

Family Reading.

The Golden-rod and the Aster.

You are so beautiful, Golden-rod! Said a purple Aster, with loving pride; And I am so happy to think that God Has deemed me worthy to be your bride!

New Select Serial.

MRS. HURD'S NIECE: Six Months of a Girl's Life.

CHAPTER I.

HER WELCOME.

Lois is at her journey's end. The train slows and moves jarring along the lighted streets, but instead of being in a little bustle about leaving, like everybody else, Lois drops her veil over her face, and leans her head on the seat in front.

ation has played her. Common sense, another one of her "familars," taunts her with it.

"I told you so! I told you all the time that her letter was not a nice auntie's letter at all!"

"I wonder," she says at last, "if I ought not to have taken an omnibus and gone straight there." She is a most plain little figure.

She goes to the door. Omnibuses and hacks are gone. She can see the lamps of the last carriage turning down a distant street.

"Never mind, Brother Harkness! It's not so very bad if you're only a few hundreds behind hand. We are in no danger of starvation—and our people are sure if they are slow—don't let it vex you thus, brother!"

And he beams on "brother," who is evidently a "steward," with a smile that warms even the listening stranger's heart.

"Brother Harkness,"—she seizes upon that especial word, uttered in all its native New Testament meaning and warmth; a soft moisture springs in her eyes.

Lois feels no longer quite alone. Near her is a member of the great Household of Faith to which she belongs.

"I wish to speak to you, sir. I am a stranger, and my friends are not here to meet me as I expected. Could you direct me to Mr. John Hurd's? Mrs. Hurd is my aunt."

"Oh yes," he glances around—not a hack in sight—and then at her with the trained eye of one acquainted with the world.

"My way lies past the house," he says,—"if you can walk there—it is a mile—I can leave you at the very door."

The expression of unspeakable relief answers and thanks him. He takes her shawl and basket, and they set off at once.

Lois gets long glimpses of her future home. It is a large town, a large, prosperous place. They pass great blocks, massive public buildings; she sees street upon street stretching away on either hand, glimmeringly lighted.

"This is Grammercy Place," says her guide, "the avenue upon which your relatives live. It is thought to be the finest portion of the town."

It is as beautiful as a park. Lois looks around more keenly than ever. She is half heart-sick, half in a rapture of delight. The silvery air is drenched with balsamic odors, and the sweet breath of flower gardens.

"I have no place here!" she simply bred young girl cries to herself with a sickening heart.

"Do my uncle's people attend your church?" she finally asks, abruptly.

"Oh, no, my dear!" There is a very curious intonation of voice. Lois looking up at him catches the slight smile.

"Are not my relatives church-going people, then?" she asks abruptly again.

"Certainly, my dear child," he answers. This time it is with all due gravity. "Both your uncle and aunt are among the very pillars of Dr. Guthrie's church. We just came past their place of worship—back there on the last corner. Mr. and Mrs. Hard are most excellent people."

"Do church people seek out strangers here?" she asks after awhile.

"I think so—I trust so," the gentleman answers gravely as he pauses to open a tall ornamental gate. "You will doubtless, my good girl, find pleasant friends. Your relatives have a wide circle."

This is Aunt's Alice's home! Her heart sinks as she gives the place a hasty glance. She turns back to her guide impulsively—there is only a moment in which she may grasp after the shadow of a future friend; and in need of a future friend she prophetically feels. She looks up, almost beseechingly. I hope you will not forget me, sir."

He is about to ring the bell, but at this appeal he pauses. He looks at her, keenly, perhaps gets a glimpse of the truth.

"My good little sister, I will remember you," he says, earnestly. "Your way and mine will probably stretch far enough part," he slips a card within her hand as he speaks, "but should you be in trouble at any time, or at any time need advice, come to my house. I will speak of you to Mrs. Nelson, and you will find us both glad to see you. I read your name upon your shawl strap here. I will keep you in mind, sister Lois. I shall also ask the Protector of the stranger and the fatherless to remember you with his especial care."

She steals a glance at the card—he is a minister, as she thought.

There are no lights in front of the house. It is a tall, imposing stone mansion. It has peak, and turret, and balcony, and pointed windows, and is much ivied at the corners. Lois, who has read far more than she has seen, fancies it must be built after some of the old world models.

After the bell is rung the second time footsteps approach. The key is turned, a servant opens the door.

"Is Mrs. Hurd at home?" Mrs. Hurd is not at home.

"Any of the family?" The family are out. The door is closing, but the gentleman prevents:

"I have in charge here a niece of Mrs. Hurd."

At this, the face of the servant suddenly gives signs of interest.

"Oh, yes, sir, if it be Miss Gladstone, Mistress Hurd spoke about as she might come. They be all out, but if the young lady come, I was to show her her room. I will send Brown out about the luggage. Oh, you walked up, Miss?"

The gentleman turns to his silent companion:

"I'm sorry there is no one here to receive you, but truly, it is not at all strange—your friends are quite important fractions of our fashionable society. I dare say you will now find that your troubles are at an end."

He speaks cheerfully; and making his adieu cordial enough to almost serve in place of the missing welcome, he leaves her following the servant in.

The Peacock and the Turkey.

"Look at me," said the Peacock, spreading his tail and strutting grandly about; "am I not handsome?"

"Yes," replied the turkey, "in your own eyes; but I put up a perpetual thanksgiving that I was not hatched so vain as you."

"I should think thanksgiving was rather a tender subject for you," rejoined the Peacock, pluming himself.

"Not at all," said the Farmer, who had been listening to this interchange of civilities; "he is a tender subject for Thanksgiving!" And so saying, he caught up the Turkey, and carried him off to market.

"Well, well!" said the peacock, "I'm glad I'm too handsome to eat, and that fine feathers don't always make fine birds according to the cook.—St. NICHOLAS Almanac.

Something about Corkwood.

At present we depend for cork upon the countries bordering on the Mediterranean. In these countries the actual market value of cork is ten times what it was at the beginning of the century, and it is likely to go still higher. In Sardinia, Sicily, and Naples, extensive cork plantations are being destroyed for the purpose of obtaining the tannin of superior quality, yielded by the bark and carbonate of soda from the ashes of the wood.

The cork oak grows to the height of about fifty feet. In Algeria and in the Spanish province of Estremadura the development of the tree is something greater. The tree reaches a great age. It continues to grow for one hundred and fifty or two hundred years, and after its growth it still yields cork, though of an inferior quality. In some parts of Spain it is customary to destroy the tree when the quality of its cork begins to deteriorate.

Joining the Church.

How soon should I join the church? The best answer we can give to that question is—Just as soon as your heart has joined the Saviour. When God gives conversion he demands confession. Make the most of your early love. If your heart goes out to Jesus in loving trust, then stand up for him, and with him joining your hands to his, take the blessed vow of spiritual wedlock.

The Southern World prints a bit of "weather wisdom" which just about covers the case. To those who continually croak about the weather, it says, whether 'wet' or 'dry' we commend the following utterance of Colonel Richard Peters: "We all complain of the weather, and can't see the wisdom of it, but I confess, in the light of forty years' experience, that if I could turn on the rain as I do a sprinkler at home I couldn't have managed it so well for this one year, year in and year out, as it has been managed. So I take the weather without complaining. I know it will come all right in the end."

There is a transcendent power in example. We reform others unconsciously when we walk uprightly.

Mrs. Mason's Economy.

"It is lovely; do take it, Maria. I am sure I do not see why you hesitate a moment, for it is a regular bargain." "Yes, I know that it is very nice for the price, but then you see Lizzie, that is just exactly twice as much as I intended to pay. I really cannot afford it," and with a little sigh Mrs. Mason put aside the soft fabric, and turned to another, which, though pleasing at first, seemed now, in comparison with the other, very coarse and unsatisfactory.

"But, Maria, if you must economize, as you tell about, why don't you do it in some other way? I'm sure I should like for once to see you dressed in some sort of style. Didn't you say that you were going to hire it made? Now, why not make it yourself? I will lend you patterns, and you can get along nicely; now do!"

Mrs. Mason hesitated, then she compared again the two pieces of goods. She imagined herself in a dainty, stylish suit. She fingered the goods caressingly, it was so soft and nice looking, Mrs. Mason liked nice things very, very much.

"You would save a clear ten dollars, if not more," whispered her sister. "And as I say if you must economize, I think that you might have some regard for the feelings of your friends in your choice of ways. It is not very pleasant for me to have my only sister look as poverty-stricken as you make out to most of the time."

Mrs. Mason was only half convinced of the soundness of her sister's reasoning, but obeying her inclination, she tried hard to feel that it was really her duty to consult the feelings of her friends, her sister in particular.

"I suppose that I do seem shabby to Lizzie," she thought, glancing at her sister's heavy silk. "I am not sure but that I ought to please her."

"Come, come, Maria, don't think any longer over this little matter. You will take it of course; now let us decide about the trimmings."

And Mrs. Mason allowed the clerk to measure off the dress, but somehow she felt anything but comfortable. Do her very best, she could not put out of her mind a sad, pale face that she had seen in church last Sabbath.

"I do not believe that Miss West gets much work," she had said to her husband on their way home. She looked positively hungry this morning, or else it was my imagination. I've half a mind to give her my spring suit to make."

"I would, dear," was his reply. "What a thoughtful little woman she is," he added, looking down lovingly to her. How could she tell him now that she had selfishly put her money all into her dress! She was heartily sick of it even now.

"Have you seen that Miss West about your dress yet? asked Mr. Mason a day or two after.

"No, no, not yet," replied Mrs. Mason confusedly. Somehow she had not brought herself yet to tell her husband how she had been over-persuaded out of her good intentions.

"I would go there to-day, then, if I were in your place, for I met her this morning, and I am sure from her looks that she is in trouble."

"Oh, I wish, I wish that I had never bought that dress," sobbed Mrs. Mason as her husband left her. "If poor Miss West is in trouble or want, what shall I do?"

For a long time it seemed to Mrs. Mason that she could not go to her, but just at night she went.

"Do people really call this living?" she thought to herself as she climbed the narrow, rickety stairs, and caught glimpses through open doors of desolate, poverty-stricken rooms. Somehow dainty spring suits seemed of far less importance here than in the store by her sister's side.

At first there was no answer to her knock, but just as she was about to try the door, it opened, and one glance only was sufficient to assure Mrs. Mason that her husband was right in his surmise. Miss West was in trouble. It needed only a few kind, sympathizing words to win her confidence.

The Home of the Codfish.

What a marvellous influence upon civilization and human progress the humble but nutritious codfish has had. He has been a mine of wealth to a vast population. It seems that good mother nature, foreseeing the needs of humanity, has made special preparations for a good supply of this very necessary article of food for body and brain; she floated her icebergs, which were filled with the sandy bottom of the Northern sea, down to the Gulf Stream, where they melted and deposited their debris forming the Grand Bank of Newfoundland.

It was the work the slow and toilsome work of ages. Every spring, thousands of the bergs, one-third above the water and two-thirds below, the upper part clear, sparkling and translucent, reflecting the sunshine, and giving it back in the enraptured eye with that prodigious gally and brilliancy of coloring which only nature can afford, the lower part mixed with the coast-bottoms of Greenland and Labrador, to the extent of thousands of cartloads, came floating down majestically through Davis Straits, and meeting the warm air and warm waters of the Gulf Stream, melted and deposited their contributions until those immense shoals were formed where the cod and haddock swarm. And it is said that there, sand-banks have huge depressions like vast valleys, which serve as an aquarius, and that when a vessel is lucky enough to anchor over one of them, it can fill its hold and deck with as many as it can carry. For generations, the inhabitants of Newfoundland and the venturesome folk who live all along the New England coast, get their daily bread, or lay by a competency from this never failing source of wealth.

What a vast number of people on the globe get their living out of, and subsist principally on, the invaluable cod, and what vast quantities have been landed by the fishing fleet of Gloucester since her fishermen first engaged in the business.

A New York man advertises for "a thousand bushels of old rubber over-shoes, fancy prices paid." It is said he is in the chewing-gum business.