

For the Weekly Miscellany.
HOME.

Mr. Miscellany. Allow me to congratulate you on your intended appearance as a candidate for a share of public favour, in a path of varied usefulness. Your publishing proposition, as I understand it, consists in the devotion of a small paper to the cause of intelligence, and virtue. May you be faithful to your beneficial plan,—and may your readers be improved by your efforts, and yourself encouraged by the patronage which you seek.

I suppose your columns will have many appeals to more juvenile readers, as well as to those of more experience. Allow me to enquire if the former, and perhaps some of the latter might wisely consider the question,—Have they ever tried to duly estimate the privileges and the duties of Home? The vast difference which exists between being the honoured or loved member of a happy family, and being an outcast?—and the many gradations of those conditions? The “gradations,” Mr. Editor, are of commanding importance, and therefore I have marked the word to be printed in what you call italics, so as to give it prominence and emphasis.

Who can estimate the consequence of the decision of youth, when it determines whether its path shall be on the ascending scale of integrity, intelligence and virtue,—or on the fearful descent of disrepute, vice and disgrace;—or, which is more frequent, when it makes no choice, forms no determination, no plan of life, but waits idly and ignobly, for some passing current to direct the momentous outset of the voyage of life. Ah! when I think for a minute, of the importance of the topics here suggested,—I become aware, that a volume, rather than a brief communication would be required for their adequate consideration.

The woman of scripture, when, in return for varied acts of kindness and hospitality, was urged by the prophet to say how he might serve her interests, replied “I live among my kindred.” He saw that she enjoyed comfort and competence, and her answer appeared to intimate, that all other reasonable requirements were satisfied. She lived among her kindred, her home, judging from her character, was adorned by the virtues of love, and benevolence, and wisdom and prudence; what could the rulers of the earth offer, to enhance her blessings?

A gentle providence, for the most part, lulls us among the consolations of home and kindred, at our earliest years; and, more or less, surrounds our path with their influences during life's stormy scenes.

In some unfortunate instances, an unhappy home is the experience; but this, in the majority of cases, is induced by folly or vice, and might be provided against, by wisdom and virtue.

Let the young learn the inestimable value of a happy home;—let them strive to defend and foster its privileges;—let them aid all they can, and that is much, in forming such a circle,—and let them shun, as they would a nest of serpents, the habits which tend to deform and ruin the sacred precinct.

How varied are the homes of earth, in reference to their attractions, their cares and their joys; but, happily, the group in the poor garret, about the little hearth, may know the name of “Home” and understand its blessings, and respond to its duties, as well as the proprietors of park-surrounded mansions.

A force called gravitation, we are told, is the means of keeping the “Orbs of Heaven” in their orbits, and of causing harmony and perpetuity, in systems of worlds. Home may be described as a centre of moral gravitation to the orbs of the social system.

It causes the steady day by day revolution, about a centre of affection and security and duty;—and when, comet-like, some erratic members go from its immediate sphere, it exerts subtle influences, causing them to look back, frequently and fondly, and urging return, that they may draw draughts of light and love from the native fount.

How wise to mature these home feelings, which so much concern the art, the science, of individual happiness. And if unusually stern circumstances deny the desired realization,—if loneliness and abstraction become the rule,—if misanthropy whispers insidiously, as Satan at the ear of Eve, how well to repel the tempter,—to have a home in the heart,—to have a spiritual circle of friends and relatives,—to have a home above the varied maze of earthly homes,—and to be able to say, amid sorely trying experiences,—“He placeth the solitary in families;” “I have an house not built by hands,”—“I live,” in a peculiar and higher sense, “among my kindred.”

BUTTERFLIES.

“Oh! see, mamma, the flowers have got wings; see them fly round the garden!” exclaimed a little girl of three years old. She had never been in the country before, and did not know what to call the beautiful butterflies she saw sporting among the flower-beds. It was a pretty idea. The gorgeous dress of the butterfly is equalled only by the brilliant colours of the tulip and the rose, and they may well be called the flowers of the insect tribe.

It would take many pages to write only the names of all the different kinds of butterflies. Every country has thousands of different species; almost every plant gives nourishment to some different kind of worm which is afterward changed to a butterfly. They differ in size, colour, general appearance, and habits. Some of them are dressed in plain drab, others are gaudy, with the brightest colours. There are some specimens little larger than a pin's head, and some whose wings spread more than six inches. Many fly only by night, while others sport in the sunshine. The plainly-dressed species are called millers, because their coats appear as if dusted with flour. If you examine the wing of a butterfly or miller with a good microscope, you will perceive that this dust is composed of delicate and beautiful little scales, arranged as regularly as the feathers upon a bird. No artist, save the Divine Creator, could make such exquisite workmanship as is there shown.

Some people have the mistaken idea that the small butterflies are young ones, which in time will increase in size; but winged insects do not grow. All the growing, and most of the eating, is done before they get their wings.

A butterfly, like most other insects, is found in four different forms before completing his life: these are the egg, the larva, the pupa, and the imago. The egg is laid by the winged insect. It is seldom larger than a pin's head, and frequently so small as to be scarcely visible to the naked eye. The larva is hatched from the egg. Larva means a mask. While in this state, the insect has the form of a worm; he is thus “masked” under a different guise from that in which he will finally appear. The eating and growing are mostly accomplished during the larva state. The black and red hairy caterpillars, so common everywhere in summer time, are the larvæ of the Tiger moth. They subsist on the leaves of any plant on which they may be found; nettle-leaves are their favorite food.

The skin of a worm, or caterpillar, does not grow; and he soon becomes too large for his clothes. Then the skin splits along the back of the neck, and the creature comes out soft, moist, and helpless, but the new skin soon hardens, and the worm is ready for another feast. Each