

ORPHANS' FRIEND.

Wednesday, February 21, 1877.

WHAT SHALL CHILDREN READ?

All good people deplore the effect of pernicious literature on the minds of children, but as children will read something, they should be supplied with books of wholesome moral tone. Do this and they will cease to crave sensational stories. Whatever gives information to a child generally interests him, and he will read instructive books with avidity if they are written in language not above his comprehension. F. L. Goulding has written some entertaining stories, and few boys or girls will lay aside "The Young Marooners" for any of the paper-back trash of the day. Jacob Abbott may well be called the children's friend, for besides his story books he has furnished them with so many valuable histories. Although many of these are mere biographies, short and incomplete, he invests his characters with so much interest that the reader will seek farther information concerning them in larger volumes. Children have a natural taste for history, even "Cinderella and the Glass Slipper" loses its fascination after hearing the adventures of real people. The language of histories is usually well chosen, at least there is no newspaper slang nor mushroom words to corrupt the language of the reader. And though a course of historical reading makes one familiar with many records of crime, yet the faithful historian throws no false glamour over his characters; vice and ignorance are portrayed in such a way as to excite horror. If we seek good examples, the pages of history teem with them; the story of good king Alfred the wandering harper, never wears, and the shining character of Bayard, the Chevalier, "sans peur, sans reproche," never fails to fascinate, and Pavia the scene of his death is invested with an interest that no writer of fiction can ever give to the place where his most thrilling scenes occurred. William, the Silent, challenges the admiration of any school-boy and makes him regard Holland as of more importance in the history of nations, than it would ever appear in his eyes had he never read the history of this brave defender of the Dutch Republic.

Some writers say read the history of a country in its literature; but there are few works that will not be read with greater interest if the history of the author is known together with the circumstances that led to its production.

The pleasure of reading *Telemachus*, is greatly enhanced, by first becoming acquainted with the life and trials of the pious Fenelon and his pupil, the good Dauphin; characters that appear in glaring contrast to the courtiers of the corrupt court of the Grand Monarch.

VASSAR COLLEGE.

Vassar has a reputation for thoroughness, which is as merited as it is unquestioned, and there are some features in its management which we think our southern schools would do well to imitate; but they cry with one accord, "Vassar has money." So it has, and a better supply of it than any of our schools can hope for at present; but some things may be imitated without money. Enthusiasm never dies out at Vassar. The most ordinary Freshman feels the effects of it. It is no spasmodic influence, but is sustained throughout each semester, and this is brought about by the active mode of teaching. It is a rare thing to see a teacher, either male or female, assume a comfortable position while a class is reciting. The teacher stands, and during the three quarters of an hour assigned to each recitation we felt there was no time to go to sleep, either mentally or physically, knowing too well that all we knew about the subject in question would be drawn out of us, and knowing too that the teacher had studied that lesson; we went to class feeling that we had mastered the subject, but came away feeling that an unexplored field lay before us.

Names often tell their history by their significance; but they frequently acquire a new significance, because their history is forgotten or unknown. Few of the bearers of the name Percy are aware of its origin. In feudal times a Scotch baron was besieged in his castle, and having displayed the flag of truce from his battlements, a knight advanced with raised visor to receive a letter which the baron extended on the point of his lance. As he stooped to take it the treacherous baron thrust the point of the lance in his eye, and thus acquired the name of "Pierce eye." It was applied to him as an epithet of reproach, but has since been contracted to Percy, which is now a very popular name.

SPEAKING SO AS TO BE UNDERSTOOD.

It is a marvel how comparatively little attention is paid to distinct pronunciation, when so much depends on it. Strength of lungs is not what is needed so much as skill in pronouncing. The sibilant letters require special attention, but the organs of speech can and should be trained so as to give every letter its proper accent. Words are the medium through which the thoughts and feelings of one mind are conveyed to another mind, and impression is deepened and the thought exactly conveyed, only when every sound of the words is distinct, separate, articulate. Thanks to progress some of our schools are waking up to this necessity.

Davenport Female College, at Lenoir, in Caldwell county, has been burned. The building stood on a beautiful site, in full view of High Brighton Mountain, and offered good education at a low price. It belonged to the N. C. Conference, and was not insured. The loss to the Conference is heavy; to the children it is irreparable.

Commodore Vanderbilt was an habitual swearer up to six months before his death, and he lived to be 82 years old. Dr. Deems says he died a Christian. Nothing is impossible with God. But he was one of the few examples of the eleventh hour converts. The life of the great millionaire was absorbed in the interest of this world, and he makes no appropriation from his vast wealth for the advance of christianity.

The Misses Orphan Aid Society of Goldsboro are a noble band of workers. They have remitted \$115 to the Asylum as the result of their efforts for the orphans. They shall have their reward.

St. Valentine's Day has been gradually resigned to the children, when formally it was hailed with delight by bashful lovers, and aided the course of true love by many a pretty device. Although St. Valentine died somewhere in the year 270, his name, as familiar as a household word and few children are not familiar with his memory. The letters which have passed through the London post office on this eventful day have reached the sum of \$200,000 besides the usual daily average. But modern taste and culture carries us further and further from such simple customs until we of the nineteenth century look upon the Saint as some old foggy unworthy the name of priest and martyr.

THE TEN WORKERS.

(From the French.)

"A story, Prudentius, a story, good fellow!"

The man smiles, and glancing at Martha always idle:—

"That is to say," said he, "I must pay for my welcome. Well then! your wish shall be gratified my good people. The last time, I talked to you about the long ago, when pagan armies desolved our hills, that was a narrative suited to men. To-day I shall tell you (if you do not object,) something about women and little children. Let each have his turn. We have considered Cæsar; let us now attend to mother Veit d' Eau."

Every one burst into a shout of laughter; quickly arranged themselves. William lit his pipe, and the generous-hearted Prudentius began:—

"This story, my pets, is not like those told by nurses, and it ought to be found in the almanacs among true histories; for the adventure happened to our grandmother Charlotte whom William knew, and she was a woman of remarkable courage.

Grandmother Charlotte had been also young in her time, which appeared a little incredible to those who saw her scattered grey hair and her nose always in friendly proximity to her chin; but those of her day said that no young girl had a finer face or a disposition more inclined to gaiety.

Unfortunately, Charlotte was left alone with her father, at the head of a large farm more en-

cumbered with debts than income; so although work succeeded work, yet the poor girl, who was ill-suited to such cares, often lapsed into despondency, and fell into the habit of doing nothing (here the speaker glanced again at Martha) while she was seeking an opportunity of doing every thing in an easier way.

One day then, while seated before the door, her hands under her apron, as a lady suffering with chilblain, she begins taking to herself quite low: "God forgive! the burden laid on me is not the burden of a christian woman! and it is a thousand pities that I am worried, at my age, with such cares!" Though I were more active than the sun, quicker than water, more patient than fire, I should never be adequate to all the labors of the household. Ah! why is the good fairy Vert d' Eau no longer in the world? or why was she not invited to my baptism? If she could bear me, and only was willing to help me, perhaps we would find a release, I from my cares, and my father from his troubles."

"Be satisfied, then, I am here," put in a voice, and Charlotte saw, before her, mother Vert d' Eau, looking at her, leaning on her little holly staff.

For a moment the young girl was frightened, for the fairy's dress was little in accordance with the fashion of the times; she was completely enveloped in a frog skin, the head of which served her as a bonnet; and she was so old, so ugly, and so wrinkled, that with a million for dowry, she could not have found a husband.

In the meanwhile, Charlotte recovered her composure soon enough to ask the fairy, in a voice rather trembling, but with the utmost politeness, what she could do for her.

"Ah! are you really in earnest, good mother?" cried Charlotte, who all at once, grew very familiar; "do you come to give me a bit of your wand with which I shall be able to make all my labor easy?"

"Better than that," replied Vert d' Eau, I bring you ten little workmen who will execute whatever you might wish to ask of them."

"Where are they?" asked the girl.

"Thou shalt see them."

The old woman partly unclosed her mantle, and thence issued ten dwarfs of unequal height.

The first two were very short, but large and strong. "These," said she, "are the most powerful, and will aid you in every work, and will make up in strength what they want in dexterity. Those which you see following them, are taller and more skillful; they can milk, draw out the thread from the distaff, and will attend to all the house work. Their brothers, whose tall stature you notice, are very dextrous in using the needle, as the little brass thimble I have furnished them shows. Here are two others less skillful which are girded with rings, and which will hardly be able to assist in the general work, as the last whose good-will you must not unestimate. All the ten appear to you, I say, a very trifling matter; but you shall now see them work, and judge for yourself.

At these words, the fairy made a sign, and the ten dwarfs sprang out. Charlotte saw them perform, one after another, the roughest and most delicate acts, suit their

actions to every thing, fail in nothing, succeed completely. Astonished, she uttered a cry of delight, and extending her arms to the fairy, said:—

"Ah! mother Vert d' Eau, lend me these ten active workers, and I ask nothing more of the Creator of the world."

"I do better," said she, "I give them to you; only, as you could not take them about with you, without being accused of witchcraft, I will order each of them to make himself very small, and will hide them away in your ten fingers."

When this had been done:—

'You are now aware what a treasure you possess,' replied mother Vert d' Eau, all will depend on the use you may make of them. If you are ignorant how to govern the little helpers, if you allow them to grow stupid by idleness, you will derive no profit from them; but give them a proper direction, lest they may fall asleep, never leave your fingers in rest, and the labor at which you were affrighted, will be found accomplished as if by magic.'

The fairy spoke truly; and our grandmother who followed her instructions succeeded not only in righting the business of the farm, but secured for herself a dowry with which she effected a happy union, and which helped her to rear eight children easily and properly. Since, as tradition tells us, she has transmitted the workers of mother Vert d' Eau to all the females of the family, and if these bestir themselves ever so little, the little workers put themselves in motion, and bring in much profit. So we are in the habit of saying, that it is through the motions of the ten fingers of the housewife that all prosperity comes, all the joy and all the comfort of home."

UNCLE AL.

INFLUENCE OF MAN ON CLIMATE.

The *London Evening Standard* observes: "The influence of man upon climate has been a favorite subject of late years, and it has been demonstrated that, by cutting down forests and draining the soil, man can materially change the climate of a country, sometimes to his advantage and sometimes to his detriment. Some recent experiments have shown the extent to which woods will affect the rainfall. We read in *Biedermann's Centralblatt* that the most recent experiments have been undertaken to ascertain to what extent the rainfall may be affected by firs and pines. Two observatories were established for purposes of comparison—the one over a clump of *Pinus sylvestris* some forty feet high, and the other over a bare sandy plain three hundred metres (three hundred and twenty-eight yards) distant from the wood, and at the same height above the level of the ground. Twelve months' observation showed that of the total rainfall within that period, ten per cent. more fell over the trees than over the bare sand three hundred metres distant from them. This result is regarded as all the more surprising since experiments of a precisely similar nature in giving an excess of five per cent. Only in favor of the wooded site of observation. Further, the mean state of saturation of the air over the wood was found to be ten per cent. higher than of that over the bare expanse of sand, the former holding much more water in so-

lution than the latter. The ground, too, under the trees retained far more water than the exposed earth, the evaporation from the surface, thanks to its shade of trees and moss, being only one-sixth of that outside their friendly shelter. The moral of all this seems to be that we should plant pines and fir forests in sandy and chalky districts, not only to encourage the water to come down, but to keep it in position when it has fallen, and to assist to prevent floods."

DR. SCHLIEMANN.

A German gentleman of this city, an old personal friend of Dr. Schliemann, says that the professor is the son of humble parents in Mecklenburg, Germany. At sixteen he sailed from Hamburg to Venezuela, but got wrecked on the Dutch coast. He subsequently was a porter in a store, and was glad of a place at \$100 a year. Here he arranged to teach a New Yorker Spanish in exchange for lessons in Italian. So poor were they that they were a year without a regular dinner. Next Schliemann learned Russian from an old soldier; afterward, a Russian gentleman took a fancy to him, and had him for some time as a courier. After traveling over Europe, he took young Schliemann to Moscow. After four years there, he returned to Amsterdam with \$93,000, and started for California (1851), where he became a banker. In four years he came to New York worth \$400,000, and when he got smitten with the excavation business he had his million. In a moment of enthusiasm he exclaimed to some Athenian friends, "I will marry the Olyseus." The statement was repeated by his hearers as an offer. It was an interesting piece of gossip. "A millionaire American" (for he is a naturalized citizen of this country, and always calls himself every where an American) "wants a wife. Apply, without reference, if you know Homer." A fair Greek girl presented herself unintroduced, told him what she had heard, fulfilled to his satisfaction the solitary condition, was offered and accepted his heart and his hand. She is now known throughout Christendom as the sharer of his toils at Mycenæ, as his brave and capable ally in the work for which he lives. "We have to do the work ourselves, Mrs. Schliemann and I," he has just written to the *London Times*. "The task is exceedingly difficult and painful, particularly in the present rainy weather, for we can not dig otherwise than on our knees, cutting with our knives the earth and stones carefully away, so as not to injure or let escape any of the gold ornaments." This lady will have a poem written on her one of these days. She is said to be the only woman in Greece who knows the *Odyssey* by heart. She carried off Priam's treasures concealed in her shawl, in order to elude the vagrant brigands.—*Bazar*.

—Princeton College is just now somewhat unpleasantly prominent in the papers, under charges of having paid too much attention of late to the things which are seen and temporal, such as buildings, etc., and not quite enough to weightier matters of high standard of scholarship and increased facilities for advanced instruction.