

The Orphans' Friend.

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THE RIVER TIME.

Oh, wonderful stream is the River of Time!
And it flows through the realm of tears;
With a faultless rhythm and a musical rhyme,
And a broadening sweep and a surge sublime,
As it bends with the ocean of years.

How the winters are drifting like flakes of
snow!

And the summers like buds between;
And the ears and the sheaves, how they come
and go,

On the river's breast, with its ebb and flow,
As they glide in the shadow and sheen.

There's a magic isle up the River Time,
Where the softest of airs are playing;
There's a cloudless sky and a tropical clime,
And a voice as sweet as a vesper chime,
And the Junos with the roses are staying;

And the name of that isle is the "Long Ago,"
And we bury our treasures there;
There are brows of beauty and bosoms of
snow,

There are heaps of dust, but we loved them
so,

There are trinkets and tresses of hair.

There are fragments of song that nobody sings,
And a part of an infant's prayer;
There's a harp unswept and a lute without
strings,

There are broken vows and pieces of rings,
And the garments she used to wear.

There are hands which are waved when that
fairy shore

By the mirage is lifted in air,
And sometimes we hear, through the turbu-
lent roar,

Sweet voices we've heard in the days gone
before,

When the wind down the river is fair.

Oh, remember for aye be that blessed isle,
All the day of life till night;

And when evening comes with a beautiful
smile,

And our eyes are closed in slumber awhile,
May that greenwood of soul be in sight!

B. F. TAYLOR.

MAHOGANY.

The Mahogany tree was discovered just a little before the year 1600, and not till nearly a century later was it brought into European use. The first mention of it is that it was used in the repair of some of Sir Walter Raleigh's ships, at Trinidad, in 1597. Its finely variegated tints were admired; but in that age the dream of El Dorado caused matters of more value to be neglected. The first that was brought to England was about the beginning of the last century, a few planks having been sent to Dr. Gibbons, of London, by a brother who was a West Indian captain. The Doctor was erecting a house, and gave the planks to the workmen, who rejected them as being too hard. The Doctor then had a candle-box made of the wood, his cabinet-maker also complaining of the hardness of the timber. But, when finished, the box became an object of general curiosity and admiration. He had one bureau, and Her Grace of Buckingham had another, made of this beautiful wood; and the despised mahogany now became a prominent article of luxury, and at the same raised the fortunes of the cabinet-maker (Wollaston), by whom it had been at first so little regarded. Since that time, rivaling and almost displacing all other ornamental woods, mahogany has become everywhere indispensable, and is, all over the world, converted into whatever of useful or beautiful may promote the convenience and comfort, or delight the taste, the caprice, or the religious sentiment of civilized man.

The mahogany tree is found in

Florida, and may thus be claimed as indigenous to the United States; and there is no reason to doubt that it may, and hereafter will be, planted and cultivated to great advantage. But hitherto it has been cut chiefly in the native forests of the Bahamas, the West India Islands, Honduras, and Yucatan.

Full grown it is one of the monarchs of the forests of tropical America. Its vast trunk and massive arms, rising to a very lofty height, and spreading with graceful sweep over immense spaces—covered with beautiful foliage, bright, glossy, light, and airy, clinging so long to the spray as to make it almost an evergreen—presents a rare combination of loveliness and grandeur. The leaves are very small, delicate, and polished like those of the laurel. The flowers are small and white, or greenish yellow. The fruit is a hard, woody capsule, oval, not unlike the egg of a turkey in size and shape, and contains five cells, in each of which are inclosed about fifteen seeds.

A few facts will furnish a tolerably distinct idea of the size of this splendid tree. The mahogany lumbermen, having selected a tree, surround it with a platform about twelve feet above the ground, and cut it above the platform of the largest part of the trunk are thus lost. Yet a single log not infrequently weighs from six or seven to fifteen tons, and sometimes measures as much as seventeen feet in length, and four and a half to five and a half feet in diameter, one tree furnishing two, three, or four such logs. Some trees have yielded twelve thousand superficial feet, and at average prices, have sold for fifteen thousand dollars.

[Messrs. Broadwood, London, piano-forte manufacturers, paid £3,000 for three logs, all cut from one tree, and each about fifteen feet long and more than three feet square. Of these logs it is recorded that the wood was particularly beautiful, capable of receiving the highest polish, and when polished reflecting the light in the most varied manner, like the surface of a crystal, and from the wavy form of the pores offering a different figure in whatever direction it was viewed. Cut into veneers of the sixteenth of an inch thick, these logs would cover an area of nearly two acres.]

In low and damp soils it is of very rapid growth; but the most valuable trees grow slowly amidst rocks and on sterile soil, and seem to gather compactness and beauty of grain and texture from the very difficulties with which they have to struggle for existence; just as in human life affliction and trial develop the loveliest traits of human character. In the Bahama Islands, springing up on rocky hill-sides in places almost destitute of soil, and crowding its contorted roots into crevices among the rocks—I speak now of a time long past—it formed that much esteemed and curiously veined variety of wood known and valued so highly in Europe as "Madelra wood." The relentless axe of the lumberman has long ago exterminated the mahogany for-

ests of the Bahamas.

The old Jamaica mahogany, now so scarce, grew also in arid and rocky soils, matured very slowly, and was remarkable for the variety and beauty of its veins, spots, clouds, and figuring.

But Jamaica, as well as the Bahamas, has been almost stripped of this valuable variety of timber. In 1753 not less than 521,000 feet of mahogany were shipped from this single island. The old Jamaica mahogany has disappeared from the market; and the trees now cut in that island, growing, as it do, on low, alluvial soil, furnish an inferior timber, pale and porous, and less esteemed than that of the Cuba, San Domingo, or Honduras.

THE PYRAMIDS OF EGYPT.

Rev. R. Dumm, in a letter from Suez, thus describes the pyramids:

The pyramids, destitute alike of beauty and utility, yet as mile-stones upon the highway of time, their rough sides and broken tops mark the progress of the ages and the advance of the world's civilization. They are appropriate; as destitute of beauty as their builders were of taste. In their coldness and hardness representing properly the philanthropy (!) which drove 100,000 men to ten years of toil in building the cause way for transporting the stone from the river in Cheops, and then drove 360,000 men to twenty years of slavish toil in building that one artificial mountain, covering more than twelve acres of land. And there are more than twenty of these monstrous tombs, some of which are almost as large as Cheops. And yet there is a strange interest felt in these massive piles. They were old when Christ was born, and carry one back nearly four thousand years. They show the effect of combined, persevering effort. Their magnitude is overwhelming. Think of it. One single pile of square, rough-hewed stone, with 12 feet removed from each side, and still covering more than 12 acres of land, rising nearly 450 feet, and containing 85,000,000 cubic feet of stone. Enough to fence in 3,500 farms of 160 acres each; or enough to build more than 37,000 houses, 30 by 40 feet, which, with six persons to each house, would accommodate over 200,000. One of these twenty would furnish building stone sufficient for comfortably housing the entire population of Boston.

Words of Wisdom.

The Japanese Normal school, in Yeddo is for the education of girls. The Empress and other high dignitaries, who presided at the opening recently, were escorted to the main hall of the building by the Vice-Minister of Education. The Superintendent of the school read an address, as follows:

"We humbly venture to think that the enlightenment of a country depends upon the excellence of its government, and that the excellence of its government depends upon the perfect nature of the regulations of families. Now, the perfect nature of household regulations depends upon the in-

tegrity of thought, advance of intelligence, and chaste and upright action of women. Our land affords, from olden days down to the present time, numberless instances of virtuous women; but still, if we regard the matter in respect to the whole of our country, it must be allowed that the regulations for the education of women are exceedingly defective. At the present moment, reform in enlightenment has gradually progressed; and it is a source of rejoicing to the myriads of our people that the Tokio Normal School for girls has been established, and that by her majesty's attendance to-day, the ceremony of opening the school is favorably carried out. Our earnest desire is that those who may in after time complete their education here may become virtuous women, and so assist their husbands; virtuous mothers, and so to instruct their children; and that by their giving birth to and rearing up a worthy population, our country may become a prosperous and tranquil land."

The Empress replied:

"Upon hearing last year that this school was about to be established, in order to foster the growth of education for girls, I was unable to contain my joy. Its construction has now been completed, and the ceremonies of its opening has been performed. My earnest desire is that this school may henceforth be prosperous, and that I may eventually see the beautiful fruit of female education appear in profusion throughout the whole of the land."

DIMENSIONS OF THE AMERICAN LAKES.

The greatest length of Lake Superior is 335 miles; the greatest breadth is 160 miles; mean depth, 988 feet; elevation, 627 feet; area, 23,000 square miles. The greatest length of Lake Michigan, is 360 miles; its greatest breadth, 108 miles; mean depth, 900 feet; elevation, 687 feet; area, 23,000 square miles. The greatest length of Lake Huron is 200 miles; the greatest breadth is 160 miles; mean depth, 800 feet; elevation, 474 feet; area, 20,000 square miles. The greatest length of Lake Erie is 250 miles; its greatest breadth is 80 miles; its mean depth, 200 feet; elevation, 555 feet; area, 6,000 square miles. The greatest length of Lake Ontario is 180 miles; its greatest breadth is 65 miles; its mean depth is 500 feet; elevation, 262 feet; area, 6,000 square miles. The total length of all five is 1,584 miles, covering an area altogether of upwards of 90,000 square miles.

HELPING OTHERS.

It seems a strange thing, but it is nevertheless true, that sharing another's burden will lighten our own. If you begin doing little things for your neighbor, it will very soon be easy for you to perform great deeds in his behalf. No man is sufficient unto himself. Trust in Providence is nothing but higher belief in humanity. You may feel very much depressed some day, discouraged and well nigh despairing, when some

kind friend happens in—God sent, and you are soothed, cheered and encouraged; the veil is lifted, and you are happy once in more. Many are able to give substantial help to those who are in need, money, to tide over some financial trouble; food, to keep a family from starving; gifts that nourish the heart with assurance of love, something that may be a trifle in itself, but helps make up the sum of human happiness. But perhaps you cannot do this; you have a large family and limited income, or are otherwise prevented from making the hand the almoner of the heart. Well then draw on the spiritual treasury. Give kind words to those who need them; comfort those who are bowed down; speak lovingly to little children, and encouragingly to those who faint for this support. Stand ready to help everybody.

Extremes of Rainfall.

It is well known that in some parts of the world rain is a novelty. The clouds never distil their grateful showers, and vegetation cannot flourish. Not a drop of water falls in Northern Mexico, or on the Peruvian coast, or in Central Arabia, or in the deserts of Sahara and Cobi. On the other hand, in Patagonia and other countries, it seldom leaves off raining.

The quality of rain varies quite as much as its frequency. An inch a day in England is an extraordinary amount; in Scotland and in this country three or four inches a day are not uncommon; while in Gibraltar thirty-three inches have fallen in twenty-six hours. In France the average annual fall is thirty inches; in Russia, fourteen; in this country, from thirty-five to fifty; but among the Khasia, hills, opposite the head of the Gulf of Bengal, it is often forty-four feet. This is probably the wettest part of the globe, for, on the western coast of Ireland, where the moisture from the Atlantic creates perpetual rains, the annual fall is only ten feet.

FAMOUS ENGLISH OAKS.

The King Oak, Windsor Forest, is more than 1,000 years old, and quite hollow. Professor Burnet, who once lunched inside this tree, said it was capable of accommodating ten or twelve persons comfortably at a dinner sitting.

The Beggar's Oak, in Bagshot Park, is 20 feet in girth, five feet from the ground; the branches extend from the tree 48 feet in every direction.

The Wallace Oak, at Ellerslie, near where Wallace was born, is 21 feet in circumference. It is 67 feet high, and its branches extend 45 feet east, 36 west, 30 south and 25 north. Wallace and 300 of his men are said to have hid themselves from the English, among the branches of this tree, which was then in full leaf.

A colored preacher, commenting on the passage, "Be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves," said that the mixture should be made in the proportion of a pound of dove to an ounce of serpent.