. And what can it matter whether we have the basket or not? I can carry the eggs in my hat, which is just as good a place, if not better."

"That's all very well; but you know they fell out of your cap the other day when Sprat jumped suddenly up at your arm, and, only it was in the field, they would have been all smashed and ruined. And if I were you," added Mary, shaking her head at the little rough-haired terrier who followed at her brother's heels, "I would not have you bring Master Sprat with you egg-hunting; he frightens the birds off their nests, and does no good."

"What a Solomon you are, to be sure!" sneered Willie, sitting down, and looking himself to and fro in the low kitchen chair, while he watched with feverish impatience for the tub to be set aside, and his sister at liberty to join him. "Here, let me squeeze out those rags, Mary; you go up, and put on your hat. I am sure I could do it as well as you." And Willie, standing up again, took off his coat, and began to roll up his shirt-sleeves preparatory to the attempt.

"Indeed you could do nothing of the kind. If you have only patience to wait for five minutes more, I'll have everything finished, and be ready to go with you. There now, don't go off in a rage, that's a good fellow!"

Willie put on his coat again, and strode out of the cottage, followed by Sprat; but he was too fond of his own pleasure to set off really without his sister, for Mary was far too pleasant a companion and too clever a seeker to be left behind. She had small hands, which could find their way through thorns and briars to the coveted nest; and besides, she had never been deceived yet as to the eggs themselves. She knew by the touch and the weight whether the tiny bird was nearly hatched, or even partially so, in which case the egg was always replaced in the nest; for Mary and Willie were not nest robbers in the true sense of the word—they did not rifle the fledglings, or deprive the mother of her expectant brood—they were only egg-collectors, taking one here, another there, whose hollow shell contained no promise of a bird, and adding each new-found treasure of pale-blue spotted with maroon, or emerald-green dotted with brown speck, to those already in their possession, and never returning to any nest the second time, lest the timid mother might be frightened from her charge, and desert it altogether.

So Willie sauntered out into the lane, switching at the dandelions, and shying pebbles at the ducks, who, terrified by Sprat, waddled to and fro across the road, till at length Mary appeared in the doorway, with her large sun-hat on her head, and the linen dresses in her arms which she had been so industriously washing for her mother.

"That will do now," cried Willie, turning at the sound of her step: "can't you throw those wretched things on the hedge, and not wait to climb up to the top of the wall? If there is a short way and a long of doing things, you always choose the long one. I declare you are the most perverse creature that ever lived! What can it matter whether a thing is dried on a hedge or on a wall?"

"It matters a great deal," replied Mary, good-humouredly. "A nice row you made the other morning because your shirt was torn on a thorn, which was sticking somewhere out of sight in the hedge! And besides, the fowl fly up on the hedge, and ruin the clean things with their dirty feet."

"Oh, of course, you'd have an excuse ready for walking on your head, if you chose to do it; you girls always will have your way in everything."

Mary made no reply, but running along the side of the lane, soon reached the bleaching wall; she threw the dresses over her shoulder while she climbed the stile, and then, standing on the uppermost step, she shook them out and laid them along the top, the bricks being specially rounded for the purpose, so that no angles or rough corners might tear the linen.

"Hand me up a couple or so of good heavy stones, that's a dear boy," she cried to her brother beneath, "or they may slip off when they dry, and tumble into the field."

"Now Mary, what can it matter whether you put stones on them or not? I believe you are worrying me on purpose."

"No indeed, Willie, I am not! But if you would only let me do as I ought to do

at first, I should be ready in half the time; if you don't hand me up the stones, I shall have to go down and get them for myself."

Willie, seeing that Mary was resolute, and that nothing save the stones intervened between him and his promised pleasure, handed them up—somewhat sulkily, it must be confessed—and the dresses being securely fixed on the wall, he followed his sister over the stile into the field beyond.

The way to the glen for which they were bound ran through a series of pasture grounds, deliciously green, soft to the feet, and pleasant to the eye, so Willie's temper soon recovered itself; and, leaning on his sister's arm, he discussed with her the merits of various eggs, their size, color, etc., while both ardently looked forward to the chance of finding the wren's nest—a golden-crested wren too, as Willie described it—whose eggs were, to say the least, uncommon.

The first few fields were trudged through almost unconsciously, so interested were they in their speculations, and no stiles or gates having so far obstructed their way, each pasture being only separated from the other by a row of trees, and never used for any other purpose but sheep-grazing; but now, as they came to the middle field, a large stretch of pasture ground surrounded on all sides by a stone wall, they beheld to their dismay that the gap which had been open all the winter was filled up with stones, and no way of entrance left save by climbing the gate, which was an unusually high one and devoid of cross-bars, while the spikes at the top made it difficult for a man to cross, and almost impossible for a girl.

"Here's a pretty go!" cried Willie, angrily, as he gazed alternately at the newly-built gap and the high iron gate. "I'd like to know what they have done this for! Filling up a fence that's useful to everybody, and sticking a gate in one's field that no one can climb over—such tom-foolery. But it's just like Farmer Stack, throwing stumbling-blocks in every one's way."

"He must have had some good reason for doing it, I suppose," observed Mary, quietly; though the bright glow of expectancy faded from her face, as she looked hopelessly at the high granite wall before her.

"Some good reason for fiddlesticks!" replied Willie, contemptuously. "But that's just the image of you, Mary—when a fellow is vexed, always trying to prove that there's nothing on earth to make him angry. We may just as well turn round and go home now, for you could as soon think of climbing that gate, Mary, as I could climb over the moon."

"Suppose we walk round by the road," suggested Mary, in a very humble voice; for when Willie was angry he generally found something to carp at in her remarks. "Go round by the road! why, I think you are just a simpleton, Mary, and nothing else; it's a good hour's walk round by the road, as you call it, to the place we are aiming for; and as I've walked that way once already this morning with the dairy cart, and shall have to go over every step of the ground again this evening, I've no mind to give my legs all that additional work. No, let's go home." And Willie whistled to his dog, who, having slipped through the offending bars, was standing on the opposite side, barking energetically at them, to show the thing could be done, if they only chose to follow his good example.

"Did you try the gate to see whether it was locked?" asked Mary, who did not like the idea of giving up the expedition; besides, she knew Willie had only proposed it because he was angry.

"What's the use of a gate, you stupid, unless it is locked!" But though Willie said this, he walked over and examined it with both eyes and hands.

"I don't believe it is locked," he said, presently; "it seems to open and shut with some kind of spring, for there is no padlock or keyhole of any kind; some new dodge, I suppose, of old Stack's. I never met such a fellow for dodges in all my life."

Willie worked, and fiddled, and pressed at the spring with all his force, but it gave no promise of yielding; he was obliged presently to call Mary to his aid, who, had, for all he pretended to look down upon her—clever hands and clever brains, and very often Willie had found them of service to him before now.

"Come on here, you silly!" he cried, testily; "why do you stand gaping there, as if you expected the gate to walk open at word of command? One can't force a spring open all by oneself that would take a Goliath to move it. Here, do you press against this tongue of iron, while I try to push it up out of the place it has got hitched in."

Mary pressed with all her force against the spring, while her brother shoved, and kicked, and shook the gate in his vexation; but it was all in vain, till at last one kick, more vicious than the rest, freed the latch from the bar in which it was caught, and the gate immediately flying wide open, sent Mary sprawling on her face upon the ground.

She was not much hurt, however, and the relief of having conquered the great difficulty which lay in their path prevented her from thinking of the few scratches she had received; she soon scrambled to her feet, and once more the bright smile of anticipated joy beamed over her face.

"Come on now!" cried Willie, taking her by the arm. "I'm glad I conquered the brute, though I'm trembling all over from the force it took to open it. I thought I should never have done it, and that last kick I gave was more in a rage than anything else."

"But you'll shut it again, won't you?" asked Mary, anxiously, for her brother had already begun to drag her forward.

"I shut it! Don't you wish you may catch me doing it! I've just about as much notion of hoarding myself to fasten Farmer Stack's gates as I have of doing anything else to please him."

"Indeed, Willie, you must go back and close it; they would not have taken so much pains to fasten it unless there was some reason for it."

"There you go again with your 'reason'; but I tell you there is neither right nor reason in the matter; it's simply one of old Stack's whims, like his lawn-mowers, and steam-ploughs, and all the rest of his new inventions, robbing people of their right of

way. Come on, Mary, I say, and don't drag away from me so, for I won't shut the gate, and there's the end of it."

"Then I will try myself and see if I can't do it," replied Mary, firmly; "for I am certain we ought to fasten it; they may be going to put the black bull into the field for all you know, they kept him here all last summer, and, whether or not, I'm certain, as we found it shut, we ought to fasten it."

"Very good, do as you like," replied Willie, turning on his heel, and whistling. "You know you are simply shutting it out of obstinacy, for what on earth can it matter whether the gate is fastened or not?" and Willie, not deigning to look behind him, walked straight on across the field.

(To be continued.)

Russian Sects.

Many of the sects have persons among them whom they believe to be Christ, incarnate for the second time, and the Virgin. One sect was founded by a peasant soldier, Daniel Philpitt, about the middle of the seventeenth century, and is now strong in many parts of the empire. Philpitt's doctrine, as reported by Mr. Hepworth Dixon, who has made a special study in Russia of secret and curious sects, were first, "I am God;" second, "There is no other God;" and third, "There is nothing new." He gave nine precepts to his followers, which I quote from Mr. Dixon's text:—"Drink no wine. Remain where you are and what you are. Never marry. Never swear or name the devil. Attend no wedding, christening, or other feast. Never steal. Keep my doctrine secret. Love each other, and keep my laws. Believe in the Holy Spirit."

Another soldier has recently established a new religion which is so secret that it has no name, even among its disciples. He pretended to be Christ, and chose a woman for Virgin-mother. The accounts given of this sect represent its doctrines and practices to be unlawful and blasphemous. The members are said to insult the church in their meetings, and to treat sacred things with the utmost indignity; and yet when the authorities undertook to punish the heresy, the men who were arrested established by abundant evidence their perfectly good behavior, and proved that they were in all respects especially exemplary citizens and subjects; that they paid their taxes, obeyed the law, performed all their duties, lived sober lives, attended the services and participated in the rites and ceremonies of the Orthodox Church, went to confession regularly, partook of the sacraments, and conformed strictly to the requirements of the church. Enough was proved, however, to make it certain that these men have a secret religion of their own; and an emissary of the police, who had attended their meetings, testified that they mocked the sacraments, spat upon icons, and gave other expression of their contempt for the church, which in public they treated with ostentatious respect and veneration.

Mr. Dixon tells us of another sect in Moscow who regard Napoleon as the Messiah, and worship his image. They believe that the French Emperor is still alive, somewhere in Asia, and that in due time he will return and conquer the forces of the Czar.

I have mentioned here only a few of the many sects which have been described in Russian official records. The list might be extended almost indefinitely if there were space at command. One sect, whose practices are not proper matters to be described in this place, boast that even the Emperor Alexander I. was a member of their communion. This is extremely unlikely, but it is certain that the Czar was deeply interested in studying the doctrines of the order, and for that purpose went among them in person, and questioned them of their belief and practice.—*Appleton's Journal*.

Highland Fidelity.

The clan Chattan in 1526 made an inroad under circumstances somewhat different from the ordinary and usual occurrences of that description. Lachlan Macintosh, the chief of the confederacy, was a man of talent and vigor, who successfully exerted himself to repress the depredations of his smaller clans in the neighboring Lowlands, and we may presume that, of course, he experienced a profitable return of gratitude. But his clansmen considered that however agreeable this might be to the interests of their chief, it was not an arrangement in the benefits of which they could participate, and accordingly they slew him. The Earl of Murray, as guardian of the infant son and heir, he being his sister's son, on this thought it prudent to remove him from the mountains to a place where it might be presumed he would be less exposed to danger. Hector, the illegitimate brother of the late chief, who now discharged the duties of that office, and was suspected to have a design against the child's life, found no difficulty in persuading the clan to consider the conduct of the Earl of Murray as an insult, and at once attempt to gratify their avarice and revenge. They therefore fell upon all the low country along the Moray Firth, burning the houses and driving off the cattle. They overthrew the Castle of Dyke, and besieged and captured the Castle of Petty, putting four-and-twenty men of the clan Ogilvie, whom they found in it, to death. To resist these freebooters the Earl of Murray received a commission from the king to raise an army, which he did; and in a battle which ensued took William, brother of Hector, and two hundred of the clan, prisoners. As an example William was immediately hanged. His head was fixed at Dyke, and his four quarters were exhibited at Elgin, Forres, Auldearn, and Inverness. The two hundred men who were taken at the same time, says Leely, "were brought out man by man, and offered life on condition of discovering their chief; but, with a firmness and fidelity of which the Scottish Highlanders have afforded so many illustrious examples, they every man refused the proffered condition, and were put to death."

FAITH in to-morrow, instead of being of Christ, is Satan's snare for man's perdition.

An African Eve.

In his letter of August 7, from Ujiji, Stanley recounts this tradition of the natives regarding the origin of Lake Tanganyika. The woman in the case is fitly designated as "African Eve." "The natives say that 'years and years ago' on the plain there was a large town, near where is not known. In this town lived a man and his wife, with an enclosure round their dwelling, which contained a remarkably deep well or fountain, whence an abundant supply of fresh fish was obtained for their wants. The existence of the fountain and its treasure was kept a profound secret from all their neighbors, as the revelation of its existence had been strictly prohibited by father to son for many generations within the particular family, lest some heavy calamity dimly foretold would happen if the prohibition was not strictly respected; and, remembering the injunction, the owners of the fountain lived long and happily, and fresh fish formed their main food each day. The wife, however, was not very faithful, for she took another man into her confidence, and, among other favors, she frequently gave him some fresh fish, a kind of delicious meat he had never before tasted, and which roused his utmost curiosity to ascertain whence she obtained it. For a long time he ceased not to ask, while the woman steadily refused to tell. One day the husband was compelled to begin a journey to Uvinza, but before his departure he strictly enjoined his wife to look after his house closely, to admit no gossip within his doors, and, above all, not to show the fountain. This African Eve solemnly promised to comply with his instructions, though secretly she rejoiced at the prospect of his absence. A few hours after her husband's departure she left her house to seek her lover, and when she found him she said to him, 'You have for a long time demanded to know whence I obtained that delicious meat you have so often praised. Come with me and I will show you.' African Eve then took him to her house, in opposition to her husband's commands; but as with a view to enhance the glories of the fountain and the pleasure of viewing the fish, she entertained her lover with fish cooked in various ways and wine of her own manufacture. Then, when her lover began to be impatient at the delay, and having no other cause to postpone the exhibition, she invited him to follow her. A fence of water came plastered over with mud enclosed the wondrous fountain, within whose crystal depths he saw the fish. For some time he gazed on the brilliant creatures with admiration; then, seized with a desire to handle one of them and regard them more closely, he put his hand within the water to catch one of them, when suddenly the well burst forth, the earth opened her womb, and soon an enormous lake replaced the plain. Within a few days the husband, returning from Uvinza, approached Ujiji, and saw to his astonishment a large lake where once a plain and many towns stood, and he knew then that his wife had revealed the secret of the mysterious fountain, and that punishment had fallen upon her and her neighbors because of her sin."

Savonarola.

What strikes one most of all in the extraordinary career of the republican monk is the strange fascination, the wonderful power, that he exercised over the masses of the people. With a convent for his court, a crucifix for a sceptre, and a pulpit for his throne, he wielded a more than regal sway. People kneel as he passes, then press upon him to kiss the hem of his garment, so that he requires a guard to protect him from the throng in his passage back and forth from the convent to the cathedral. The great Duomo itself will not contain the immense multitudes that flock to hear him preach, and who, deeply moved by his powerful, impassioned appeals, drown the preacher's voice by their violent sobbings and outbursts of grief. To their excited imaginations he is invested with a quasi-divine character. Like Melchisedec, he is at once their prophet, priest, and king; or if under his theocratic republic Christ was king, he was the special ambassador of the people to the court above.

He preaches a crusade against all forms of luxury and lasciviousness, which was called the *Anathema*, and forthwith the people hasten to make bonfires in the public squares, upon which they pile paintings and statuary, musical instruments and books, together with their jewelry and costly apparel, rouge pots, powders, and perfumes. The works of Ovid, Boccaccio, Petrarch, and Pulci, to the lasting loss of literature, were cast into the flames with the rest. Fra Bartolomeo, sharing the popular enthusiasm, throws in his unregenerate pencil and palette, and becomes thenceforth a Dominican monk, and, after Fra Angelico, the most Christian of painters.

Thus intrenched in the hearts of the people, Savonarola's cell became a citadel, from whence he bid defiance both to his prince and the Pope. He utterly refused, as prior of San Marco, to render the customary homage to Lorenzo the Magnificent. He denounced the corruptions of the papal court, for which the notorious Alexander VI. and Innocent VIII., who with his sixteen children was entitled to the appellation of *papa or pope*, in more senses than one, had furnished him abundant occasion. Then came the Trial by Fire, and, with it, his downfall. He was mobbed, imprisoned, put to the rack, and then condemned to the stake for heresy. Prior to his execution he was formally excommunicated. "I separate thee from the church militant," said the bishop. "But thou canst not separate me from the church triumphant," was his sublime reply.

Thus died Savonarola. His ashes were cast into the Arno, as those of Wycliffe, that other precursor of the Reformation, were scattered in the Avon. Meanwhile Luther was singing songs for a subsistence in the streets of Eisenach. For many years, on each returning anniversary of Savonarola's death, the scene of his martyrdom was strewn with flowers by unknown hands. Some said it was the angels.—O. M. Saxon, in *Harper's Magazine*.

Scientific and Useful.

PLAIN FRUIT CAKE.

One cupful brown sugar, one cupful butter, one cupful molasses, one cupful milk, three cupfuls flour, four eggs, one and one-half teaspoonfuls cream-tartar, one teaspoonful soda, one pound raisins, chopped fine, one pound currants. Bake in a slow oven.

TO WASH RED TABLE-LINENS.

Use tepid water, with a little powdered borax, (borax sets the color); wash the linen separately and quickly, using very little soap; rinse in the tepid water, containing a little boiled starch; hang to dry in the shade; iron when almost dry.

FRENCH SOUP.

Four pounds of the velvet part or rump of good beef, not fat, one pound of veal off the leg, four carrots, two parsnips, four onions, celery one head, four cloves, put on coals (not on the fire) at 8 o'clock; boil slowly till 2 o'clock; when it begins to boil add two teaspoonfuls salt, no pepper; one gallon of water.

TO PRESERVE TOOLS.

The following, to preserve iron and steel from rusting, is worth the attention of farmers and mechanics: Dissolve one-fourth oz. of camphor in one gill of cold-drawn linseed oil; by adding to or diminishing the quantity of oil, it may be made any consistency desired. Apply this with a soft rag.

A NEW LEATHER PRESERVATIVE.

A correspondent of the *English Mechanic* suggests the following for the preservation of sole leather: "A solution of an ounce of solid paraffine in a pint of light naphtha, to which six drops of sweet oil have been added—say at 18° O.—on the soles until they will absorb no more. The same solution without oil confers immortality on an umbrella."

CLOTHES MOTHS.

This is the period when moths begin to fly, and those who have not packed away winter garments and furs should lose no time in doing so. Beat the articles thoroughly, and expose them to bright sunlight and air for several hours. Seal them up in tight paper cases, or put them away in close trunks, with plenty of gum camphor, pepper, tobacco, chips of Russia leather, or cedar dust.

WORTH REMEMBERING.

Stair carpets should always have two or four thick pieces of paper put under them, at or over the edge of every stair, which is the part that first wears out. The strips should be within an inch or two as long as the carpet is wide, and about four inches in breadth. This simple plan, so easy of execution, will, we know, preserve a stair carpet half as long again as it would last without the strips of paper.

SULPHUR FOR SCARLET FEVER.

Dr. Henry Pigeon writes to the *London Lancet* as follows: "The marvellous success which has attended my treatment of scarlet fever by sulphur induces me to let my medical brethren know of my plan, so that they may be able to apply the same remedy without delay. All the cases in which I used it were very well marked, and the epidemics on the arms in each case came away like the skin of a snake. The following was the exact treatment followed in each case: Thoroughly anoint the patient twice daily with sulphur ointment; give five to ten grains of sulphur in a little jam three times a day. Sufficient sulphur was burned, twice daily (on coals on a shovel), to fill the room with fumes, and, of course, was inhaled by the patient. Under this mode of treatment each case improved immediately, and none were over eight days in making a complete recovery, and I firmly believe in each it was prevented from spreading by the treatment adopted. One case was in a large school. Having had a large experience in scarlet fever last year and this, I feel some confidence in my own judgment, and I am of opinion that the very mildest cases I ever saw do not do half so well as had cases do by the sulphur treatment, and as far as I can judge, sulphur is as near a specific for scarlet fever as possible."

ENAMELED COOKING VESSELS.

Cast iron cooking vessels, coated on the inside with a white enamel, are now extensively used, and are generally supposed to be as safe as they are convenient and cleanly. It has been assumed that vegetable acids, which act more or less energetically upon metallic surfaces, do not affect this porcelain lining, and that vessels protected by it may therefore be used for cooking acid fruits, preparing pickles, and kindred processes. It seems, however, that there may be "death in the pot," even when it is enamelled. A Scotch chemist, in a paper recently read before the Society of Public Analysts, states that some kinds at least of this porcelain lining are very readily acted upon by acid fruit, common salt, and other substances used for food, and that thus large quantities of lead and even arsenic are dissolved out during culinary operations. Analyses were given of three enamels taken from cast iron pots made by as many manufacturers. All contained arsenic, and two of them lead. A one per cent. solution of citric acid, boiled in the third, roughened and destroyed the enamel at once, dissolving out lead enough to give a dense black precipitate with hydrosulphuric acid. An enamel that will not bear so moderate a test as a one per cent. solution of citric acid is certainly not fit to be used for culinary purposes. If the enamels employed in this country are similar to those in Europe, as they probably are, our readers should be cautious in using vessels coated with them.

If you will show me a Bible Christian living on the word of God, I will show you a joyful man. He is mounting up all the time. He has got new truths that lift him up over every obstacle, and he mounts over difficulties higher and higher, like a man I once heard of who had a bag of gas fastened on either side, and if he just touched the ground with his foot, over a wall, or a hedge he would go; and so these truths make us so light that we bound over every obstacle.—D. L. Moody.