

Family Reading.

A Summer Day.

Over the fields the daisies lie
With the buttercups under the azure
sky;
Shadow and sunshine side by side
Are chasing each other o'er meadows
wide;
While the warm, sweet breath of the
summer air,
Is filled with the perfume of blossoms
fair.

Ferns and grasses and wild vines grow,
Close where the waters ripple and flow,
And the merry zephyrs the livelong day
With the nodding leaves are ever at play;
And birds are winging their happy flight
'Mongst all things beautiful, free, and
bright.

There's a hum of bees in the drowsy air,
And a glitter of butterflies everywhere;
From the distant meadows—so sweet
and clear—

The ring of the mower's scythe we hear,
And the voices of those who make their
hay.

In the gladsome shine of the summer's
day.

Sing, little robin, sing, and wait
On the old rail-fence for your tardy mate,
All hearts rejoice in the happiness
Of the perfect day. Like a sweet caress
It lies on our hearts, and fills our eyes
With the sunlight born of the tender
skies.

Select Serial.

COMING TO THE LIGHT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE BABES
IN THE BASKET."

CHAPTER XI.—ITALIA.

Dr. Aulick and Mrs. Clinton talked long and late after Fidgetty had retired. This conversation made the doctor more than ever anxious to see the young stranger, and he impatiently awaited her arrival in the breakfast room, the following morning. He was prepared to study Fidgetty's every word and motion, and to look upon her rather as a patient than an ordinary visitor. He was hardly aware of the strange image he had formed of her in his mind, until that image was suddenly dispelled by her appearance. Instead of the awkward, uncouth, peculiar-looking being he had expected to see a tall, slight girl, came gracefully and modestly into the room, and received his cordial greeting with an expression of pleasure that made her face so agreeable that he did not wonder at Mrs. Clinton's strong affection for her protegee.

Mrs. Clinton saw the impression Fidgetty had produced, but the modest girl herself was quite unconscious of being the object of particular and admiring attention.

At the breakfast table the conversation was almost entirely between the doctor and Mrs. Clinton, but after Mrs. Tryon and the tea-equipage had disappeared together, the kind host soon engaged Fidgetty in an easy chat.

When he found that she was talking with him without embarrassment, he suddenly turned to her and said: "I must show you my canary-birds, Italia; come this way and we may catch them at their bath."

The name was mentioned so easily and naturally, and so immediately followed by the remark, that Fidgetty's momentary confusion was dispelled, and she followed the doctor without stopping to dwell upon the feelings roused by the name. The canaries having been duly admired, the visitors were taken to the doctor's parlor to see his paintings.

This parlor was a place that was seldom opened, except at the meetings of the Medical Society, or the various Natural History and Horticultural Clubs, to which the doctor belonged. Here he had stored all the curiosities which he had collected during his solitary life, and he had really formed quite a museum. Fidgetty was greatly interested in all she saw, and in the explanations that the doctor so cheerfully gave. Now and then he called her "Italia," but so quietly and naturally that she ceased to notice it. Several times, when he wished to attract her attention, he pronounced the name quickly, and a smile crossed his face as she turned suddenly, as one only does on hearing one's own name.

After all the curiosities had been examined, the doctor threw open the piano, and said: "Now, Italia give us some music."

Fidgetty sat down, and played without apparent effort, a difficult piece from an old opera.

"Is that something you have lately learned?" asked the doctor carelessly.

"I don't know; I can hardly say why I played that," said Fidgetty, blushing. "I think—I think one of the pictures brought it to my mind."

The doctor glanced round the room and then pointed to a scene from Moses in Egypt, and said: "This was what reminded you of it, I suppose?"

"Yes! yes!" said Fidgetty, looking confused.

"Have you ever taken drawing lessons?" said the doctor, who wished to change the subject of conversation.

"I have tried sometimes," said Fidgetty, again growing confused.

It was plain that dim remembrances were stirring in the chambers of memory, and he forebore further questions.

That day the doctor sought an opportunity to speak privately with Mrs. Clinton. Then he broke forth: "She is indeed a jewel worth reclaiming. Italia is her name beyond doubt. I hope you will adopt it immediately, and use it as freely and naturally as possible. That her knowledge of music is as much memory as the result of remarkable talent, I am also convinced. Wait patiently, Faith, and you may yet have your hopes realized. Italia may yet recall her lost past, and be no more a peculiar being."

Mrs. Clinton followed the doctor's advice, and the new name soon became familiar to her lips. It is difficult to describe the effect that sound had upon Fidgetty Skeert. It seemed to her like the voice of comfort that told her she was no more the Fidgetty Skeert of the Orphan Asylum, but one who had been ever loved and cared for.

The visitors had been some days at the doctor's pleasant home when he said one morning to Mrs. Clinton: "Faith, I want you to pass the winter here. You have only to send word to Nora to put the house in order, and then lock up and come to you. It will be better for you and Italia, I am sure."

Mrs. Clinton was silent for a few moments; the decision cost her a struggle, but she answered calmly: "I will. I can see already that the change has been an advantage to Fidgetty—to Italia, I mean."

"You will see her improve more rapidly when she is once among young companions. Sidney Carr is to be one of Mrs. Lightfoot's pupils. Mrs. Lightfoot has only twelve scholars, and she has still one vacancy left. Shall I engage the place for Italia?"

"I had hoped to teach her myself," said Mrs. Clinton doubtfully.

"A little selfishness, Faith. I don't wonder you dislike to give her up. She needs to be thrown among other girls, and to be treated exactly as they are. What shall I do about it?"

"I will let you know before evening," said Mrs. Clinton, as she left the room.

Mrs. Clinton was not only unwilling to give up the pleasure of instructing her enthusiastic, docile scholar, but she feared that Fidgetty would draw upon herself unpleasant remarks by her backwardness in many of her studies, and the peculiarity of her mind, which might by some glance question be brought to light.

Quiet thought, however, brought Mrs. Clinton over to the doctor's opinion. She could not always entirely seclude Fidgetty from the world, and if she were to mingle with others, it were well to learn the lesson early, painful though it might prove to be.

When Mrs. Clinton announced her decision that evening, the doctor gave her a cordial shake of the hand, and said: "I knew you would come out right, Faith. Now we must be prompt in action. I will go this evening to secure the vacancy, or we may lose it. By what name will I enter your *portege*?"

"Italia," said Mrs. Clinton, "Italia, certainly."

"Yes, Italia, but one name will not be enough. Shall I say Italia Clinton?" persevered the doctor.

"Yes, Italia Clinton," said Mrs. Clinton with much effort, and after a long pause. The image of her fair young daughter, now happy with the Lord,

rose to the mother's mind, and she could not suppress her tears, but she repeated: "Italia Clinton. I love her well enough to give her my name, though I can not, can not forget the dear ones that are gone."

So Fidgetty Skeert ceased to be, and henceforth we shall know her only as Italia, the adopted daughter of Mrs. Clinton.

That evening Mrs. Clinton sat in her room with her arm around her young friend, as she said to her, "Italia, we are to pass the winter here, and you are to go to school."

"Will not you teach me any more?" said Italia, with a saddened tone of voice and a look of anxious surprise.

"It is better for you to be more with companions of your own age, and I am sure you will not marmur at any plan I make for you," was the serious reply.

"No, no, indeed! dear Mrs. Clinton," said Fidgetty earnestly. "There are many reasons too, why I should like going to school. Will Sidney Carr go too?"

"Yes, and you and Sidney will be much together. I hope, dear Italia, you will not allow yourself to be made unhappy when you find that in most of your studies you are behind girls of your own age."

Italia's face wore a beautiful expression as she replied, "I hope I am too grateful for the mind I have, and the little knowledge I have acquired, to let such a thought trouble me. I shall take cheerfully whatever rank in the school the Lord Jesus thinks best for me."

"I know you will, my dear," said Mrs. Clinton fondly. "I have your name entered as Italia Clinton, and you will be received as my adopted daughter."

Italia burst into tears and exclaimed, "Oh, I have too many mercies! Don't call me daughter, that will be too hard for you. It is enough for me to know that you mean it."

"You are to be henceforward my daughter, dear Italia. Let us ask God to help us to do our duty to each other, that we may be welcomed to the Eternal Home, where I have two treasures safe forever."

Side by side knelt Mrs. Clinton and the orphan girl who had once been Fidgetty Skeert. Many an own mother and child might long to possess the true mutual affection and oneness of heart with which those two asked strength to perform their duties, and and walk lovingly heavenward together.

A compact so consecrated was not lightly to be broken.

CHAPTER XII.—A WISE BOY.

Although Mrs. Clinton counted Sidney Carr among her first cousins, it was many years since they had met; and to Master John she was an entire stranger.

To the arrival of the young visitors all looked forward with much interest. Mrs. Tryon had found the presence of Mrs. Clinton and Italia in the family, an agreeable variety in her monotonous life, and she had begun to hope that the other inmates might be equally pleasant.

The morning came when Sidney Carr and her brother were expected. At the appointed time a carriage drove up to the door, and a round-faced, mirth-loving boy jumped out first, leaving his sister, a year or two older than himself to follow as she best could. Sidney Carr seemed well able to take care of herself, and why should she not, when she had been taking care of others all her life? Sidney was the oldest of six children, and as her parents were not endowed with an abundance of this world's goods, on her had fallen much of the care and labor that in city families belong to the nursery maid. Sidney did not appear worn down with her efforts. She was a healthy, substantial looking girl, with a broad, pleasant, sensible face that had no other beauty than a pure complexion and a frank blue eye.

Dr. Aulick was at home to receive the young visitors, and the way in which he saluted Sidney, showed that she was one of his favorites. The greetings between the uncle and Master John were somewhat different in their nature.

"Well, uncle, at the old stand yet, I see. How are the bones, and the materia medica?" said the boy, with an

expression on his merry face, half-glad, half-mischievous.

"Well, Master John. The same chap yet, I see. How is Cicero, and what news from Caesar?" responded the doctor.

A tremendous Latin quotation, to which nobody listened, was now poured out by Master John, while the doctor proceeded to take Sidney into the house, and make her acquainted with her 'Cousin Faith,' and 'Cousin Italia.'

"That's the way with the world's great men; they live 'apart and say their good things for posterity," said Master John, springing up the steps and joining the group in the hall.

"Here is John Carr, introducing himself to his cousins, in his own way," said the doctor, taking by the shoulders the stout boy of fourteen. "I am sorry for you girls; you will have a hard time with him. Don't let him convince you before the winter is over that one boy is better than three women. Faith, you will have to have your eye on the youngster."

So saying, the doctor looked at his watch, then made a hasty bow and hurried away from the party.

Mrs. Tryon now came bustling forward. "This is Miss Sidney Carr, Mrs. Tryon," said Mrs. Clinton, politely.

Sidney was shaking Mrs. Tryon's hand cordially, when John seized hold of his sister's arm, and making the shake doubly energetic, said: "You may as well do the business for both of us while you are about, Sidney. I mean to shake hands too with Mrs. Tryon, but this will do as well."

The worthy house-keeper was not particularly pleased with this specimen of the young gentleman's deportment, yet she managed to say she hoped they would all be friends with or without shaking hands so violently.

"Never fear about that," said John merrily. "Uncle doctor don't live like a church-mouse, I'll warrant you, looking so portly and so ruddy. Let me fare after his fashion, and you and I'll be friends I'll promise."

"Will you walk up-stairs now, Miss Sidney?" said Mrs. Tryon, taking no further notice of Master John.

"Will you walk into my parlor, said a spider to a fly," sung Master John, as he followed Mrs. Clinton and Italia into the parlor, while his sister went up-stairs.

"This is a queer place of uncle's," said the boy, walking round the room, and taking a general survey.

"That picture must be a Michael Angelo, from the depth and darkness of its coloring," he said, as he examined an old painting, so smoky that little could be seen but that some figures had once been there. "That is a *Correggio*, doubtless; the look of the mother is not to be mistaken," he continued. Then going up to the case of shells, he began to rattle over the names of Bullas, Tellinas, Strombi, and Trochi, in a way that made Mrs. Clinton smile, in spite of herself.

"You seem quite fresh from all manner of studies, Cousin John," she said.

"I am a general reader; I can't say I study much," said the boy. "I don't follow the maxim, '*Legere multum, non multa*.' The ancients were not right about everything. In these days of many books one must keep up with the times. In the old parchment period it was a different thing."

Italia looked on, with the astonishment that she felt not altogether suppressed in her face.

"I suppose you hardly understand what we are saying, Cousin Italia. Girls are always four or five years behind boys," said Master John, with a consequential toss of the head.

"I did not understand it all, I confess," said Italia modestly. "I am uncommonly backward for my age."

"How old are you?" asked John bluntly.

It was a simple question, yet a puzzling one to the person addressed. Italia wished to be strictly truthful, and she answered: "I am considered nearly fourteen."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed John, "that is a real girl's answer. Girls ought to study mathematics to make them exact. I shall have fine fun here this winter. 'Dark as winter was the flow of her rolling rapidly.'"

The Lesson of the Briers.

"Charley! Charley!" called Ella to her younger brother; don't go among those briers; come over here in the garden!

"Ho! stay in the garden! who wants to stay in the garden?" answered master Charley with great contempt. "I guess you think I'm a girl to want to play where it's all smooth and everything Ho!"

"That's not it, Charley, but you know we both have on our good clothes, and we must be ready to run quick when we hear the carriage drive up to the gate with Aunt May and Cousin Harry and Alice."

"I know that as well as you do," said Charley, pushing his way through the hedge as he spoke. "Girls are n't good for anything but to sit and sew. I mean to have some fun. I mean to do—"

Ella felt like giving some angry answer, but she checked herself, and went on with her sewing as she sat under the big tree, wondering what made Charley break off his sentence so suddenly.

"Ella, Ella!" cried a pitiful voice at last, "come help me! I'm getting all torn. O—oh!"

Sure enough, Charley was getting all torn; some big thorns had caught his new trousers, and the harder he struggled the worst matters became.

"Hold still, dear," said Ella. "I can't help you while you kick so. There! now you're free. Oh! Charley!"

Charley, clapping his hands to his trousers, knew well enough what Ella's "Oh!" meant. It meant a great big tear in his new clothes, two cousins coming to spend the day, and a poor little boy sobbing in the nursery until the nurse would stop scolding and make him fit to go down and see the company. The very thought of all this misery made him cry.

"Oh! they'll be here in a minute! boo-boo!" he sobbed; "what shall I do?"

"Why, stand still, that's all," said Ella, hastily threading her needle with a long black thread; "stand just so, dear, till I mend it."

"Mend it!" cried master Charles delighted. "O Ella! Will you?"

"Certainly I will," she answered very gently, at the same time beginning to draw the edges of the tear together; "you know girls are not good for anything but to sit and sew."

"O Ella! I didn't say that."

"I think you did, Charley."

"Not exactly that, I guess. It was awful mean if I did. Oh, hurry! I hear the carriage."

"Do be quiet, you little wriggler!" laughed his sister, hastily finishing the work as well as she could, so that Charley in a moment looked quite fine again. "There! we'll get to the gate before they turn into the lane, after all."

Charley held Ella's hand more tightly than usual as they ran toward the gate together. Ella noticed it, and stopped to kiss him.

"I'm sorry I spoke so," he panted, kissing her again right heartily. "Does it show?"

"Not a bit; you wouldn't know anything had happened. Hurrah! here they are!"

"Hurrah! Howdy do, everybody!" shouted Charley.—*St. Nicholas for August.*

A bothersome Boa-Constrictor.

"Did you ever carry any really dangerous animals on your ship, Captain John?" said I.

"Well," said he, "once, when I was in Para, I bought a snake, a boa-constrictor, seventeen feet long. I got him of four Indians, who caught him some twenty-five or thirty miles up the river. They brought him into town in a strong covered crate, or basket, which they carried on two poles. When I bought him, I had him carried into my old consignee's yard, and I got a stout packing-box, and had it all double nailed, and holes bored in the sides to give him air. Then the Indians put the snake in the box, and we nailed him up tight, leaving him in a snug corner for the night."

"The next morning, I went around early to the market to buy something for my snake to eat. I got a couple of

little animals, something like our rabbits, and I carried them around to my consignee's house. I found the old gentleman hadn't turned out of his hammock yet; but he soon got up, and went with me into the yard. When we got there, we saw the packing-box all burst open, the boards lying around loose, and no snake to be seen. We looked about, but could see nothing of him. I was amazed enough, to be sure and the old gentleman felt quite uneasy at the thought of such a creature wandering about his place.

"We went look for him," he said. "Those Indians are still in town and we will send for them."

"The Indians came, and they soon found him. You can't imagine where he had hidden himself. There was a pile of earthen drain-pipes in one corner of the yard, behind some bushes and he had crawled into one of these short pipes, and then turned and crawled into the one next to it, and then into the next one, and so on, in and out, until he had put himself into five or six of the pipes. He had probably seen, through the holes in his box, some of my old consignee's chickens, and, being made perfectly ravenous by the sight, had broken out. Then, having made a meal of one or two of them, he had crawled into the pipes.

"The Indians were not long in capturing him. Fortunately, his head stuck out of one of the pipes near the ground and one of the Indians, taking a long pole with a fork at the end, climbed on a high fence near by, and soon pinned Mr. Snake's head to the ground, leaning on the pole with all his weight. Then the other Indians straightened out the drain-pipes in which he was, and began to draw them off him, pulling them down toward his tail, and first exposing the portion of his body nearest his head. Then they took a long, strong pole, and, with hands of the tough grass which grows in that country, tied his body to the pole close to his head. Then they bound him again about eighteen inches farther down. Slowly drawing down the pipes, they tied him again to the pole, about eighteen inches below, and so on until his whole length was fastened firmly to the pole. Thus he was held secure until the box was nailed up again, and I had sent for a blacksmith to put iron bands around it, so that it should be strong enough to hold any snake. Then the creature's tail was loosened and put through a hole in the top of the box. Then another band was cut, and the snake pushed still further in. Then, one after another every fastening was cut, and the snake pushed gradually into the box, until his head being loosened and clapped in, a board was fastened over the hole. And he was snug and tight and ready for his voyage."

"Did you have any trouble with him when you were taking him to the North?" I asked.

"But just then the supper bell rang, and the captain arose to his feet. It was of no use to expect Captain John to go on with a story when supper was ready.—*St. Nicholas for August.*

ALABASTER BOXES OF HUMAN SYMPATHY.—Do not keep the alabaster boxes of your love and tenderness sealed up until your friends are dead. Fill their lives with sweetness. Speak approving, cheering words while their ears can hear them, and while their hearts can be thrilled and made happier by them; the kind things you mean to say when they are gone, say before they go. The flowers you mean to send for their coffins, send to brighten and sweeten their homes before they leave them. If my friends have alabaster boxes laid away, full of fragrant perfumes of sympathy and affection, which they intend to break over my dead body, I would rather they would bring them out in my weary and troubled hours, and open them while I need them. I would rather have a plain coffin, without a flower, a funeral without an eulogy, than a life without the sweetness of love and sympathy. Let us learn to anoint our friends beforehand for their burial. Post-mortem kindness does not cheer the burdened spirits. Flowers in the coffin cast no fragrance backward over the weary way.

He who throws out suspicion should at once be suspected himself.