

Family Reading.

Fallow. I like these plants that you call weeds,— Sedge, hardhack, mullein, yarrow,— That knit their roots, and sift their seeds Where any grassy wheel track leads Through country by-ways narrow.

They fringe the rugged hillside farms, Grown old with cultivation, With such wild wealth of rustic charms As bloom in Nature's matron arms The first days of creation.

They show how Mother Earth loves best To deck her tired-out places; By flowery lips, in hours of rest, Against hard work she will protest With homely airs and graces.

You plow the arbutus from her hills; Hew down her mountain-laurel: Their place, as best she can, she fills With humbler blossoms; so she wills To close with you her quarrel.

She yielded to your axe, with pain, Her free, primeval glory; She brought you crops of golden grain; You say, "How dull she grows! how plain!"— The old, mean, selfish story!

Her wildwood soil you may subdue, Tortured by hoe and harrow; But leave her for a year or two, And see! she stands and laughs at you With hardhack, mullein, yarrow!

Dear Earth, the world is hard to please! Yet heaven's breath gently passes Into the life of flowers like these; And I lie down at blessed ease Among thy weeds and grasses.

A Musical Evening.

BY HELEN C. GARLAND.

"We are going to hold a Service of Song down in—(never mind what district inquiring readers next week, a friend said not long ago. "Will you come with us?" The invitation was accepted, and in due course of time we found ourselves outside the school indicated, though thanks to a cabman who knew as little of his whereabouts as we did, rather later than the appointed hour. Our friends had gone on before, and as we entered we could see them already seated on the platform at the further end of the room. Between them and us a great mass intervened of restless heads—some bare as befitted the occasion, others crowned by coverings quite regardless of current fashion.

Not a wealthy congregation by any means. Poverty, with all its attendant evils, has waged a long battle amongst these scantily-attired men and women. The scars are still plainly visible, though just now there is a look of relief on most faces, as if the burden, borne so patiently, has been laid aside for a brief breathing space. Everyone is occupied in singing very heartily the familiar hymn, "knocking; knocking; time and tune put in according to each individual taste.

A place is found for us, not without some little difficulty, to the left of the platform—a favorable spot for a bird's eye view of things in general. It is a long, wide room, used for parochial school-training during the week, to judge by the coloured maps hanging against the dingy white-washed walls. Red banners break the monotony of the brickwork pattern, and their mottoes, raised in white letters, catch the attention of the whole room. The texts are well chosen. "The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me," is side by side to the words, "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price." And opposite these another verse runs in the same red and white colouring along the whole length of a cross beam, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

books closed for the present. In answer to inquiries made of our next-door neighbor, we are told that this evening is intended to form the initial letter to a Young Woman's Institute, a want sadly felt in these parts. "Why, then, invite such a mixed assembly?" we ask. "Because it attracts general attention to the work. This is the first evening of the kind we have ever held here. Yes! the admittance is all free." It promises well for future evenings, this over-crowded room with its eager attentive audience. Here and there a few small boys show signs of mutiny against the prevailing order, but they are quickly suppressed by voluntary guardians of the peace. "Christie's old organ" has been the theme chosen for this "service," and is conducted and sung entirely by ladies, though there is a clerical bass somewhere in the background, powerful enough to give just the needed "sostenuto" effect. A lady it is, too, who reads the quaint telling story, of "Christie's adventures." And she does her part in a way that shows it is no new role in her experience.

Almost everyone must be acquainted with the simple machinery of a Service of Song. A reader, a piano, a practised choir of voices—These are all the requirements to give an immense amount of pleasure, and to sow seed which some day shall yield goodly fruit. These services usually open with a full chorus; then the reader begins the story, and without a break all goes on to the end reading and singing, dove tating in with one another, forming an effective combination which otherwise cannot be gained.

In this instance, "Home sweet home" at once appeals to the sympathies of the audience. Late comers still dropping in, at first disturb the sounds others are bending eagerly forward to catch, but after a few bars silence is generally well maintained, though occasionally broken by the babies, who thus make known their appreciation of the sentiment. How strange it is that this well-worn air never fails to make its mark! Judging from what we see, home must be anything but "sweet" to some of these poor creatures. Yet every face involuntarily softens as the song goes by, and although a few hours later words and blows may be exchanged with impartial liberality, a fragment of the air may steal across ashamed memories, and suggest a "best-all" remedy. Really "musical" music is attached to this story. One melody catches the fancy at once; it has the motion of a shower, shaking bough, swaying lightly in the April sunshine, and bears the refrain, "There's nothing bright but heaven," which is good to hear. Another, we may call it the key note of the service, also lingers long in the memory:

"There is a city bright, Closed are its gates to sin, Nought that defileth, Nought that defileth, Can ever enter in."

Such words as these are as good as some condensed sermons, and rather better than others. The singers themselves form not the least interesting part of the programme to-night. What a contrast to some wearers of cheap finery and untidy "fringes" in the seats below, are these refined, educated faces. The chief singer is a young girl, with a face that might easily escape notice in a crowd, but cannot easily be forgotten, once seen as we see it to-night, singing with the very soul of music shining through the dark uplifted eyes, that are rarely bent on the score in her hands. She is as utterly absorbed in her part as any heroine on a histrionic stage, a slight intensity of colour alone denoting any nervousness. Her voice is sweet, full-toned; good for leadership, marking time, and emphasis well. She sustains her solo without the least hesitation when once or twice the accompaniment falters, and sings one or two verses unassisted by any one beyond her own correct ear. Every word is heard distinctly through the quiet room, and once irrepressible murmurs of "beautiful! beautiful!" break out from some listeners behind us.

is the matter with her friend. "I don't know sir; that's why I sent for you!" And they fully enter into the poor old organ grinder's doubt of the superiority of harps over barrel-organs in a future existence.

The crisis of the narrative, old Treffy's death, causes great sensation, and in the hush that follows, the hymn is taken up, "There is a green hill far away," set to Gounod's exquisite music.

"What is the upshot of these remarks?" someone may ask. "Go and do thou likewise."

Our people must be amused. If they are not given wholesome recreation (and think what that word implies,) they will seek other kinds of their own flavouring. The cry we hear so often now a days is, "Educate the masses!" How are we going to do it?

As we have hinted, nothing is easier than to arrange these simple entertainments. Everyone now is musical or has musical friends; a little time, a little patience and the thing is done—and meanwhile, a rich harvest of gratitude—lasting, it may be, far into eternity, waits for those who will condescend to put in their sickle and reap. —Christian World Magazine.

Rue's Trust.

HOW SHE LEARNED TO BE CHEERFUL.

"I ain't a bit sleepy, Rue," said Dick, as he took off his shoes, "and I shall want to have you tell me 'bout Jack the Giant-killer, and Moses 'n Danells 'n Goliath, 'n all the rest of them." Rue looked up to the clock in despair,—she did want to go to meeting so much. It had been such a long, hard day, she felt as though she must have a word of help and encouragement from somewhere. It was just quarter of seven,—perhaps Dick would let her off in time.

"You tell 'em too fast," said that incorrigible youth, as she commenced the first one on her list rapidly. "I can't 'preciate 'em when you talk so fast." Rue smothered a sigh as she commenced on Moses, more moderately. Seven o'clock—quarter past! Dick's eyes showed not the remotest sign of closing, and she had only gotten as far as Goliath.

"Dick," she said, persuasively, "isn't this enough for to-night? If you will be a good boy and go to sleep without any more, I'll let you make candy to-morrow,—will you?" "I'll think about the candy to-morrow, said Dick calmly. "Maybe I shan't want any; if I do I'll let you know,—now let's go on."

"But I shall not let you make it unless you do as I want you to, to-night."

"Oh, yes, you will," replied Dick, with serene assurance—"if I tease hard enough, you'll be glad to. Now I want to hear about Joseph." There was plainly nothing to be done about meeting, Rue went through her list without further remark; she might as well be telling stories as anything else, she thought. But by-and-by even Dick could hold out no longer. Rue was free to go if she pleased; but it was too late for meeting, so she went downstairs, out on the porch.

It had been such a long, hard day. To-morrow would be just like it; the day after, the same. Everything had gone wrong. She wondered vaguely how old she should live to be. "Could she go on and on like this until she was seventy-five or eighty? Everything had gone wrong all day long. Mother had had a sick headache, the baby was teething and fretting incessantly. Angie had torn her dress, a miserable three-cornered tear, as though Rue had not enough to do without having to stop to mend that. As for Dick, what had he not done!

And the fall term of the Academy commenced to-day. That was enough in itself. Nobody knew how Rue wanted to go; but how could she? Her father was unfortunate in business,—somehow he had always been,—and always would be, Rue supposed. There was a large family of them. Rue often wondered if unfortunate families were not always large! Her mother was not very strong,—she could not do the work alone, anyway. So Rue must give up the darling purpose of her heart, and instead of fitting herself for a teacher, must stay home,—help

about the house, and take care of the children. Rue's face grew very bitter as she thought it all over, out there in the gathering dusk. So buried was she in her own thoughts that she did not notice her father's step, as he came up the walk and sat down beside her.

"What is it, Rue?" he asked, gently and tenderly. Rue was the child of his heart.

"O father, it isn't anything, it's every thing," she said, trying hard not to let the tears come. Poor Father! he grieved over his unfortunateness so much for the others' sake. But she need not have tried so hard.

"I know," he said. "I wish you could have gone to the Academy, Rue." Rue broke down utterly then.

"I tried not to mind it," she sobbed, "but it is so hard to give it up, and I hate housework so! I don't believe God loves us,—me,—at any rate,—or he wouldn't make it so hard."

"Rue," said her father, "do you remember when you were a little girl how your mother left you for a whole week to keep house and take care of Tom, Angie, and Will,—do you remember?" "I guess I do," laughed Rue. "Didn't I feel proud! for you know everybody said mamma ought to have Miss Pepper or some one come here to stay and look after things. But mamma said, no,—she could trust me; and I was proud enough!"

"But it was hard. You know how very tired you would be every night. Didn't you ever think she could not love you, or she would not give you such a hard thing to do?"

"O father," said Rue, sharply, "I know she trusted, and—." But all at once Rue stopped; it began to dawn upon her what her father meant.

"Don't you think perhaps it is the same with God, that he gives us the hard places in trust,—just as the general puts his best men on the most dangerous posts?"

"O father, you don't really think so, do you?"

"Indeed I do, my daughter. Nothing comes by chance. Everything—even the most trifling incident—has its place in the plan of our lives; and for some of us God plans hard things. Shall we disappoint our leader or shall we prove equal to the trust? Can we not be glad that he thinks us capable of the hard places? Rue's eyes filled with tears. But over her face there crept a bright smile.

"If He's trusting me I'll do my best," she said solemnly. "And remember, little daughter, no matter how hard and strange it may seem, it is the very best thing for us, or else it would not come to us. You and I cannot understand why it is best for you to have to stay home, when you want so much to go to school; but we know we are in safe, wise hands—do we not?"

"I'll try to remember," whispered Rue softly, a she stopped for a good-night kiss, "it will help ever so much."

Noah's Raven and Dove—A Legend.

From his floating ark, Noah anxiously looked out, and waited till the waters of the deluge fell. Scarcely were the tops of the mountains perceptible, when he summoned around him feathered fowls of all kinds. "Who," said he, "among you all will be the messenger, to see if our deliverance is near?" Thereupon the raven, with a shrill cry, thrust himself forward before all others, for he scented in the air his favourite food. No sooner was the window opened, than he flew away and returned again no more. The ungrateful bird forgot, while feeding on carcasses, both his deliverer and his errand. But revenge was not long in overtaking him. The air was still full of poisonous vapors, and dense mists hung around the corpses, which clouded his face, and blackened his feathers; and as a punishment for his forgetfulness, his memory as well as his eyes failed him, so that he did not even know his own young ones, and he enjoyed no father's pleasure in them. Frightened at their ugliness, he flew away, and forsook them.

The ungrateful beget an ungrateful race; they are deprived of the best reward, the thanks of their children. For eight days the father of the new world waited for the return of the tardy

raven, before he again summoned around him his feathered host, to select from among their tribes another messenger. Timidly the dove flew upon his arm, and offered herself as messenger.

"Daughter of faith," said Noah, "thou shouldst truly be to me a messenger of good tidings; but how wilt thou be able to perform thy journey, and do thine errand? What wilt thou do when thy wings become weary, and the storm overtakes thee, and casts thee into the dark river of death? Also thy feet shrink from mud and dirt, and thy tongue loathes unclean food."

"Who," replied the dove, "giveth strength to the weary, and supported the feeble? Let me go: I will assuredly be a messenger of good tidings to thee."

She flew away, and wandered about hither and thither; but nowhere could she find a place where she might rest; when suddenly there arose to view the mountain of Paradise with its green summit, over which the waters of the deluge had no power to come, and this refuge was not denied to the dove. Joyfully she hastened and flew to the spot, and humbly laid herself down at the foot of the mountain where bloomed a beautiful olive-tree. She broke off a leaf from the tree, and hastened back strengthened, and placed the branch upon the breast of the sleeping Noah.

On awaking he scented the odor of Paradise. Then his heart was revived within him, and the green leaf of peace refreshed his spirit until his Saviour himself appeared to him, confirming the good tidings of the dove.

Since then the dove has been the messenger of love and peace. Her wings shine like silver, says the Psalm—a glimmer still of the glory of Paradise which revived her in her wanderings.—From the German of Herder.

Law about Overhanging Branches.

Two persons own land separated by a line fence, which is common property between the two parties. One has an apple tree on the side of the fence, whose limbs overhang the fence on the side of the other. Apples fall on either side. The question often asked is, Do the apples that fall on one's land belong to one or the other or to both? This subject has been several times discussed with some contradictory decisions and judgments, but the rules are now pretty well established. If the stem or trunk of the tree grows so close to the line that parts of its actual body extend into each, neither owner can cut it down without the consent of the other, and the fruit is to be equitably divided. If the stem of the tree stands wholly within the boundary line of one owner, he owns the whole tree with its products although the roots and branches extend into the property of the other. There was an old rule of law that the latter might claim from the yield of the tree as much as would be an offset for the nourishment it derived from his estate, but this is now obsolete. The law gives the land owner on whose soil the tree stands the right to cut it down at his pleasure and to pluck all the fruit from it while it stands. In New York State the courts have decided that trespass for assault would lie by the owner of the tree, against the owner of the land over which its branches extended, if he prevented the owner of the tree, by personal violence, from reaching over and picking the fruit growing upon the branches while standing on the fence dividing the lands. The land of the owner over which the branches extend may lop the branches close to his line. He may dig down and cut the roots square with his line, if he so elects. In plain terms, if no portion of the trunk is within his line, he may refuse all trespass of the tree on his premises, either above ground or below it. But if he gives the tree license either to extend its roots under his soil or to hang its branches over his premises, he does not thereby gain any right to its fruit. He cannot pick it for himself nor interfere with the picking by the owner, as long as the latter remains in the tree or on the fence which divides the property. This right to the fruit does not, however, permit the other owner to come upon the soil on the other side of the line to gather the fruit, and all the fruit which falls without violence to the ground on one side may thus become the property of the owner.

—Toronto Globe.

Gems.

A good story is told by Dr. Johnson of a father hearing the voice of his child behind him as he was picking his way carefully along the mountain-side, "Take a safe path papa; I'm coming after you." Ah! if older Christians, while passing along the rugged hill of life, would only remember that young Christians and children are coming on after them, how much more circumspect would they be concerning the path taken!

"Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings has thou ordained praise." A little child of three summers absorbed with her playthings, while a Christian lady conversed with her mother on the duty of personal piety, was so impressed, that when that lady called again, she hastened to her mother, and with a face beaming with interest, exclaimed: "Mamma, that lady has come again to get us ready for God."

My own experience is that the Bible is dull when I am dull. When I was really alive, and set in upon the text with a tidal pleasure of living affinities, it opens, it multiplies discoveries, and reveals depths even faster than I can note them. The worldly spirit shuts the Bible; the spirit of God makes it a fire, flaming out all meanings and glorious truths.—Horace Bushnell.

God respecteth not the arithmetic of our prayers, how many they are; nor the rhetoric of our prayers, how neat they are; nor the geometry of our prayers, how long they are; nor the music of our prayers, how methodical they are; but the divinity of our prayers how heart-sprung they are. Not gifts, but graces prevail in prayer.—John Trapp.

It is no small commendation to manage a little, well. He is a good wagoner who can turn in a little room. To live well in abundance is the praise of the estate, not of the person.—Bishop Hall.

Occasions do not make a man frail, but they show what he is.—Thomas A. Kempis.

Grumblers never work, and workers never grumble.—Dr. Williams.

Of the treatment of crooked walking Church-members, Dr. Cuyler says: "If kind entreaties will not move a delinquent church-member, then administer righteous rebuke. No matter if it irritates. My experience has been that irritation is often a means of grace: The man gets mad at the minister, and ends by getting more mad at himself. If he has the grace of God in his heart, he cools down and amends; if he has no grace at all, then he has no place in a church. But fidelity on the part of God's minister is the first step commonly toward bringing back to fidelity a delinquent church member."

Do not pity yourself. Self-compassion is a morbid luxury, a caricature of self-respect. Do not nurse your grief and brood over it. Do not feed it with thought till it grows big. Forget yourself. Think of the world with its want and woe. Think of God and his help. Fling yourself, sorrow and all, upon the distress of man, and you shall find how God comforts those that mourn.—Christian at Work.

There are too many of our churches in which "the worship of riches" and the undue deference to men because they are rich, too much invade the pulpit. The commendation of the widow that she gave more than they all seems to be forgotten, and the millionaire who gives but, it may be, a hundredth part, according to his means, as does the poor man, gets all the praise.—Cuyler.

If you tell your troubles to God, you put them into the grave; they will never rise again when you have committed them to Him. If you roll your burden anywhere else, it will roll back again like the stone of Sisyphus.—Spurgeon.

When a man says he is a miserable sinner, if you take him at his word and tell him you agree with him, he will—well, it's on the whole better not to do it till you get on the other side of the fence.