

# The Orphans' Friend.

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## THE BRIDGE OF LIFE.

Across the rapid stream of seventy years  
The slender bridge of human life is thrown  
The past and future form its moldering piers;  
The present moment is its frail key-stone.

From "dust thou art" the arch begins to rise,  
"To dust" the fashion of its form descends,  
"Shalt thou return" the higher curve implies,  
In which the first to last lowness binds.

Seen by youth's magic light upon the arch,  
How lovely does each far-off scene appear!  
But ah! how changed when on the onward  
march

Our weary footsteps bring the vision near!  
A smoldering steam upon its bosom takes  
The inverted shadow of a bridge on high,  
And thus the arch in air and water makes  
One perfect circle to the gazer's eye.

So 'tis with life the things that do appear  
Are fleeting shadows on time's passing tide,  
Cast by the sunshine of a higher sphere  
From viewless things that ceaselessly  
abide.

The real is but the half of life; it needs  
The ideal to make a perfect whole;  
The sphere of sense is incomplete, and pleads  
The closer union with the sphere of soul.

The pier that rests upon this shore's bank  
As that which stands upon the farther bank;  
And fitness for our duties here will frame  
A fitness for the joys of higher rank.

Then let us, passing o'er life's fragile arch,  
Regard it as a means, and not an end—  
As but the path of faith on which we march,  
To where all glories of our being tend.

## SIGNS AND OMENS.

Let none of us boast ourselves  
as free from the servitude of su-  
perstition so long as we nourish  
our pet signs and sacrifice to our  
favorite omens. How many of  
us dare to begin a piece of work  
on Friday, lest we never finish it?  
How many of us refuse to cut our  
nails on Sunday, lest misfortune  
follow us all the week? Indeed,  
superstition has made quite a  
point in the matter of finger-nails,  
and instructs us that the maiden  
who abbreviates them upon Sat-  
urday will see her true love on  
the morrow. There are those of  
us who even yet believed in the  
evil-eye, and bear their death-  
warrant in the baying of a dog or  
the crash of a mirror—who would  
almost starve sooner than sit the  
thirteenth at table. In the creed  
of these it is an evil omen to  
count the stars—you will certain-  
ly die before you have finished.  
To see the moon over your left  
shoulder presents ill luck, though  
one ought to be fortunate at seeing  
it at all hazards; to receive or to  
bestow the gift of a pointed or  
sharp instrument argues certain  
destruction of friendship between  
the two; to pick up a pin with  
the point toward you is of such  
import that one had better want  
a pin forever than to secure it at  
this cost. So little have most of  
us outgrown the belief that com-  
ing events cast their shadows be-  
fore, that for a harmless bird to  
enter a dwelling is prognostic of  
some dire event. There is prob-  
ably not one of us who, upon  
spilling the salt, will not seek to  
appease the gods by throwing a  
pinch over the shoulder—unless  
we especially hanker after a quar-  
rel. If our scissors stiek in the  
floor upon falling, we straightway  
expect a stranger; if a hostess,  
through inadvertence, sends us  
two spoons to our cup of bohea,  
we anticipate a present. Who of  
us would put on the mourning  
bonnet of another without a shud-  
der of apprehension? And do  
we not learn that to sing before  
breakfast is a most dangerous er-  
ror? perhaps because there are  
malaries abroad in the morning  
air, which it is not wise to fill  
one's lungs with, while the stom-

ach is empty. Does not the  
verse tell us,

"Sing in the street,  
Disappointment you'll meet?"

It may be because singing thus  
denotes great elation of spirits,  
which is invariably followed by  
corresponding depression; while  
the prophesy that, "those who  
sing in the morning will cry be-  
fore night" belongs to the same  
family, and is derived probably  
from the same natural causes.

"A maid shall not marry on a Wednesday,  
A maid shall not marry in the month of  
May."

we are told, though one would  
be inclined to think that Wednes-  
day, after the washing and iron-  
ing were put away, would be  
a most opportune season for a  
wedding.

"Marry in Lent, and you'll live to repent,"  
inherits its assurance from a more  
ancient superstition, which predic-  
ted misfortune to those who mar-  
ried during the feast of St Joseph.  
And does it not tend to prove the  
degree of bondage in which even  
the Christian world was held,  
when the churches forbade mar-  
riages at that season, as the feast  
fell in Lent?

"Change your name and not your letter  
You'll change for the worse, and not the  
better."

is a saying, however, the most  
superstitious is brave enough to  
duty at Cupid's bidding. Who  
of us has not known a mother to  
persist in carrying her new-born  
child into the attic before taking  
him to the parlor, in order that  
he may be sure to rise in the  
world? or one to whom, the rock-  
ing of an empty cradle would  
give a chill of foreboding? Who  
has not known the nurse to shake  
her head over the weighing of  
the baby? And have we not  
fallen in with some rheumatic old  
fellow who tells us that the horse-  
chestnut in his pocket "has been  
better'n all your doctors' stuff,"  
though its curative powers may  
not be visible in the distorted  
limbs of the believer?

In the beginning, doubtless,  
most of these superstitions had a  
natural and reasonable origin,  
though they have become so cor-  
rupted by time and overlaid by  
prejudice that we can see nothing  
but nonsense in them. Why  
should it be lucky to put on a  
garment in side out, unless the  
trouble it occasions teaches us  
particularity and painstaking? If  
we break two articles, why must  
we perforce break a third, unless  
it is that a careless habit grows  
upon one? and why must we buy  
something to break the spell of  
slippery fingers, unless it is to  
teach a lesson in profit and loss?  
Why do dead men's shoes never  
wear long? or is it only another  
version of "light com', light go,"  
and confirmation of the fact that  
we only value what we secure  
with effort? Does not the ad-  
monition never to count your fish  
when fishing, or you will catch  
no more, merely signify that it is  
unwise to rest on one's laurels and  
let opportunity slip by? that there  
is a tide in the affairs of men, as  
well as of fishes? Truth to tell,  
we should be sorry to part with  
some of our pleasant superstitions,  
which often lead a charm to our  
commonplace experiences, linking  
then with the inscrutable and mys-  
terious. Has not the finding of

a rusty horseshoe brightened the  
dull day for us?

"How it touches our quick heart  
When Fate, by omens, take our part!"  
when we discover a four leaved  
clover, for instance, and  
"Carry in our hearts for days  
Peace that hallows rudest ways."  
—Harper's Bazar.

## SOMETHING TO DO.

BY M.

"Heigh-ho!"  
Katy was tired, so she sat down  
on the stairs. She was tired of  
play, tired of trying to please her-  
self, tired of everything; so she  
sat on the stairs, hugged doily  
tight, and began to sulk.

But she had not sat there long,  
before mamma passed that way,  
and, seeing her little girl so dis-  
consolate and miserable, sat down  
beside her, and asked what was  
the matter.

"Oh, mamma," said Katy, "I  
don't know what to do. I've had  
three parties and two dinners, and  
I've dressed all my dolls over as  
many as five times, till I am sick  
of them all."

"Katy," said mamma, "I once  
knew a little girl not much older  
than you, who had more cause  
than you to be sick of everything.  
The little girl was blind, blind  
after nine years of happy life in  
which she hardly knew what a  
blessing sight was until it was ta-  
ken from her."

"Many and many a time have I  
seen her, looking so sad and pitiful  
that my heart ached for her."

One day, a kind friend said to  
her, "Annie, I don't like to see  
you so sad. Is there nothing we  
can do to make you happier?"

"No," said Annie, "nothing."  
Then the lady said, "Have you  
ever asked yourself if there is  
anything you can do to make us  
happy?"

"Why, no," said Annie, "is  
there?"

"Yes, my darling," said the lady,  
"so many things that in doing  
them you will in time grow hap-  
py yourself. You can greet pap-  
pa with a loving smile, when he  
comes home, tired, to his little  
daughter whose sorrow he feels  
almost as deeply as she does her-  
self. You can hold baby while  
mamma is so busy in the morning;  
and do you know? I heard old  
Mr. Blake saying, the other day,  
that he wished little Miss Annie  
would come to see him, as she  
used, he missed her so much."

"Katy," said mamma, "when  
you go to see Aunt Annie, does  
she make your visit so dull for you  
that you are glad to leave her?"

"No indeed, mamma, but then  
you would hardly think she was  
blind, she does so many things,  
and is so sweet and pleasant."

"And yet, Katy, I find a little  
girl who has eyes to see her way  
down to little Eva Maynard's, to  
carry her there, and plenty  
of dolls and books to show her  
when she gets there, sulking on  
the stairs because she has  
done nothing but amuse herself  
and is tired of it. Oh, Katy, it  
makes me ashamed of her, when  
I see her living only for herself,  
with no thought or care for oth-  
ers."

"Oh, mamma," said Katy, "only  
don't look so, and I will go this

minute to see Eva. You see, I  
never should have thought of  
taking my things to show her, if  
you hadn't told me."

"You must learn to think of  
things yourself my dear," said  
mamma, "and remember that in  
helping others, you will help  
yourself as well."

The every-day life led by  
Queen Victoria is thus described  
in the Paris *Figaro*, the informant  
being the Queen's favorite servant,  
John Brown: "Her majesty  
leads a very regular life I be-  
lieve," I said. "Yes, it is gener-  
ally the same day after day," was  
the reply. "She gets up about  
nine o'clock in the morning, and  
has breakfast in her apartment.  
Then she walks up and down the  
terrace until she comes indoors to  
sign her papers. The documents  
are all put ready to sign, with  
the corner turned down where  
she is to write. But her Majesty,  
woman-like, will insist on read-  
ing most of them, and on seeing  
what is inside. However, she  
rarely makes an alteration. Af-  
ter this, which often takes two or  
three hours, she sees the Princess  
Beatrice (God bless her!) and has  
lunch. Then she will, if it is fine,  
take a walk in the grounds with  
the Princess Beatrice and prince  
Leopold, when he or she will  
drive out, and I have to attend  
her. Then she comes home, and  
one of the ladies reads to her un-  
til it is time to prepare for dinner.  
After dinner the ladies read to  
her again, and she looks over  
pictures and things, and goes to  
bed very early." "The dinner is  
rather a stiff affair, I suppose?" I  
said. "Well, stiff is hardly the  
word for it," was the reply. "The  
guests assembled, and dinner is  
generally announced before her  
Majesty enters the room. The  
minister is waiting, and the peo-  
ple invited sit at the table, and  
there is a pause. Then the Queen  
enters, every body rises, her Maj-  
esty makes a bow and sits down  
and the guests resume their seats.  
The footmen serve the dishes in  
solemn silence, and not a word is  
spoken. Her Majesty usually  
makes two or three remarks dur-  
ing the dinner, but no one speaks  
unless the Queen speaks to him,  
and the company is more like a  
Quaker's meeting than anything  
else. Before the dessert her  
Majesty generally rises, bows,  
and leaves the room, but the  
guests, ladies and all, remain.  
The princess Beatrice generally  
leaves with her mother. Then  
the conversation becomes more  
general after her Majesty has left,  
and at the end of the dinner Lady  
Biddulph or Miss Cadogan, or  
somebody rises, the ladies leave  
the room, the gentleman remain-  
ing, standing. Then the gentle-  
men usually go to the smoking or  
billiard room, and the ladies to  
the drawing-room. Sometimes  
the Queen will go into the draw-  
ing-room in the course of the eve-  
ning, but not very often. And  
the gentlemen are all in court  
dress, which is usually very  
tightly fitting, so they can't en-  
joy their dinner much. I don't  
envy them a bit."

India sends dismal accounts of  
the probabilities of an approach-  
ing famine.

## THE BLESSINGS OF GOOD WIVES.

No companion so valuable and  
safe can a man have as a discreet  
and godly wife. It is her prov-  
ince and care to make her home  
neat and attractive in appearance,  
genial, sweet and healthy in at-  
mosphere—the place to which  
her husband shall turn with glad  
and longing heart. It is her aim  
to be in person and manner so en-  
gaging, in spirits so fresh, in affec-  
tion so genuine and true in thought  
so elevated and pure, that he shall  
seek her companionship with nev-  
er failing zest and joy. And it is  
by such companionship that a  
sweet and refined woman moulds  
and fashions her husband to grace  
and worth to him attainable in no  
other way. Her delicate sense  
seizes upon, and unconsciously  
elevates his aesthetic nature. He  
grows up toward her standard of  
good taste. The gentleness of her  
spirit woo the slumbering nobil-  
ity of his nature to the fortune of  
life, and makes him great in the  
strength of manly tenderness. Her  
piety, more simple, trustful, stead-  
fast than his, sweetly holds him to  
truth, to duty, to God. Her grace  
of manner gently smooths away  
masculine roughness and angular-  
ity. A most mighty wielder of the  
moral pruning knife is a judicious  
wife. One by one eccentricities  
and rudeness of outer life, excres-  
cences and vicious growths from  
the inner life, are cut away until  
a man, in character and conduct,  
is rounded and complete—*The  
Monday Club.*

The merriest place in the uni-  
verse is just beyond the earth's  
attractive power, for there all  
bodies lose their gravity.

Is your voice a soprano?" in-  
quired a country music committee  
man of a young lady who applied  
for a position in the choir.

It is related of a certain minister  
who was noted for his long ser-  
mons with many divisions, that  
one day, when he was advancing  
among his teens, he reached at  
length a kind of resting place in  
his discourse, when, pausing to  
take breath he asked the question,  
"And what shall I say more?" A  
voice from the congregation ear-  
nestly responded, "Say 'Amen!'"

A genius was explaining the  
utility of an India rubber ship  
which he was inventing, when an  
old salt exclaimed: "No, no; it  
will never do. An India rubber  
ship would rub out all the lines  
of latitude and longitude, to say  
nothing of the equator!"

An Irish peasant being asked  
why he permitted his pig to take  
up its quarters with his family,  
made an answer abounding with  
satirical *naivete*: "Why not?  
Doesn't the place afford every  
convenience that a pig can re-  
quire?"

A reverend doctor was on one  
occasion proceeding to the act of  
ordination of one of his hearers to  
the Kirk-session, when the person  
in question rose and said that he  
was not suited for such an office.  
The minister promptly replied to  
his hesitating hearer. Come awa,  
mon, do ye ken that the Master  
had ance need of an ass?"