

Family Reading.

The Wedding Fee.

(From the Grand Rapids Democrat.)

One morning, fifty years ago,
When apple blossoms were white with snow
Of fragrant blossoms, and the air
Was spell-bound with perfume rare—
Upon a farm horse, large and lean,
And lazy, with its double load,
A sun-brown youth and maid were seen
Jogging along the winding road.

Blue were the arches of the skies,
But bluer were that maiden's eyes!
The dew drops on the grass were bright,
But brighter was the loving light
That sparkled 'neath each long-fringed lid.
Adown the shoulders, brown and bare,
Rolled the soft waves of golden hair,
Where, almost strangled with the spray,
The sun, a willing sufferer, lay.

It was the fairest sight, I ween,
That the young man had ever seen,
And with his features all aglow,
The happy fellow told her so:
And she, without the least surprise,
Looked on him with those heavenly eyes,
Saw underneath that shade of tan
The handsome features of a man,
And with a joy but rarely known
She drew that dear face to her own,
And by that bridal bonnet hid
I cannot tell you what she did.

So on they ride, until among
The new-born leaves with dew drops hung,
The parsonage, arrayed in white,
Peers out—a more than welcome sight.
Then, with a cloud upon his face,
"What shall we do," he turned to say,
"Should he refuse to take his pay
From what is in the pillowcase?"
And glancing down, his eyes surveyed
The pillowcase before him laid,
Whose contents, reaching to his hem
Might purchase endless joy for them.
The maiden answers "Let us wait;
To borrow trouble, where's the need?"
Then at the parson's squeaking gate
Halted the more than willing steed,
Down from his horse the bridegroom sprang,
The latchless gate behind him swung,
The knocker of that startled door,
Struck as it never was before,
Brought the whole household, pale with
And there, with blushes on his cheek,
So bashful he could hardly speak,
The farmer met their wondering sight.

The groom goes in, his errand tells,
And as the parson nods, he leans
Far o'er the window sill and yells,
"Come in! He says he'll take the beans!"
Oh, how she jumped! With one glad bound
She and the bean bag reached the ground;
Then clasping with each dimpled arm
The precious product of the farm,
She bears it through the open door,
And down upon the parlor floor
Dumps the best beans vines ever bore.

Oh! happy were their songs that day,
When man and wife then rode away,
But happier this chorus still,
When echoed through these woodland scenes
"God bless the priest of Watonsville!"
God bless the man who took the beans!"
R. M. STREETER.

Squire Brewster's Ambulance.

Squire Brewster was laid up with the rheumatism. This was a painful thing to him, and it was not wholly a pleasant thing to his excellent wife.

The fact was, illness was a new experience to the worthy squire. When congratulated on his robust health he had sometimes replied, "Well, I am a busy man; I never have had time to be sick."

He took the time now, however, and plenty of it, though it was at his very busiest season of the year.

The squire never did things by halves, and probably few mortals ever groaned more vigorously, or appreciated their own misery more completely than did he. Not that he was selfish, even in his affliction. The large-hearted generosity which had marked the whole life of the worthy man showed itself in the remark often repeated to his faithful wife, "I hope, Hannah, you will never have to suffer as I do." The patient but suppressed "I hope not," which came in reply, might have provoked suspicion had not the invalid's mind being pre-occupied with his bodily aches.

Sunday came, and the squire could hardly believe that it was only one week since he sat in church in the seat he had been accustomed to fill for thirty years. Surely that vacant pew would be the centre of thought to-day. Could it be that others would note his absence only as he had last Sunday that of Deacon Peters, with the passing remark, "I hope the deacon isn't sick?"

The squire was certainly better this Sunday morning, and a great longing took possession of him to go up to the house of the Lord, and a feeling almost

that he was hardly used in being deprived of the privilege.

When the doctor made his early call he said, "Glad to see you so comfortable, squire. I was afraid yesterday your good wife would miss of hearing the new minister to-day; and then he hurried off with directions so brief that the patient began to doubt whether Dr. Wise fairly understood his case.

Mrs. Brewster was not slow to divine that the double assumption of her husband's 'comfortable' condition, and of her own intention of leaving him, might not conduce to his tranquility; so she said as she rearranged the pillows, "Dr. Wise proclaims himself a bachelor when he talks about my going to hear the new minister."

"Aren't you going, dear?" was the relieved response. "Well, I am glad, for you know I might have another bad turn; but I hate to have you lose the day."

"Oh, I shan't lose it," said his wife. "Think of poor Widow Green, who has not been able to walk to church for years, and 'old Mrs. Armour, who only gets there once or twice in summer."

The squire did think, as he had never thought before. After a pause he asked,—

"Are they able to go to church if it were not for the walk?"

"Oh, I think so. You know I used to take them when you were out West and the children were away."

The squire pondered. He remembered that since he and his wife had been left alone, the latter had sometimes remarked that it was a pity to ride to church with vacant seats in their carriage; but the suggestion had failed to meet with encouragement from him.

Could it be that the Widow Green was saying to-day, and had been saying through years of infirmity, "My soul longeth, yea even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord!" Was the Master saying to him, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me?"

The squire turned impatiently and said to himself, "I sent those women two tons of coal apiece last winter. I can't keep a free livery for the benefit of widows and invalids."

Just then Mrs. Brewster, who had left the room, re-appeared with a bouquet of choice flowers.

"Here," she said, "is a gift from little Florence Evans, with her love. She said prettily, 'When my mamma made the bouquets for the church last night I made this for Dear Squire Brewster.'"

"Bless her dear little heart!" said the squire, "I didn't know a posy could do me so much good. Mrs. Evans manages to make her children as well as her flowers a great comfort to other people. I suppose that is what my horses are for," he added *sotto voce*. Then aloud, "Wife send John here, please."

When John appeared he was instructed to run over to Mrs. Armour's, and then to the Widow Green's and say to them, that if they would like to go to hear the new minister, the squire's carriage would call for them promptly.

"Nobody is to go to church late in my carriage," added the squire with determination.

John departed, the invalids accepted, and that first Sunday of the Squire's illness became to them a white day and a beginning of days.

Squire Brewster did not go to church for six long weeks, but his carriage went every Sunday, and it was always full. It held the Widow Green and her lame boy, old Mrs. Armour and a blind girl. The squire's representatives, they were called by some of the witty young men peculiar to that locality, who were accustomed to choose their post of observation on the church steps.

The first Sunday that Squire Brewster was able to be out, John remarked diplomatically,—

"Sure, and the old leddies will be ather missin' their ride now intirely."

"Not a bit of it, John; not a bit of it," said the squire, "I don't want anybody to be sorry to see me out again. We will take two of them in with us, and you can come back for the rest. I told Mrs. Armour to take her daughters to-day."

So it happened that the witty young men, assembled as they said for a 'view of the halt and the blind in the squire's

ambulance,' witnessed the squire's stout figure and beaming face descend therefrom; and more than one received from him a hearty greeting and an approving "Glad you get to church in good time, young man. That's right."

Sunday after Sunday the 'ambulance' made its rounds, and brought the new minister some of his most appreciative hearers; and these, Squire Brewster said, helped him to understand the eighty-fourth psalm, which was first expounded to him by the rheumatism.

"The ambulance" performed a more extended mission; for by its means some of the other wealthy members of the First Church began to think that they too might imitate the early Christians in having some things in common with their less-favoured brethren, which they had been wont to call their own. And thus it came to pass that more of the lame, the halt and the blind assembled in the sanctuary than had been their custom in many a long year, and the poor had the Gospel preached to them.

Housekeeping.

While in the regular harness of city life the sitting-room is so far from the kitchen that we have not much understanding of its toils and perplexities, we have not much to say save when there has been an accident, and the pudding comes in burned or the coffee has not been settled. But housekeeping sometimes in the country, and during vacation, we have more time to consider; and our appetite whetted up by sea-bathing, we wander into the culinary department to see when dinner will be ready. We then bethink ourselves of the grace necessary for the kitchen.

First.—There is the grace for managing a balky stove. You, being in the hardware business and interested in certain patents, may begin to rattle over the names of stoves which never flinch, which do things brown at the right moment, which never take up the habits of our human race and begin to smoke, and never let the fire go out. But we do not believe you. Stoves belong to a fallen race and the best of them sometimes prove tricky. Sometimes they fly into a hot temper and burn things up, and sometimes they will put for half an hour because a green chip or unseasoned stick of wood is thrown at them. The best dispositioned stove will sometimes refuse to broil, or stew, or bake, or frizzle. You coax it in every possible way. You reason with it and tell it how important it is that it do its duty, for company has come, or a departing guest must meet the train, or you are too tired to bother any longer, and all it does in reply is to sputter. Here is a place for Christian sympathy and help. For lack of this, Martha of Bethany acted precipitately, and many a good woman has lost her equilibrium.

Secondly.—There is a grace needed for the pantry. Somehow cups and glasses and cake-baskets will get broken and no one has done it. Knives will disappear, and no one has taken them. An old saucer that was given to your grandmother the day of her marriage is cracked and set back on the shelf as though it had been uninjured. The tea-caddy has been despoiled, or flour unreasonably failed, with no miracle, as in Zarephath, to replenish it. There are but few women who can keep their temper when their best china set gets broken. To study economy for a month, and to find the result of this unusual carefulness has leaked out at some mysterious spigot; to have a whole mess of milk soured by one thunderstorm; to have the washboiler boil over and put out the fire; to have the dessert only half done when people at dinner are waiting, wondering whether it is to be sage pudding or Narcissus blanc-mange; to have the servant make up her mind she don't like the place, and leave the house in the midst of the ironing; to have to provide elaborate entertainment for some one whom you asked to come to your house without any idea she would accept the invitation; to find after the quinces are all peeled and cut that the brass kettle has been borrowed—all this demands grace for the kitchen.

We, masculines, have yet to learn that the kitchen is the most important end of the household. If that go wrong, the whole establishment is wrong. It de-

termines the health of the household, and health settles almost everything. Heavy bread, too great frequency of plum-pudding, mingling of lemonade and custards, unmasterable beef, have decided the fate of sermons, storehouses, legislative bills, and the destiny of empires. What if Bismarck had been seized with a long fit of indigestion about the time of the breaking out of the last French and German War? What if, when Plimsoll was trying to raise an insurrection among the sailors of Great Britain, Disraeli should have been overcome of the gout? What if, when the monetary world was shocked with the failure of Duncan, Sherman and Co., the cook at Saratoga Springs should, by means of some unhealthy pastry, have killed Commodore Vanderbilt? The kitchen-knife has often cut off the brightest prospects. The kitchen gridiron has often consumed a commercial enterprise. The kitchen kettle has kept many a good man in hot water. It will never be fully known how much the history of the world was affected by good or bad cookery.

Let no housekeeper, therefore, despise her occupation, but rather pray for grace to fulfill her mission. The toils and fatigues and vexations of such a sphere may be unappreciated by husbands and fathers and mothers, but God knows and sympathizes. If, according to the Bible, God puts into a bottle his people's tears, he will count the number of sweat-drops on your forehead while bending over the stove in the midsummer solstice. By the potential way in which you perform your duties, you may make the rolling-pin a sceptre. Be faithful! There will be a grand supper after a while for the preparation of which you will have no anxiety. It will be the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and you will be one of the banqueters.—*Sunday Magazine.*

Enduring Sorrows.

There are Christians fit to sing at the martyr's stake as sweetly as any that have given up their souls amidst the flames of persecution, who yet under prolonged and peculiar trials feel their faith falter and their feet begin to sink. They need the outstretched hand and re-assuring voice of those who represent Jesus on stormy Galilee. It is one thing to carry a burden in the patience of hope to the next milestone, and another to know that it will not be rolled off the paired shoulders till the celestial gates are reached. To receive certain forms of divine chastening is to be counted a vessel of honor; but what if it please the Forming Hand to turn some into vessels of dishonor? There are griefs which make no demand on mourning-goods stores, but which forever make silent demand on those whose Christian confidence is unshaken, maybe, because it has never been so severely tested. The oak striking its roots deeper for the tempest, is a model for all, but not all are oaks. Along with that episode in nature is the contrasting fact that Minot's and the Eddystone Lights were swept even from their foundations of rock by the midnight hurricane, and great was the fall.

In India the people frequently train elephants to take care of children, and they are said to be the most faithful and careful of nurses. One of them whose name was Chundah, had two pets placed in his care, boy Archie and baby Gracie, and he treated them as much like pets as their papa and mamma did. He would hold baby's bottle for her to drink, lift her as gently as a mother, and at night her cradle was by his side. One day master Archie got lost in the forest or jungle, and search was long made for him in vain. At last the mother thought Chundah might be smarter to hunt than the rest, and taking one of Archie's tunics to the elephant house, she showed it to Chundah and said, "Find, find, Chundah." And looking at her as if to say, "all right," Chundah started off, his trunk high in the air, his trumpet tones resounding far and near. Passing swiftly along, parting the tangled leaves and branches with his trunk, passing every now and then to make the low sound of endearment he used when playing with his little favorite and listen for an answer, the noble fellow at last gave a glad cry.

Then putting his trunk to the ground he raised the lost Archie in a loving embrace, and carried him triumphantly to his mamma, who had been frightened enough. After that Chundah kept close watch of his two charges, and was not happy when they were out of his sight.

Table Manners.

A writer in Harper's *Bazar* calls attention to the want of good table manners which marks so many American families and which foreigners notice as one of our defects.

We do not, as a nation, comport ourselves well at the table. In the first place, we eat too fast, and are apt to make a noise over our soup. Well-bred people put their soup into their mouths without a sound, lifting up their spoon slowly, thinking about it, and managing to swallow it noiselessly.

In the second place, we are accused of chewing our food with the mouth open, and of putting to much in the mouth at once. Again, we are accused, particularly at railway stations and at hotels, of putting our heads into our plates, and of eating with the knife instead of the fork.

Some people eat instinctively with great elegance; some never achieve elegance in these minor matters, but all should strive for it. There is no more repulsive object than a person who eats noisily, grossly, inelegantly.

Dr. Johnson is remembered for his brutal way of eating almost as much as for great learning and genius. With him it was selfish preoccupation.

Fish and fruit are eaten with silver knives and forks; or, if silver fish knives are not provided, a piece of bread can be held in the left hand. Fish corrodes a steel knife.

Never tilt a soup plate for the last drop, or scrape your plate clean. Leave something for "manners"—a good old rule.

A part of table manners should be the conversation. By mutual consent, every one should bring only the best that is in him to the table. There should be the greatest care taken in the family circle to talk of only agreeable topics at meals.

The mutual forbearance which prompts the neat dress, the respectful bearing, the delicate habit of eating, the attention to table etiquette, should also make the mind put on its best dress; and the effort of any one at a meal should be to make himself or herself as agreeable as possible.

No one should show any haste in being helped, any displeasure at being left until the last. It is always proper at an informal meal to ask for a second cut, and to say that rare or undone beef is more to your taste than the more cooked portions.

But one never asks twice for soup or fish; one is rarely helped twice at dessert. These dishes, also salad, are supposed to admit of but one helping.

Hearing the Clock Strike.

Lying awake in those still hours which come between midnight and dawn, the sound of the familiar clock strikes on the ear with a strange solemn emphasis. One—two—three—how the bell rings out on the air, vibrant, sonorous, and resolute, determined to be heard and noticed! In the day-time the clock sometimes strikes without our hearing it, or paying attention to the hour; but at night we are not so heedless. In one of Dr. Bushnell's letters to his wife, he speaks of his occasional absences from home and her, as like the striking of the clock of life. In her presence and sweet company, he said, the time was ticked off smoothly and imperceptibly by seconds and minutes,—he only observed the passage of the hour-hand around the dial when they were separated from each other.

There are events of joy and grief in every life, which are like the striking of the clock. The baby was born on such a day. On such another, the dear grandsire was gathered to his fathers. On that June morning when the honeysuckles were filling the air with perfume, there came the telegram which sent an icy breath across the gladness of your days. You associate honeysuckle ever after with that striking of the clock. On a sunny autumn noon, the bride left your threshold to

link her life with that of another. The clock struck then and its echoes still linger in memory.

Home life must have its festival and its shadowy recollections. We do well to guard sacredly those associations which are peculiarly our own, belonging to our particular families and homes. Thus, birthdays should be tenderly kept, hallowed by praise and prayer, made beautiful with flowers, and jubilant with gifts. And when the clock strikes slowly and sadly, in the night of sorrow and care, let us lift up hearts and voices to God who never forgets us; however dark the cloud may be.—*Intelligencer.*

Hold on, Boys!

Hold on to your tongue when you are ready to swear, lie, or speak harshly.

Hold on to your hand when you are about to punch, scratch, steal, or do any improper act.

Hold on to your foot when you are on the point of kicking, running off from study, or pursuing the path of error, shame or crime.

Hold on to your temper when you are angry, excited or imposed upon, or others are angry with you.

Hold on to your hearts when evil associates seek your company, and invite you to join in their mirth, games and revelry.

Hold on to your good name at all times, for it is of more value than gold, high places, or fashionable attire.

Hold on to the truth, for it will serve you well and do you good throughout eternity.

Hold on to virtue—it is above all price to you at all times and places.

Hold on to your good character, for it is, and ever will be, your best wealth.

Daniel Webster at Hay-making.

Mr. John Taylor, who resided on the Webster farm at Franklin, N. H., tells the following about the "great Secretary":—"One day we had fourteen tons of English hay well made, and ready to put in the barn in the afternoon. It was a busy day on the farm, and all who could handle a rake or pitchfork were pressed into the service. When we came in to lunch in the forenoon, Mr. Webster entered the kitchen and in a playful manner and tone of voice said:

"John Taylor, what wages will you give me to work for you this afternoon?"

"I will give you half a dollar, sir."

"Why, John Taylor, I cannot afford to work for that price, and you underrate my abilities. I can pitch as much hay as any other man."

"It is on the supposition, sir, that you are a good hand that I offer you those wages; we get our best men for one dollar a day," I replied.

"If that is the case, John Taylor, I am your man. I will finish my correspondence with the department, eat an early dinner, and be ready to take the field with you." As noon on that day was short, and by the time the teams were ready Mr. Webster made his appearance, we drove into the field; the hay lay in windrows. Mr. Webster and myself pitched on the same cart. He took a windrow on one side and I the other. A ton was put on the cart, when he took the whip and drove it up to the barn, leaving me in the meantime at work in the field. When unloaded he returned with the empty cart, upon which we pitched a ton, making in all three tons between us that afternoon, and one ton and one-half as his part of the work. It was a hot afternoon, and I observed what I had before seen when he used muscular exertion, he sweat more profusely than most men: it literally poured off him like rain.

"When I met him the next morning, said he: 'John Taylor, I have slept sounder and feel in better health than usual. How I wish I could live as you do! A farmer's life is the most rational mode of existence; good food, home-raised, with healthful work for the day and sound sleep for the night. It gives a man a clear head, a large heart and strong hands.'"

A village schoolmaster, examining a reading class, asked the head of the class, "What is artificial manure?" "Don't know," said he, and the same reply was given by four other boys; but a precocious youngster, not yet in his teens, was equal to the occasion, and said: "Please, sir, it's the stuff they grow artificial flowers in."