

Family Reading.

The Fallow Field.

The days were bright and the year was young; As the warm sun climbed the sky; And in a thousand flowers their censers swung, And the larks were singing high; For an angel swept on silent wing To the grave where the dead earth lay; And the Easter dawned as the angel Spring Rolled the rugged stone away. Then the fields grew green with springing corn, And some with flowers were bright; And each day came with an earlier dawn, And a fuller, sweeter light. So the year grew older, noon by noon, Till the reapers came one day, And in the light of the harvest moon They bore the sheaves away. But one field lay from the rest apart, All silent, lone and dead; And the rude share ribbed its quivering heart Till all its life had fled. And never a blade and never a flower On its silent ridges stirred; The sunshine called, and the passing shower— It answered never a word. It seemed as if some curse of ill Were brooding in the air, Yet the fallow field did the Master's air, Though never a blade it bear; For it turned its furrow'd face to heaven, Catching the light and rain: It was keeping its Sabbath—one in seven— That it might grow rich again. And the fallow field had its harvest moon, Reaping a golden spoil; And learned its ever-brightening noon That rest for God was toll. —Good Words.

Athens.

A HOLIDAY SKETCH BY REV. JERVIS COATS, M. A.

On the evening of February 29 last, we found ourselves skirting along the shores of Laconia. We had rounded during the day Cape Matapan, dread of all sailors in ancient times, and were ploughing our way through the calm green sea towards our destination—Athens. When we came on deck after the evening meal, the wind had died completely away. Overhead the new moon was in possession of a cloudless sky. There trembled on her outer rim a large and lustrous star, which we soon recognised as the evening star, whose strange beauty had struck us on each clear night during our journey southward. And now once again it appeared, and as it gradually emerged from under the moon's bright edge, it formed a graceful golden pendant to her silver crescent. The Pole Star dipping low towards the horizon reminded us of how far we had wandered from our home in the north. The loveliness of the scene made us linger till a late hour before descending to our berths.

When we awoke next morning, the cessation of the throb, throb, of the propeller told us that our ship had put into port. We went on deck, the vessel lay in the little bay of Piræus—the port of Athens. There are few basins of water more suitable for a harbour than this; and as we looked around at its natural advantages we could not but admire the wisdom of old Themistocles who, in establishing the marine power of the Athenians, advised them to seek their main strength here. The morning was raw and cold. A chill grey mist was rising from the plains and creeping up the sides of the ranges of Pentelicon and Hymettus. We had expected sunny skies and balmy air, and it was difficult for us to call up much enthusiasm, as we drove amid freezing blasts along the muddy road, part of which runs parallel with the famous 'long walls' that once connected the city with its flourishing port. And yet it was impossible for even these untoward circumstances wholly to check the ardour of our desire to catch a first glimpse of the far-famed Acropolis.

At last, after sundry transient peeps we obtained a full view of the ancient citadel. It reminded us of nothing so much as the Castle rock at Edinburgh. Though of less imposing appearance it has a great look of that familiar stronghold, and stands in the same relation to the city which lies at its feet. After a brief rest at the hotel we set out to visit some of the sights of the place.

The sun had by this time broken through the clouds, and the chilly

morning was fast giving place to a pleasant day. After spending a little time at the temple of Jupiter, between whose magnificent columns we caught a charming view of Egina, the coast of Argolis, and the silver sea gleaming beyond, we toiled up the steep ascent that leads to the Acropolis. The old entrance on the west side is now blocked up, and the visitor enters by a narrow side gate on the south side. Turning to the right he finds himself standing before the ruins of the Propylæe or grand entrance to the Acropolis. This structure was, when in its complete state, regarded as an exquisite work of art, being, indeed, considered as of equal merit with the Parthenon. Now it is in so ruined a condition that it is difficult to conceive what it was like in its prime. Glimpses of the buildings that lie behind are to be had through its shattered remains. Crossing a court covered with irregular piles of architectural fragments the Parthenon stands before us. We are made familiar from boyhood with the form of this famous temple. It is held up as one of the most graceful and beautiful edifices ever erected by the hand of man. It was with no little eagerness, therefore, that we gazed at it on the brightening morning light. The first impression it produced was a trifle disappointing. One expects to find it in a less ruinous condition, and it is difficult just at once, amidst the mutilation which it has sustained, to realise the whole in its full grandeur. But the first momentary disappointment soon passes away, and then, more than any other building that can be pointed to, does it grow upon the imagination, till you get to feel that the praises that have been bestowed upon it are none too lavish. As we wandered in and out amidst its broken columns, lingering at each advantageous view-point to take in the scene, the calm beauty, the massive strength, the majestic simplicity of the structure impressed us profoundly.

It is in vain to attempt a description that can convey any adequate conception of the reality. One needs to stand before these marble walls and colonnades themselves, to breathe the pure sweet air of a Grecian spring, to get peeps of the bluest of skies through broken pillar and ruined architrave, to visit them in varying lights and shadows, before the influence of their beauty can be duly felt. Crossing once more the Court in front of the Parthenon, and directing our steps to the northward, we reach another temple scarcely less famous, the Erichtheum. Whilst the Parthenon is noted for its grandeur and dignity, the Erichtheum is famed for its easy elegance and alluring grace. One notes more particularly the eastern front consisting of a row of graceful Ionic columns, and the south portico, which is supported by six Caryatides, or marble statues of women clad from head to foot in graceful flowing robes, whilst long tresses hang down their backs in luxuriant fulness.

Like its more imposing neighbour, the Erichtheum is built of the finest Pentelic marble, now tinged by age with a yellowish hue. The space between these temples is covered with fragments of ancient sculpture. One cannot walk a yard without being arrested by some exquisite piece of carved work starting up before him from the tangled grass beneath his feet. Now it is a bas-relief representing some warlike deed of the distant past; again it is the carved border of frieze or cornice that has fallen from its lofty place above some stately porch; or once more it is the figure of a man or woman, which, though sadly mutilated, still shows signs of the highest art. In some cases the designs are as sharply cut as if they had been done yesterday, and the most minute inspection only serves to bring out more clearly the rare character of the workmanship. As we run our eye over the countless fragments with which each court is strewn, we can well believe the record of history as it tells how the Acropolis was once covered with temples, and that these temples were crowded with the works of the greatest artists of Greece.

We left the Acropolis by the little wicket-gate, and turning to the right paused for a moment at the western side of the hill. Our eyes rested on spots made memorable by many a bustling and tragic event in the checked life of Hellas. In the distance lay Salamis, around whose shore she gave her last blow to the retreating power of Persia; to the left was the Agora where Socrates taught, and where afterwards Paul disputed daily with the Athenians. In front was the Pnyx, with its square steeple Bema, from whence many an orator has harangued the listening throngs of his fellow-countrymen. To the right lay Mars' Hill, the seat of the Areopagus. We descended into a tiny valley, and then ascended the few steps cut in the rock that leads to the spot where Paul stood before this august court. The whole incident as depicted in the 17th chapter of the Acts came vividly before us, and we felt how natural and appropriate was the line of thought which the apostle followed on that memorable occasion. Wherever the eye turned at that hour, whether upward to the Acropolis, or downwards towards the Agora and Pnyx, it saw a countless succession of temples, altars, statues, and images. To Paul these were the signs of nothing but an idolatrous worship. It is very well for us to speak as we have done of the remains of the ancient cultus. But it is to be remembered that we are gazing on the ruins of a system out of which life and energy has for centuries departed. In Paul's day, on the contrary, these objects, then in their glory, represented an idolatry that was alive and powerful for evil. We are apt to associate beauty of form with beauty of character. But they were all too often dissociated, and art, instead of purging the soul from vicious and carnal desires, served rather to minister to their gratification. Paul with prescient mind saw this, and fired with intense zeal for the pure and elevating religion of which he was the chosen exponent, felt his spirit stirring in him at the sights and sounds that greeted him wherever he went. Yet one gleam of comfort shone athwart the darkness. Among the altars that stood in every open place, and at the corner of every street, he found one with the inscription 'To the Unknown God.' How eagerly he scanned this motto, for it told him that amid the vast profusion of deities with whose shines the city was adorned, the soul of man remained unsatisfied. Its aspiration had not been met, its cravings had not been appeased. Whether this was the actual significance of the inscription or not, the Apostle loved to believe that it expressed the yearnings of a spirit that demands an infinite and eternal object. Through it he read the hearts of the people, and preached Him who alone can allay the hunger of the soul, Him who has made us for Himself so that we can find rest only in His bosom of love. It all came home to us with redoubled power as we sat that afternoon 'in the midst of Mars Hill,' and beheld the light playing amongst the ruins of that eminence which was at once the citadel and Pantheon of Athens. What a contrast between the intense earnestness of this man, with soul deeply stirred, and the lightness and frivolity of his hearers! What a power lay in his apparent weakness, what weakness in their boasted strength! How foolish appeared his words to their ears, what strange folly is seen now to be their fancied wisdom.

From many points of view we beheld on that day, and on the other days of our stay, the city itself. It has taken great strides of recent years, and boasts now many large and elegant buildings. There are signs of a quickened national pulse, and we seemed to feel that there was the prospect of a bright future yet for this land so long neglected by her own sons, and down-trodden by the alien. We found two Protestant missions, one (American Presbyterian) conducted by a Mr. Kalopathakes, the other (Baptist) carried on by a Mr. Sacularius. May the pure gospel light radiate from these centres till it illumines many hearts and minds! The few days which had been allotted to Athens soon ran their course, and once more we found ourselves at the Piræus. It was a beautiful afternoon. A smart breeze was blowing; the little harbour was dotted with tiny sail boats that formed a lively picture as with their white sails they flitted hither and thither among the black hulls of the numerous vessels lying at anchor. When the sun began to sink

towards the west, we set sail, and passing out into the open sea shaped our course for Smyrna. Even and anon we caught glimpses, through openings in the hills that guard the coast, of the Acropolis with its stately ruins, till at last passing onward a ridge of the mountain range hid it from our sight. And so in the gentle evening light we bade farewell to that city.

On the Egean shore Built nobly, pure the air, and light the soil, Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts And eloquence.

Carly's Mischief.

'Don't touch anything you don't know about,' said Carly's mamma; because, you see, it was almost Carly's first visit to the country, and she didn't want him to get into trouble first thing. 'Remember Carly.'

'Yes'm,' answered Carly very promptly and politely; and he really meant to.

But when he got out into the woods one day, with a soft carpet of ferns and mosses to lie on, and an airy roof of green leaves overhead, he forgot to remember.

He stretched himself out under a tree, and when he had eaten all the bunch-berries within his reach, he began to look for something else to do; and pretty soon he saw an odd-looking thing like a big bunch of crumpled, coarse paper fast to a limb of a hazel-bush.

Carly wondered about it for a minute. 'Well, I'm going to pull it off,' said he; and he jumped up and walked toward the hazel-bush. 'Mamma won't care. It's only some nasty gray paper; and I wonder what it's there for.'

So Carly took hold of the queer-looking bunch; and in the same instant he let go again with a shrill little scream. For out at him swarmed an army of small defenders in jackets of black and yellow; and each one carried a tiny sharp sword which he knew well enough how to use.

Oh dear! how Carly screamed, and how he ran!

And after a while the little yellow-jacketed fellows gave up the chase, though not before Carly had felt the points of a good many of the sharp little swords.

And mamma pitied him, and soothed him, and bathed his poor, swelling little hands and face in saleratus-water.

'How did you happen to get into a hornet's nest, dear?' 'I thought it was pa-aper,' moaned Carly. 'It just looked like paper, mamma.'

'Ah!' said mamma, lifting her eyebrows. 'And I'm orfe sorry I didn't mind, mamma,' said Carly, penitently. 'I will next time 'cause—'cause I don't like such hard prickers, mamma.'

Mamma laughed. 'There's always sure to be something to prick when little boys don't mind,' said she.—*Youth's Companion.*

The Wonderful Mother.

The winter of the year of 1709 was one of extreme cold. Never was a colder winter known in Europe. In France many people froze to death in their beds, not only among the mountains, but even in the villages and cities. The hottest fire was not sufficient to keep a room warm. While the stoves were red hot the water would freeze but a few feet from them. The trees in the forest and by the roadside became so frozen that some of them burst, and made a noise as if a small mine had exploded.

Sparrows and crows and jackdaws sometimes fell down dead while flying in the air. Large flocks of sheep and cattle froze in the barn-yards. The bats, which usually sleep during the winter, were awakened out of their torpid slumbers, fluttered around a little while and fell dead on the ground. The deer in the forest could no more run swiftly, but crept slowly out of the woods and came near the dwellings of men. Finally spring came, and a multitude of them were found dead in the woods. The little lakes and brooks and rivers after they had been thawed by the sun, emitted a very unpleasant odour, because the fish in them had been frozen to death. The people suffered from extreme poverty from

extreme poverty, for the cold had destroyed many of their means of support. The wheat that had been sown in the autumn, their sheep, fowls, fish, and vegetables that had been buried in the ground, were completely destroyed by the frost.

During this winter, a poor little Savoyard boy was wandering in the streets of Luneville, in Lothringia. He was a pitiable orphan. His older brother who had taken care of him had now gone on a message to the city of Nancy, to earn a few francs. But he suffered the fate of many travellers, and was frozen to death. Many of the passengers of the stage and on horseback were frozen to death, though covered with furs and cloaks. The drivers lost their lives and still held the reins in their stiff hands.

The little Savoyard boy wandered about from house to house to get a little employment or a piece of bread. He was glad to blacken boots or shoes, dust clothes, clean dishes in the kitchen, or do anything that would give him a sou. But when night came on his suffering became intense. He slept with his brother in a carpenter's shop, where the two had covered themselves with an old foot-cloth, on which they piled shavings very high. They lay very close together and by this means managed to be protected from the severity of the cold. But now he was alone he would certainly freeze if he should attempt to sleep in the carpenter shop. The wife of a hostler took compassion on him. She showed him a little sleeping place in one of the stalls in the stable where the horses of a certain prince were kept. In this stall there stood an iron cage, in which a large brown bear was confined; for the beast was very wild and angry. The little Savoyard boy, who had come in the darkness of the night into the stable, neither knew nor cared for any wild beast that might be near by. He lay down upon some straw and stretched out his hand to pull more. As he stretched out his hand he put it in between the wires of the cage in which the bear was, and found that a large pile was there. Thinking that it was better to get in where the straw was, he crawled up to the cage and squeezed in through the iron bars. The bear grumbled a little but did no violence. She took the little stranger between her paws and pressed him near her warm breast, and against her thick skin, so softly and comfortably that he who had not slept for many nights with any comfort now forgot all fear and soon fell into a sweet deep sleep.

In the morning the boy waked up with renewed strength and crept out of the cage and went forth to the city to attend to his business and seek his daily bread. At night he returned to his strange mother. Besides the bear lay a great many pieces of bread which had been brought from the table of the prince; but the bear had taken all she had wanted and these were left. So the little Savoyard boy helped himself to all he needed. He then lay quietly down between the paws of his thick-clad mother, who pressed him to her as she had done before, and he slept there as if in the warmest feather bed.

In this way he spent five nights without anybody knowing it. On the morning of the sixth night he overslept himself, so that, when the hostlers went around with lanterns in the early morning to attend to the many horses in the stable, they saw the boy lying between the paws of the great bear. The old bear grunted a little, as if she were offended at any one seeing her taking care of her little favourite. The boy sprang up, and squeezed through the cage to the great astonishment of the bystanders.

The strange affair became widely known, and created much wonder throughout the city. Although the modest little Savoyard boy was very much ashamed that anybody should know that he had slept in the arms of a bear, he was ordered to appear in the presence of the prince, to whom he told his recent experience. The prince appointed a day for him to come again. The boy came; and in the presence of the prince and princess, and many people of rank he was requested to enter the cage where the great bear was. She received him as kindly as ever, and pressed him to her breast.

The little Savoyard afterward led an honorable and useful life, nor did he ever forget how God had spared him in his great need.—*Good Words.*

Cultivate a Sweet Voice.

There is no power of love so hard to keep as a kind voice. A kind hand is deaf and dumb. It may be rough in flesh and blood, yet do the work of a soft heart, and do it with a soft touch. But there is no one thing it so much needs as a sweet voice to tell what it means and feels, and it is hard to get it and keep in the right tone. One must start in youth, and be on the watch night and day, at work and play, to get and keep a voice that shall speak at all times the thought of a kind heart. But this is a time when a sharp voice is most apt to be got. You often hear boys and girls say words at play with a quick, sharp tone, as if it were the snap of a whip. If any of them get vexed you will hear a voice that sounds as if it were made up of a snarl, a whine and a bark. Such a voice often speaks worse than the heart feels. It shows more ill-will in tone than in words. It is often in youth that one gets a voice or a tone that is sharp and sticks to him through life, and stirs up ill-will and grief, and falls like a drop of gall on the sweet joys at home. Such as these get a sharp home-voice for use, and keep their best voice for those they meet elsewhere, just as they would save their best cakes and pies for guests, and all their sour food for their own board. I would say to all girls and boys, use your best voice at home. Watch it by day as a pearl of great price, for it will be worth more to you in the days to come than the best pearl hid in the sea. A kind voice is a lark's song to a heart and home. It is to the heart what light is to the eye.—*Jewish Messenger.*

USES OF ARCTIC EXPLORATION.

In three hundred years there have been some two hundred arctic voyages, for various purposes and with various fates. The Greely expedition was but one of thirteen expeditions. Five hundred men passed two winters within the polar circle, and nineteen of them only were lost. And Lieutenant Ray says that the result of the observations of all these expeditions will be the doubling of the world's knowledge of the magnetic forces. That is to say, as the Rev. Brooke Herford states in his admirable sermon upon this subject, 'Not one of all the thousand and ten thousand craft sailing to and fro among the many lands of earth but will be a little surer of its compass, a little closer in its reckoning, a little safer, than it ever was before.' Is this worth nothing? Is not the risk, the loss, even amply recompensed? But also, as Mr. Herford points out, the moral qualities, the patience, the courage, the self-denial, the faith, the endurance, developed by these Northern researches are incomparable. 'There is simply no other chapter in the history of human doings to be compared with it. Beside it the adventures of commerce and conquest look greedy and base, the stories of chivalry are mere tinsel, the long heroism of the Crusades seems a fevered frenzy.' *Cui Bono?* is not an argument to discourage the restless soul which the prospect of peril inspires, nor will the pathetic story of the patient and generous endurance, amid apparently remediless suffering, which the record of the Greely expedition discloses dismay or deter other Greelys from daring the same dangers. The arctic story is one of the saddest, but it is also one of the noblest, in the annals of human heroism.—*GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS, in Harper's Magazine for October.*

PEPPERING THE CANARIES.

Canary birds are made high-colored with the free use of cayenne pepper in their food. The more of the pepper food the birds partake of, and the less of seeds, the deeper the color of the plumage will be. Commence with the pepper diet when the young have attained the age of six weeks. There will be necessity to put the whole of the young birds upon the cayenne diet. Select for the purpose the boldest and most lively-looking cock-birds. Young canaries bred from pepper-led birds will not be high-colored in the first or nest feathers. To make them high-colored they must be molted upon cayenne.