

THE ORPHANS' FRIEND.

Wednesday, September 29, 1875.

THE NINETY AND NINE.

There were ninety and nine that safely lay
In the shelter of the fold,
But one had wandered far a way,
In the desert so lone and cold;
A way on the mountains wild, and bare,
A way from the Shepherd's tender care;
tender care.

Shepherd, hast thou not here thy ninety and
nine;

Are they not enough for thee?
But the Shepherd replies, "This one of
mine,
Has wandered away from me;
The way may be wild and rough and steep,
I go to the desert to find my sheep."

But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed,
Nor how dark was the night the Lord pass-
ed through

Ere he found the sheep that was lost.
Away in the desert he heard its cry,
So feeble and helpless and ready to die.

And afar up the mountain, thunder riven,
And along the rock steep,
There arose the glad song of joy to heaven,
"Rejoice, I have found my sheep!"
And the angels echoed around the throne,
"Rejoice, for the Lord brings back his
own!"

THE PICTURE ON MY WALL.

BY HENRY A. CHITTENDEN, JR.

It is a trifle, even here,
Where trifles rule and show is small,
Dearest to me than aught more dear—
The picture on my wall.

It came there years and years ago,
It stays there: that is all
There is to make me love it so—
The picture on my wall.

There's little beauty in the lines,
The scetch you might not call
Divine. Perhaps 'tis memory refines
The picture on my wall.

When hours are sad, it meets my mood
With sweetness magical;
It winds my thoughts from themes more rude—
The picture on my wall.

It melts me when I feel most strong,
Its powers most intrall
When I am gay with wine and song—
The picture on my wall.

I mind me of the form that graced
My room, my life, my all:
I think of the dear hands that placed
This picture on my wall.

I think of the blithe laugh and fun
That rang thro' house and hall,
Of the bright face that beamed upon
The picture on my wall.

That face is vanished, dust that hand,
The voice is vain I call;
And touch no more, by smile or wand,
The picture on my wall.

There's beauty still may claim my eyes,
And coarser senses thrill,
My heart within that picture lies—
The picture on my wall.

Mother's Love.

A touching illustration of the
power of a mother's love is con-
tained in the following incident
of the recent floods in France:

At Castelzarrazin a young
mother took her two infants
(twins at the breast), tied them
together, and placed them in a
large wooden trough used for
kneading bread, and committed
it to the waves, hoping it would
save her children's lives, as she
felt that her house was about to
fall. The improvised boat swam
safely for a time, but soon after-
ward the current dashed it against
the trunk of a tree, where it was
broken. The poor woman, to
whom maternal love gave a su-
perhuman force, succeeded in
seizing a branch and climbing in-
to a tree. But it was too weak,
and began to crack ominously.
She then rapidly tied the infants
to a branch, kissed them, made
the sign of the cross, and leaped
into the waves. The two little
twins were saved, but the devo-
t-
ed mother was drowned.

CURIOSITY IN CHILDREN.

"You are too inquisitive!"
"Don't bother me!" "Little boys
must not ask so many questions!"
and numerous other like expres-
sions of impatience at the curios-
ity of children, are continually
heard in every household. The
little ones are from day to day—
in fact, from hour to hour—ad-
monished that an awful, inde-
scribable something called prop-
riety—in simplicity they sup-
pose it to be some terrible crea-
ture not of human form, proba-
bly a wild beast—wars against
their expression of a very natural
and essential feeling. Parents,
have you ever considered what it
is you are thus repressing? Has
it ever occurred to you that, in
rooting out curiosity from your
children's minds, you are pluck-
ing up by the roots the tree that
is eventually to bear the beauti-
ful flowers and sweet fruits of
knowledge? Your child's mind
is in that elastic condition which
makes it spring forward to catch
the smallest fact. The storehouse
of knowledge is empty, and those
busy little harvesters, the percep-
tions, are running wild over the
fields of his observation in search
of grain that may be gathered in.
He finds a new object unlike
any thing he has ever seen or felt
before. He can learn nothing of
it except from you, and with
touching, confiding faith in you
comes running up for information.
You have some more important
matter in mind; you are busy,
and not to be bothered, and so,
crestfallen, he goes away with
wounded ambition, and perhaps a
whit less affection for you. One
of the little harvesters returns
home empty-handed. One sheaf
has been lost to the granary.
Worse than all, your child has
lost an opportunity—a precious
thing in the brief season of life—
and has received a check which
may operate to restrain him
from seizing future opportunities.
Think of it! You may have
forged the first link in a chain of
circumstances that will make him
a failure in life.

This may appear to be an ex-
aggerated statement of the case.
It may be contended, for instance,
that parents generally show a
reasonable disposition to satisfy
the curiosity of their children;
that to the question, "What is
this, papa?" an explanatory
answer is, in the great majority of
cases, promptly and cheerfully
given; and that it is only when
the questions are multiplied to an
unreasonable extent that impa-
tience and refusal to answer fol-
low. But this raises the question,
"Can there be a limit to inquiry?"
and the answer is, "None!" The
desire to know as much as can be
known of any thing is a perfect-
ly rational and praiseworthy one.
In fact, it is a highly-important
one—I had almost said the most
important one. It is the entering
wedge that has split the rocky
wall of ignorance, and enabled
the axe of observation to hew
open the broad avenues of science
into the very heart of the myste-
ries of nature.

But this objection rests on the
supposition that it is all-sufficient
to answer the first few questions,
the remainder being considered
as relating to unimportant details.
Now, the fact of the case is just
the reverse. The rejected por-
tion of the question are, as a rule,
the most important. To per-
ceive this fact, observe the nature
of the questions the child invari-
ably asks, and the order in which
he puts them. He begins by ask-

ing of a thing, "What is it?"
Then, "Is it good to eat?" If
not, "Is it poisonous?" If it is,
"What does it taste like?" If it
is a fruit, "Where" (that is, how),
"does it grow?" If another ob-
ject, "How is it made?" and so
on indefinitely. Here we discern
a progression—rough and irreg-
ular at intervals, it may be, but
still a progression—from the more
general to the less general. If
you answer the first two or three,
and throw out the balance, you
acquaint him with the general facts,
and leave him ignorant of the par-
ticular facts. Now, consider that
throughout the domain of knowl-
edge, be it of literature, science,
or art, the particular facts are the
most important to be known. In
science, he who knows only the
most general facts is a mere tyro.
In truth, science is the organiza-
tion of particular facts, and we
cannot acquire a respectable
knowledge of it without engraving
these upon our minds. And so it
is with all other subjects,
any knowledge becomes profound
in proportion as we extend our
acquisition of particular facts.
See, then, the great error involv-
ed in your course; you are giv-
ing the child chaff while you throw
away the wheat.

But at this early stage the pro-
cess demands more consideration
than to product. The knowledge
gained by this rough, unsystemat-
ic questioning may be small—at
most, it is usually vague and in-
definite—nevertheless, it is un-
questionably of some value. The
process, however, is the earliest
expression of the spirit of scientific
investigation, which was once
as feeble and erratic in the race
as it now in your child, but which,
by gradual development in the
slow lapse of centuries, at length
became strong enough to rear the
magnificent structure of exact
science. The curiosity which in-
duces these questions will develop
or dwindle according as circum-
stances favor the one tendency or
the other. Encouraged and in-
telligently directed, it will devel-
op into a systematic inquiry after
truth, ending perhaps in making
its possessors a compeer of New-
ton or Kant. But, under habitua-
l repression, it degenerates into
mere impertinent inquisitiveness,
the qualification of an idle tale-
bearer. The desideratum is to
make the child from a habit of
penetrating to the root of all
things.

BIG LIES MISTAKEN FOR WIT.

We have gathered the follow-
ing from our state papers:

A Missouri man tried to ride a
mule across a creek thirty feet
deep. The man was drowned,
but the mule crossed in safety,
walking on the bottom and breath-
ing through his ears.

A lazy fellow falling a distance
of fifty feet, and escaping with
only a few scratches, a bystander
remarked that he was "too slow
to fall fast enough to hurt him-
self."

An exchange, commenting on
the morality of its neighbors, says
they wear their pants out at the
knees, in Winter, in getting reli-
gion, and the seats of their trow-
sers out, in the Summer, in back-
sliding.

BROTHERLY LOVE.—A whole
Psalm,—the one hundred and
thirty-third; a whole Chapter,—
First Corinthians, thirteenth chap-
ter; a whole Book,—First John,
have been written to commend
brotherly love.

GOING TO LAW.

A farmer cut down a tree
which stood so near the bounda-
ry line of his farm that it was
doubtful whether it belonged to
him or his neighbor. The neigh-
bor, however, claimed the tree,
and prosecuted the man who cut
it, for damages. The case was
continued from court to court.
Time and money were wasted,
temper soured and temper lost,
but the case was gained by the
prosecutor. The last of the trans-
action was, the man who gained
the cause came to a lawyer to exe-
cute the deed of his whole farm,
which he had been compelled to
sell to pay his costs. Then house-
less and homeless, he could thrust
his hands into his pockets, and
triumphantly exclaim, "I've beaten
him!"

This reminds us of a little story.
Forty-three years ago a young
man was teaching a country
school. He had not been in the
place one quarter before he had
acquired a reputation for know-
ing more than he did know, but
he was wise enough to take no
pains to disabuse the popular
mind of the favorable impression.
If there was one study that he
was more deficient in than another,
it was surveying. But he
taught it as well as he could, and
his pupils learned. Two farmers
had a chronic dispute as to the
line between their lands, and for
many years they had contended
as to the right of possession in a
little strip. Both of them were
warmly interested in the young
school teacher, and in a happy
moment it occurred to them to
ask him to examine their titles
and maps, and to decide as to the
true running of their dividing line.
He took the papers, gave "his
whole mind" to the question,
made a map with the line where
he believed it should be: but
parties accepted it, set their fence
according to it, lived in peace,
and to this day, after the lapse of
nearly half a century, the school-
master's line is undisturbed,
though the lands have changed
hands frequently. The line will
doubtless never be disturbed.
How much better is this than to
go to law, consume their prop-
erty in vexatious litigation, alienate
families, fret themselves, and be-
queath a feud to successive gen-
erations. Both the farmers have
long since gone to sleep with
their fathers, but the young
schoolmaster, who judged between
them, lives to make this the first
record of his decision.—N. Y. Ob-
server.

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August 25th, 1875.

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