

The Home Circle.

STRUGGLE*

My soul is like the ear that momentarily Dies in desperate stress beneath the wave Then glitters out again and sweeps the sea: Each second I'm new born from some new grave. —Sidney Lanier.

EVENING SONG.*

Look off, dear Love, across the shallow sands, And mark you meeting of the sun and sea, How long they kiss in sight of all the lands, Ah longer, longer we.

Now in the sea's red vintage melts the sun, As Egypt's pearl dissolved in rosy wine, And Cleopatra night drinks all. 'Tis done, Love, lay thy hand in mine.

Come forth, sweet stars, and comfort heaven's heart; Glimmer, ye waves, round else unlighted sands. O, night! divorce our sun and sky apart Never our lips, our hands. —Sidney Lanier.

THE DAY IS DONE.*

Come read to me some poem, Some simple and heart-felt lay, That shall soothe the restless feeling, And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters, Not from the bards sublime, Whose distant footsteps echo Through the corridors of time.

For like strains of martial music, Their mighty thoughts suggest Life's endless toil and endeavor, And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humble poet, Whose songs gush from the heart, As showers from the clouds of summer, Or tears from the eyelids start.

Such songs have power to quiet The restless pulse of care, And come like the benediction That follows after prayer. —Henry W. Longfellow.

THE "GRIT, BARE-LEGGED LADDIE."

The story of a boy who refused to allow his poverty to stand in the way to his desire for knowledge is related by an exchange:

Nearly a hundred years ago, a stout, freckle faced, awkward boy of eighteen years, dressed in a ragged waistcoat and short breeches, without stockings or shoes, rapped one evening at the door of a humble cottage in northern England, and asked to see the village schoolmaster. When that person appeared, the boy said, very modestly:

"I would like to attend your evening school, sir."

"And what do you wish to study?" asked the teacher, roughly.

"I want to learn to read and write, sir," answered the lad.

The schoolmaster glanced over the boy's homely face and rough clothes scornfully, and said:

"Very well, you can attend, but a grit, bare legged laddie like you would better be doing something else than learning his letters." Then he closed the door in the lad's face.

If that "grit, bare-legged laddie" had said to the schoolmaster, "I mean to become a great inventor, to be the friend of rich and powerful men, to hold conversation with kings, and to write my name among the great ones of the earth," it is likely he would have called the boy a fool to cherish such wild dreams. Yet this poor, ignorant lad, who did not know the alphabet at eighteen, accomplished all these things before he died.

He did it by hard work and because he made up his mind to do the best he could. He kept pegging away. His ignorance was a misfortune, and not a fault. His parents were too poor to send him to school. He was the son of the fireman of a pumping engine in a Northumberland colliery. His birthplace was a hovel with a clay floor, mud walls, and bare rafters. When he was five years old he began to work for his living by herding oows in the daytime and barring up the gates at night. As he grew older he was set to plying stones from the coal, and after that to drive a horse which drew coal from the pit. He went half-fed and half clothed; but for "a that" he had a man's brave soul in his sturdy little body.

For several years he was assistant fireman to his father; then he was made fireman himself. Subsequently, at the age of seventeen, he was pugman of a pumping engine, a post superior to his father's.

But all this time, though ignorant of books, he had been studying his engine. Gradually he acquired so complete a knowledge of his machine that he was able to take it apart and make any ordinary repairs. The

"grit, bare legged laddie" was smarter than he seemed, and this fact the teacher was not long in finding out as the he began to teach him.

At the end of two years, by attending evening school, he had learned all that the village schoolmaster could teach him. This brought his school life to an end, but he still kept on studying. He bought books on engineering and mechanics, and spent his leisure in learning what they taught and in experimenting.

At last he began to think about making better engines than those around him. Meanwhile he had secured the appointment of engineer-wright at one of the great collieries of northern England, and he gradually applied his plans for an improved locomotive. He was not entirely successful at first, but he was not dis- couraged. He saw his mistakes and corrected them. Before he was thirty-five years old he had constructed several locomotive steam engines, and five years afterwards he had become known as a successful and energetic engineer, and was called upon to build long and difficult lines of railway.

But his locomotives were too slow; he wanted them to run faster. He proposed to build one that would run at the rate of twelve miles an hour. Everybody laughed at him. Some thought that he was going crazy. One gentleman who considered himself very wise said to him: "Suppose you invent an engine capable of running nine or ten miles an hour, and suppose while it was running a cow should stray upon the track, would not that be a very awkward circumstance?"

"I should think it might be very awkward indeed—for the cow," he answered.

Well, he succeeded in making his locomotive, and at a trial which took place near Liverpool it attained to the unprecedented speed of fourteen miles an hour. By making certain improvements, this same engine, the Rocket, was made to attain the speed of thirty miles an hour. People laughed no longer, but admired.

He was invited as a consulting engineer to foreign countries, and wealth flowed upon him. Philosophers sought his friendship. His king offered him knighthood, but he refused a title, preferring to remain plain GEORGE STEPHENSON.

Charles Metcalf, who has been writing advertisements for a drama in New York City, had an unpleasant experience in connection with a compositor of one of the great dailies in that city. Metcalf wrote a poetical advertisement, as follows:

"From half-past eight till half-past ten, You laugh and laugh and laugh again."

Imagine his surprise when a matter-of-fact compositor set up the advertisement and it appeared:

"From 8:30 to 10:30 You laugh and laugh and laugh again." —Live Matter.

WHAT IF YOUR LOT IS HARD!

That submission to one's lot means that one should sit helplessly before sorrow and disappointment while weeks and months pass by, is a terrible misapprehension. Life should be growth. These trials come to us that we may conquer them, wrest power from them. To yield faint-heartedly is surely ignoble, for there is no life so barren or hard, or sorrowful, that it does not hold some door to wider living, if we will but seek it.

Is it loneliness that closes about us and shuts joy from our day? Have we tried honestly and patiently to touch other lonely lives? Is it because we have no time for study that life seems so hard and barren? A friend of working girls advised them to learn a poem as they went to and from their work instead of simply reading street car advertisements. A verse, a line of poetry, a single noble thought every day—who of us could not make time for this, if we would? And how rich a harvest one short year would give us! Is it poverty that is eating the gladness from our day? It is hard, but there are things within our reach that no gold could purchase for us—friendship, the power of an upright life, the joy of earth and sky. Dare we, with all we have within our reach, bemoan our poverty?—Frank H. Sweet, in Home and Flowers, Springfield, O., for April.

RED TAPE IN THE TROPICS.

Says the Saturday Evening Post: An incident occurred while Admiral Dewey was commanding the Asiatic Station and one which illustrates his independence is one known as the "coal incident."

It seems that his squadron was in need of coal, but, instead of writing to the Chief of the Bureau of Equipment at the Navy Department, he purchased a large amount of coal without consulting the Department.

The following is the correspondence between the Admiral and Captain Bradford, the Chief of the Bureau of Equipment, and is self-explanatory.

Navy Department, Washington, D. C.

To Dewey, Manila:

Why did you buy so much coal? BRADFORD.

Flagship Olympia, Manila. To Bradford, Chief Bureau Equipment, Washington:

To burn. DEWEY.

THE ORATORY OF SENATOR PETTUS.

Says the Washington Post: Senator Pettus solemnly arose as if to address the Senate. His tall and venerable form towered above his colleagues. The Senate became silent, waiting for the words of wisdom which should fall from his lips.

With every eye upon him, Mr. Pettus reached around into the tail pocket of his long frock coat and drew forth a plug of tobacco. Then he took a chew and sat down without saying a word.

Everybody smiled.

KNEW HIS PA.

"Elnathan," asked the teacher of a boy at school, "if your father borrowed from you one hundred dollars and should agree to pay you at the rate of ten dollars per week, how much would he owe you at the end of seven weeks?"

"One hundred dollars," said the boy.

"I'm afraid you don't know your arithmetic," said the teacher.

"Well," said the boy, "I may not know my arithmetic, but I know my father."—Henry Elias Howland.

THE PRESIDENT'S ESTIMATE OF HIS DAUGHTER.

In speaking of his daughter Alice to a friend President Roosevelt once said: "She does not stay in the house and fold her hands and do nothing. She can walk as far as I can, and she often takes a tramp of several miles at the pace I set for her. She can ride, drive, skee, shoot—though she doesn't care much for the shooting. I don't mind that. It isn't necessary for her health, but the outdoor exercise is, and she has plenty of it."—April Ladies' Home Journal.

"Congratulations, my dear sir, on the marriage of your daughter. I see you are gradually getting all the girls off your hands."

"Off my hands—yes! But the worst of it is I have to keep their husbands on their feet."—Tit Bits.

Take off this load of responsibility from the human race and we might be happy, but we never could be great.—Lyman Abbott.

Our Social Chat.

AUNT JENNIE'S LETTER.

In the blossoming of the early flowers, the bursting of the buds on the trees, and the ploughing in the fields, we have enough to remind us that spring is really here, and knowing this the good housekeeper will avail herself of every opportunity to prepare for summer. Moths are one of the greatest nuisances of summer housekeeping. To prevent their future depredations prepare for their attacks now by thoroughly airing, brushing and shaking every article that is to be packed away. Replace lost buttons and mend garments that will be first needed next fall. This done, they will be perfectly safe from moths if you will procure stout paper sacks, place the articles to be kept in them, then seal the sacks and put them away. If you cannot get the bags, you can buy at the drug store oil of red cedar and with a little paint brush apply it to all cracks in trunks, boxes and drawers, thus rendering them moth-proof for quite a while. Our grandmothers had cedar chests in which to pack the most costly apparel, but we must content ourselves with this simple substitute. Occasionally through the summer months saturate small pieces of cotton with the cedar oil and place in the receptacles where the clothes are stored, being careful, however, that it does not come in contact with the goods, as it makes a reddish yellow stain which is hard to remove.

Before beginning to pack things thoroughly, clean every closet, wardrobe, etc.; then use some insecticide in every crevice, and if the articles are properly cleaned, you need have little fear of insects of any kind. I have found kerosene oil and borax both very efficacious.

By the way, be sure to get a supply of borax this spring to sprinkle in pantries, safes and wherever food articles are kept thus forestalling the little ants that are always busy, you know.

Minnie furnishes us this week a thoughtful comparison of an incident in nature with an incident in human life.

Ruby, who has never written a dull paragraph for our department, discusses the topic suggested by Mr. Parker. Do not forget that the prize tucker will be awarded May 1st. Those that wish to compete for it have little time to lose.

The two members of our Circle who were called on to award the prize offered by Editor Poe for the best letter for Chat written in February or March, found the task somewhat troublesome by reason of the rather indefinite wording of the announcement of the competition, "For the best letter" was the phrase used. Did that mean the most helpful, the most thoughtful, the most entertaining, or the best in style and language? They were unable to say as to this, but finally (after examining all letters received by me in February and March) agreed that the book should go to Rebecca, whose letter was written March 27th, but was crowded out of our last issue. In order that our readers may know the real name of the successful competitor, I should be glad if Rebecca would give me permission to publish her name and postoffice, if she has no objections; this is optional with her.

And by the way, I sometimes think it would be nicer if more of us gave our real names. Would it not add weight to some of the letters? I speak of the matter now because the almost unexceptional use of pen names may cause some writers to think this compulsory. The writer may use his or her own pleasure as to the matter; only please do not choose very odd or very sentimental names.

But I must not forget to say that the editor has sent a copy of "The Princess, Maud, and Other Poems," by Tennyson, to Rebecca, as the prize.

I am also authorized to announce that competition for another book as a prize will begin at once. The conditions as named by Editor Poe are as follows:

"The book will be given for the most interesting letter regarding the South of other days—incidents, reminiscences, sketches, etc., of life in the South in slavery days, or in the Civil War, or in the days of Reconstruction and the Ku Klux. Any writer can discuss any one or all three periods. This prize, which is offered by THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER and not by me personally, is a copy

of Rev. James Battle Avirett's 'The Old Plantation,' a description, of ante-bellum life in North Carolina; bound in cloth, 203 pages. The book will not be awarded until at least eight letters on the subject are received."

Now let the older readers of the Chat, soldiers and soldiers' wives, etc., relate their own memories of war days and plantation life, and let the younger readers write what they have heard from the life of older people. Who will be first to respond? AUNT JENNIE.

A LESSON FROM THE SEASON.

DEAR AUNT JENNIE:—"The wild, mad March, fell Winter's discarded King," made a furious attempt to show us that he is not "a child of spring." He rolled up from the west a great, dark mantle that threatened to envelop earth and sky with one great pall of darkness, fluttering with wind and storm. But it passed quickly by, leaving only a trace of snow and the blackened buds of flowers that were too tender to withstand the freezing touch of his icy hand.

And there are hearts that beat with high hopes when their young feet trod the well-worn path to the old school house on the hill, and they watched with eager eyes the bursting of bud and bloom, and stopped at times to listen to the mocking-bird's carol, as he welcomed the coming of spring. But ere the sound seed corn of truth had taken deep root in those hearts, they were overspread by the wild and furious waves of passion and sin, and the tender blades and buds of promise were left blackened, as though fire had scorched them. Then the skies gathered darkness overhead, as friend after friend (?) turned the cold shoulder, and the erring wanderer sought in vain a resting place for his weary head.

But there is hope for even those. The Christ who had not where to lay his head, calls unto such in the language of the deepest sympathy, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And there are Christians, too, who are seeking for such, and bidding them welcome to the feast prepared for the Wedding of the King's Son. MINNIE.

Cumberland Co., N. C.

TO PUT SOME OF SPRING'S HAPPINESS INTO LIFE.

DEAR AUNT JENNIE:—"A soft breeze kissed the expectant moon, A bluebird sang a wistful strain, A crocus bloomed: and spring was born."

After passing through a long, cold winter, how sweet are the first flowers that bloom, heralding the advent of spring! They teach us a lesson, and remind us of the glorious resurrection.

With spring's return, let us receive a new impulse, new vigor, giving better preparation for the duties of life.

It is an old teaching, but one which we need constantly to recall to mind, that the one who does that duty which is nearest at hand, is the one who accomplishes the most for the world.

The ordinary duties of life may seem commonplace and monotonous—the round of yesterday, we may think, is the round of to-day, and will be the round of to-morrow; and thus life passes and we have nothing to show for all our trial and care. But this is a mistake.

We are planted amidst these cares, as seed are planted in the ground, that we may come in contact with, and gain access to, the very materials necessary for our growth. These cares, these common duties and employments are the very material out of which the web of life is woven.

There is an attractive side to every thing. Nothing brings so much pleasure to its possessor as does the keen sense of appreciation. It points out the beauties of nature that are all about us, glids the commonplace, and emphasizes the joys of life and of living.

I was forcibly impressed with Aunt Jennie's letter, telling how to grow old beautifully. I remember reading of an old woman whose face was serene and peaceful, though trouble had not passed her by.

The Fretful Woman asked her one day for the secret of her happiness, and the beautiful old face shone as with a newly risen joy.

"My dear," she said, "I keep a 'Pleasure Book.'"

"A what?"

"A 'Pleasure Book.' Long ago I learned that there was no day so dark and gloomy that it did not contain some ray of pleasure, and I have made it the business of my life to write down the little things which mean so much to a woman. I have a book for every year since I left school, and a place for every day. It is but a little thing: the new gown, the chat with a friend, the thoughtfulness of the husband, a flower, a book, a walk in the field, a letter, a concert or a drive; but it all goes into my 'Pleasure Book,' and when I am inclined to fret I have only to read a few pages to see what a happy woman I am."

I am sure we can all keep a "Pleasure Book." And when the corners of your mouth are down, and you are an unhappy looking creature, elevate your expression. Think of the pleasantest thing that ever happened to you; the kindest thing that was ever done for you; send out the most generous, sweetest, most helpful thoughts to your friends; then you will be beautiful.

The time for the book prize to be awarded is fast approaching. A good book is worth trying for; its price is above rubies."

The letters of Social Chat are becoming more interesting. I, like Reader, trust there will be no issue of THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER without them, or without one from Aunt Jennie.

Jennie Aaton, let us have your letter on that great big subject that is up for discussion. REBECCA. Onslow Co., N. C.

THE SPRING AND SUMMER WARDROBE FOR THE FAMILY.

DEAR AUNT JENNIE:—Seeing the competitors are few as yet for the "Magic Ticker," I shall now give my ideas on the summer wardrobe.

For the mother, a sufficient number of neat print wrappers for every day wear, with a nice black skirt and as many shirt waists, including a white pique and silk waist for best, as the purse will permit.

For the young lady, a cotton jeans shirt and gingham shirt waists for every day; white and dainty colored lawns and organdies, black skirt, silk and cotton shirt waists, with a liberal supply of stock collars and ribbons; belts, gloves and neat comfortable shoes, will be a neat and appropriate wardrobe for any occasion and may be also a very economical one.

For the little girls' school dresses, there is nothing neater or with better wearing qualities than denim trimmed with white tape. Gingham aprons worn with it will lessen the amount of laundering. A large palmetto hat with a thin, dainty colored lining shirred on, band, rosette and strings of same material, will be equally as pretty and much less trouble than bonnets, and much cooler for Sunday wear. White dresses are prettier, and look better after being laundered than most colored fabrics; for visiting, chambrays, gingham or prints with white aprons make a dainty outfit; then with black slippers and hose the little miss will be furnished with a complete wardrobe, if you add a pretty, solid color of outing undershirts for school and every day wear, which do not soil quickly like white skirts.

For baby's every day wear—ginghams, chambrays or denim for the two-year-old, with white pique, dimities or lawns for best.

For our little school boys, corduroy pants and cheviot waists will stand more wear and tear; while for best and visiting, crash or linen, percale and white madras or pique, with dark pants, French gingham and silks ties, with palmetto hat for every day and a nice sailor for Sunday—and we have our little boys provided for.

I shall not give a list for father and big brother, as their apparel is mostly bought ready made.

We must not forget to include a supply of gingham aprons for mother and the young ladies to wear when they are at work. A pretty way to make them is with a gathered bib in front with shoulder-straps fastened to band in back. Then with sleeve protectors made from old stocking legs the dress is protected and this saves much washing and ironing. The aprons are really pretty made with ruffles over the shoulders and trimmed with white tape.

I have not given prices as, of course, the price of goods varies with the locality, but here in Charlotte I can buy a complete and very liberal wardrobe for our family of five for \$25, and of course this could be cut down to \$15 by leaving out some of the trimmings and extras, which are not really essential, but add to the beauty of our wardrobe.

Let me say to the busy mother who does all her own work and with no grown-up daughter to help: Put fewer tucks and ruffles on your children's clothing and trim instead with valenciennes lace and the finishing braids. It will save you many stitches, besides giving you more time for rest and recreation. RUBY.

Mecklenburg Co., N. C.

*Nos. 34, 35 and 36 of our series of the World's Best Poems, arranged especially for THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER by the editor. In this series selections from the following authors have already appeared: Burns, Bryant, Mr and Mrs Browning, Lord Byron, Campbell, Eugene Field, Goldsmith, Leigh Hunt, Holmes, Omar Khayyam, Kipling, Lampan.