

# ORPHANS' FRIEND.

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## AFTER VACATION.

Again they muster, from the far-off hillside,  
From country farm-house and from sea-girt shore;  
Their tamping feet resound along the highways,  
Their gleeful shouts ring on the air once more.

A merry band, so full of youth's elixir,  
How can their restless spirits e'er essay

The tasks that wait their patient, steady labor  
After the long bright summer holiday?

Not now, O children, in the sunny meadows  
Ye cull the flowers, or by brooklet stream,

But in the fields of knowledge, thick with blossoms,  
To garner sweets for a far future day.

Here too you roam a land of fairer promise,  
Watered by many a stream of liquid life

Where weary travellers find a sweet refreshment  
And garner richest stores of old and new.

We bid thee welcome to the homes that missed thee,  
To the deserted school room's open door.

The nation's hopes in thee, keep thy bright light  
Thine heritage is more than golden store.

—The Kingdom of Home.

## THE CROSS-ROADS.

'Which road do we take, grandpa?' inquired Harry, as grandpa's little black mare and Harry's pretty little pony, padded slowly side by side, up toward the cross-roads.

'Whichever road you would like the best,' replied grandpa, carelessly.

Harry turned and looked at grandpa, it was such an odd reply, but grandpa's face gave no more information than his answer had done.

'You are joking, grandpa, I know you are!' said Harry, laughing.

'Joking! I am very serious,' replied grandpa.

'But, grandpa, we want to go to Cresson.'

'So we do. Your cousins will be pleased to see you, Harry.'

Harry found that grandpa said no more about the road, so he waited a minute until they came to the point where the question must be decided.

Grandpa drew up his reins and quite stopped his little mare, and Harry wondered very much what grandpa meant to do, coming to a full stop just at the point where the two roads passed each other.

'Do you forget which road to take, grandpa?'

'No, indeed! I have trotted over them both too often to forget them.'

'Then, which shall we take, grandpa?'

'The one you like best, boy. Harry was perplexed.

Grandpa seemed so earnest in saying such a silly thing.

'I don't care which road we take, grandpa, only I want to go to Cresson.'

'You want to go to Cresson, of course, but it is strange you do not decide which you

like the appearance of best; one you notice is much smoother and easier traveled than the other.'

'Grandpa, I am sure they cannot both go to Cresson.'

'Oh, no, nobody said they did, boy; but what does that matter?'

Harry was greatly disturbed; he thought something must be the matter with grandpa, or that he was very provoking.

'We cannot get to Cresson, grandpa, if we take the wrong road,' he replied, a scrap impatiently; 'how can it matter about my liking the road?'

'It matters a great deal. One road is up hill and down all the way for miles, and leads over a stream which we would be obliged to ford; the other is smoother, easier; which do you think you would prefer?'

'But, grandpa, we will have to take the right one, no matter what kind of a one it is.'

'Why, my dear boy, your words are contrary to the actions of the greater part of the people of the world; how do you happen to speak so unreasonably?'

'Harry's little Midge was getting a scrap fussy, and wanted to go: Harry looked perplexed as he tried to make Midge stand still.

'I do not know, grandpa; but do let us go,' he pleaded.

'Yes, it is hard to stand still; ponies, horses, boys, men, women—time, all like to go, and do go, but the great point to decide is where to go, and how to get there.'

'Grandpa, you are too funny for anything,' said Harry more and more bewildered; 'we decided to go to Cresson, and now the thing to do is to go isn't it?'

'Yes, but how?—that is the question.'

'By the road which leads there, grandpa, for you know yourself if we take the wrong road we will never, never reach Cresson, if we even ride for a year.'

'Do you really mean that, boy?' inquired grandpa, solemnly; 'do you mean to say that it is so important about the road?'

Harry did not like to laugh at grandpa, but he did do it; how could he help it?

'Why, grandpa,' said he, as he patted little Midge, and tried to make him stand as still as Jet was doing; 'why, grandpa, it is just as important to get on the right road as it is to start at all, don't you think so?'

'To be sure I do,' said grandpa, with a sudden earnestness; 'I see that you agree with me, so we will not consider which road is the easiest, or most agreeable, but take the one to Cresson, which is this to the right. But stay a minute; Midge must wait. Did you think your grandpa had lost his senses?'

'No, grandpa, not just that,' said Harry, patting Midge, and feeling relieved that they had succeeded in so far coming to reason.

'Boy,' said grandpa, holding Midge's bridle to make him stand quite still and just where he could look in Harry's puzzled eyes; 'you are

standing at two cross-roads instead of one. Do you know what I mean?'

'No, grandpa, I cannot think.'

'These roads lead to the north, south, east, and west; the eye can see them; the other cross-roads lead to God, and away from him; there are only two of them.'

Harry was a little puzzled yet.

'If I should ask you which you would choose, the good or evil road—the road to God or away from him—I know what you would answer me; you would not wait to consider a minute, you would choose the good, and that would be well as far as it went; but thou

sands have chosen the good and have come out at the evil end. Thousands have said they choose to travel toward God, but have found themselves, afterward, with their backs to him, at the very end of the wrong road. They never started toward God, or walked on the good way at all. The reason was that they never stopped at the cross-roads, and considered properly which road to take. Their

mouth said: 'I wish to go on the good road which leads toward God,' but they did not stop and question, and find out how to get on the good road. They were content with thinking that they wanted to go toward God, but did not begin to go. If you are going to Cresson, you must take the road to Cresson, and keep on it, no matter how rough, steep, slippery, crooked, or vexatious in every way it may be. If you want to go toward God, you must take the road leading toward God, no matter how hard, disagreeable, trying, it may prove to be.'

'I never thought about its being like two roads,' said Harry, forgetting how funny it was of grandpa to stop Midge and Jet in the middle of the road to talk in such a puzzling fashion.

'Boy, you are young; that means you are coming to the cross-roads. Look out, do not say "I want to go to Cresson," and set your face toward Munford. Decide for God or against him, and get on the right road. Get on it; keep on it; stay on it; walk over it—up hill, or down hill.'

'Grandpa, you puzzled me very much at first.'

'Yes, boy,' said grandpa, dropping Midge's bridle and letting both him and Jet start at an easy pace. 'I suppose so, but I want you to get these cross-roads, and the importance of deciding about them, fixed in your mind, so that you will never forget them, that they may always come back as though they were before your eyes, reminding you of those other cross-roads of which I have spoken. When you think of going to Cresson remember the importance of deciding about the road, and of keeping on it. When you think of these cross-roads, remember too those other cross-roads of good and evil; for, boy, you can no more reach heaven by the wrong road than you can get to Cresson by going toward Munford.'

GEO. KLINGLE.

## POLITICAL CORRUPTION.

A gentleman from England who was lately diving through one of our Atlantic seaboard cities, noticed a stately dwelling-house, with gardens, conservatories, etc., standing in the midst of a district full of whiskey-shops and the squalid poverty which dwells around such dens of pollution.

'That is a strange place for a gentleman's dwelling,' he said.

His companion laughed. 'Oh, it is not a gentleman who lives there; it is a Boss. It is Mc-Munn, 'King of the Toppers,' and he must live among his constituency to maintain his influence over them. They are very proud of the 'King's' fine house, I believe, and of his wife's diamonds.'

'But I don't understand,' hesitated the Englishman. 'This, I infer, is an educated gentleman who uses these poor creatures to keep himself in office?'

'Not at all. He is one of themselves. Mc-Munn kept a drinking-house in this neighborhood, and had shrewdness enough to control the 'boys'; that is, the drunkards, ruffians and thieves who frequented his houses.

'At a primary election he was nominated by them for city Councilman and elected. His backing soon gave him power. A man who could bring the mobs of his ward to the polls, with as many roughs from the next city as were needed to control an election, was sure of office. He has risen step by step until he is County Sheriff.'

'And his fortune?'

'Ah, I've no doubt he robs the county of thousands of dollars a year.'

'And the people know it?'

'Yes; but what can you do? All of the municipal officers are his confederates. No decent man will hold office with them. Honest men will have nothing to do with electing them. New York has gone through the same experience, and Philadelphia. The Bosses are sharp, dishonest men who know how to control the dangerous classes of voters.'

'But the educated, honest men surely outnumber these ruffians and drunkards?'

'Yes.'

'Yet they allow themselves to be cheated in their elections and robbed afterwards?'

The American shrugged his shoulders. 'We are a more good-humored, forbearing people than you English, I fancy.'

'I don't call it good-humored,' said the Briton.

But he had a very clear idea of the shameful way in which political power is obtained in our large cities, of the character of the men who hold municipal offices, and of the danger to the country from these sly sources of political corruption. If the honest, educated, and self-restrained voters of the nation do not soon rouse themselves to meet this danger, the evil will become gigantic and beyond control.

## WIT AND ELOQUENCE.

Where the traveller now encounters one beggar in Ireland, fifty years ago he would meet with fifty. The towns and villages swarmed with them. A tourist in those days was alternately moved to tears by sights of misery, and to laughter by bursts of genuine wit.

The wit was mixed with blarney, which so delicately flattered that offence was out of the question. Mr. S. C. Hall illustrates the perfection with which an Irish beggar used what we Americans call "soft-sawder," by an incident that happened while he was visiting Maria Edgeworth, the popular Irish writer.

He was driving with her one day, and the carriage, as soon as it stopped, was surrounded by beggars.

'You know I never give you anything,' she said to one, who was pleading for a gift. As quick as a flash came the answer,—

'Oh, the Lord forgive ye, Miss Edgeworth! that's the first lie ye ever told.'

'Good luck to your ladyship's happy face this morning!' said another of the group. 'Sure you'll have the light heart in me bosom before you go?'

'Oh, then look at the poor who can't look at you, my lady,' pleaded a blind man; 'the dark man that can't see if your beauty is like your sweet voice.'

'Oh, the blessing of the widdy and five small children, that's waiting for your honor's bounty, be wid you on the road!' called out a mother, to Mr. Hall, as she led forth her fatherless children.

'Oh, help the poor craythur that's got no children to show yer honor!' shouted another woman; 'they're down in the sickness, and the man than owns them at sea.'

'Won't your ladyship buy a dying woman's prayers—chape?' moaned a sick female.

'They're keeping me back from the penny you're going to give me, lady, dear,' wailed another on the outskirts of the crowd; 'because I'm wake in myself, and my heart's broke with the hunger.'

Can the reader parallel the eloquence of those touching appeals, outside of Ireland?

## OVERWORKED WOMEN.

The London "Medical Record" lately gave the case of a lady, the mother of eight children, who was seized with acute mania.

The husband when asked for the cause, replied that there was no possible reason. 'She was a most devoted mother, was always doing something for us, was always at home; never went out of the house, even on Sundays; never went gadding about to the neighbors, gossiping and talking; was the best of wives; had no ideas outside of her home.'

'This husband,' says the superintendent of the insane asylum, 'has furnished a graphic list of the causes of his wife's madness.'

Dr. Holmes somewhere comments on the amount of misery and melancholy which escapes through the fingers of women on the keys of a piano. We hear them jangling on the streets of

every village; a torture and discord to the ears of the passer-by, but what a comfort and outlet is in that poor music for the discontented souls who try to speak through it!

Miss Yonge, who is a shrewd observer of an ordinary course of women's lives, tells us that her favorite heroine, after a long and cruel grief, kept a novel in her work-basket "for repairs."

Women are too apt when prostrated by sorrow or worn out by long mental strains to keep close to the damaging grief or work; to try to fit themselves for everyday duties by hugging the thorn nearer to their breast, and by prayer. They find to their dismay that they grow weaker and more irritable; their prayers are not answered; consolation and strength do not come.

This is usually the case with young girls who are braving a first heavy disappointment, and who have no imperative labor to drive them from the contemplation of it. The fact is, it is the physical brain that needs relief, which can be given to it only by total change of thought and occupation, by getting away from the exciting trouble.

Women, young and old, should plan a "recess" for every day, a vacation for every year of their lives, when for a brief space they could return to their individual, natural tastes, uninfluenced by thought of husband and children. They will be all the stronger to help husband and children when they take up the routine of life again.

## EVERYBODY SATISFIED.

This sexton, whose pen-ink portrait gets a smile, made a sad though joking comment upon the life of some one whose grave he had been digging. He was a singularly grave man, even for a sexton. For nearly half a century he had been a public functionary—had performed the conspicuous duties of a sexton; yet no man had ever seen him smile.

Occasionally he joked, but he did it in such a funeral manner that no one could accuse him of levity.

One day he was standing on the church step, wiping his melancholy eyes with a red handkerchief.

A hearse stood near and three or four carriages were drawn up behind it. The notes of the organ floated out of the window with solemn effect. A stranger came along and said,—

'Funeral?'

And the old sexton gravely bowed his head—it was

'Who's dead?'

The old man again wiped his brow and gave the name of the deceased.

'What complaint?' asked the inquisitive stranger.

Solemnly placing his bandanna in his hat and covering his bald head, the old sexton made answer,—

'There is no complaint; everybody is entirely satisfied.'

'Irritable piety,' even though Sydney Smith father the phrase, is a misnomer. We may find, indeed, irritability in pious men, but so far as they are pious they are not irritable, and so far as they are irritable they are not pious.