

Family Reading.

June.

Apple blossoms in the orchard, Singing birds on every tree; Grass a-growing in the meadows Just as green as green can be; Violets in shady places,— Sweetest flowers were ever seen!— Hosts of starry dandelions,— "Drops of gold among the green!" Pale arbutus, fairy wind-flowers, Innocents in smiling flocks; Coolest ferns within the hollows, Columbines among the rocks; Dripping streams, delicious mosses, Tassels on the maple-trees; Drowsy insects, humming, humming; Golden butterflies, and bees; Daffodils in garden borders, Fiery tulips dashed with dew; Crocus-flowers; and, through the greenness, Snow-drops looking out at you! —Caroline A. Mason, in St. NICHOLAS for June.

Flower Fancies.

DANDELIONS.

Upon a showery night and still, Without a sound of warning, A troop of band surprised the hill, And held it in the morning. We were not waked by bugle-notes, No cheer our dreams invaded! And yet, at dawn, their yellow coats On the green slopes paraded. We careless folk the deed forgot; Till one day, idly walking, We marked upon the self-same spot A crowd of veterans talking. They shook their trembling heads and gray With pride and noiseless laughter; When, well-a-day! they blew away, And ne'er were heard of after!

The Early Home of Joseph Cook.

Following up a concave valley with spurs of the Adirondacks on either side—three miles from Ticonderoga, in a southwest direction, on the western slope of one of the mountains, is the homestead and birth-place of Joseph Cook. The present dwelling is the old style two-story, double farm-house, with the indispensable 'L' on the southwest corner. The house is painted white, with green blinds, red 'L' and slate-colored piazza which spans the front. As we drove under the arched gateway leading into the yard, a few days since, in company with Rev. A. MaceGeorge, Baptist pastor at Ticonderoga, N. Y., we were met by the errand-boy, of whom we inquired if Dea. Cook was at home, and he pointed to the flats, half a mile away, where Mr. William H. Cook, Joseph's father, was engaged in sowing his spring grain. The farm is large and running down the mountain and across the valley, which is nearly a mile wide; from the house the eye can sweep over the whole place.

While the boy went to the field to call Mr. Cook, we went to the woods north of the house, and some two hundred yards from it, where Joseph Cook spends the most of his time in summer, for he generally comes home in May with his wife, and remains until September or October. The thickly spread trees consist of hard maple, beech, interspersed with a few oaks and pines. In this grove, Joseph erected a small octagon summer-house for a study. This house is about eight feet in diameter, and ten feet high. Every other section is made of lattice-work, and hung on hinges, to be thrown open when desired. In the centre of this house is a rude desk, like old-fashioned desks in country-school-houses. On this spot and desk, the material for many of the famous Boston lectures is gathered. By the side of this summer-house is a never-failing spring, with water clear as crystal and cold as ice. Joseph says he wants nothing stronger or clearer. There are summer-seats scattered about, where he has read many authors, and then cut the name of the book or author upon the soft beech bark, which will remain as long as the trees stand.

Returning to the house, we met Mr. Cook coming from the field, who gave us a hearty welcome to his home. He is a man nearly six feet in height, with athletic frame, seventy-two years of age. He is commanding in appearance, without ostentation, deliberate in speech, putting and answering questions in a few forcible words, expressing his convictions in a very decided manner,

weighing arguments in his own mind, and reaching conclusions generally correct, which become as settled as the mountains where he lives. In course of conversation, he remarked, 'Joseph is our only child; he was born in January, 1838, on this ground, but not in this house, as I have rebuilt it; and he is, therefore, forty-six years of age. I saw, when he was young, that he would never make a farmer. When he was a boy, I needed his help on the farm in summer; but he would watch the clouds, and if it looked like rain, he would take his books with him in the field, and when it began to rain he would hasten off to the school-house. I had an Irishman to work for me one summer who said, 'Joseph would order up a storm any day that he wanted to go to school.' When he was nine years old, there was an auction-sale of books in our neighborhood, and I told him he could select what he wanted, and he picked out all the best books in the library, and then he read them. The way he heard of Yale College, the name was stamped upon some plates we had in the house, and when his heart was set upon going to College, I sent him to Keeseville, and then to Poultney to prepare for college. At length he went to Yale and spent two years, when he was taken sick and came home, and when he recovered he went to Harvard, finished his course of study, and graduated with honors. Then he went to the Theological Seminary at Andover, where he spent five years, and then he went abroad two years, to finish his education. My son has been raised up by the Lord God to perform a special work. None of the family can claim any honor for his religious training. Neither of my parents was a Christian. My father was a lumberman and an unbeliever, and my wife has never made a profession of religion. In his early school-days, Joseph became a Christian, and afterward joined the Congregational Church; and it was through him instrumentally, that I became a Christian about twenty years ago; but the Bible made me a Baptist, so I joined the Baptist Church.'

At this juncture, Joseph Cook's mother came in. She is rather small in stature, but of robust figure, enjoys good health, and is seventy years of age; very reserved in manner, and talks but little. She seldom goes from home. Her heaven is in her kitchen—no disrespect to her; she is a great worker. When asked respecting her prospects for eternity, she replied, 'I am satisfied.' Joseph's father has been a deacon in the Baptist Church in Ticonderoga for some fifteen years, where his counsels have always been wise, and the church have found in him a true friend and supporter. As we turned away from the old homestead, we could but exclaim, 'God bless Dea. Wm. H. Cook and his son Joseph.' J. L. B. Ticonderoga, N. Y., April, 1884. —Watchman.

How God Answered.

'I saw Father Perkins go by this morning; he has made a long trip this time,' said Mr. Keane, as he pushed back his chair from the dinner-table.

O, mother, may I go over and see him this afternoon? and the sightless eyes of little Davie were turned pleadingly toward his mother, unconscious of the pain which the words in which his request was framed gave her.

'Yes,' she answered, 'and you shall take him a basket of the cakes I fried this morning.'

The basket was soon filled, and Davie started off in fine spirits. No one would have thought him blind if they had not seen his eyes, for his foot never stumbled in the way. The country for miles around was as familiar to him as his father's garden; he had learned it by heart in his constant rambles before the terrible blackness had shut it all away from him two years before the time of which we write. Many of these rambles he had taken in company with Father Perkins, as he was affectionately called, who was one of the earliest of the noble band of devoted ministers who left positions of honor and advancement in the East for a life of trial and discomfort in the West.

In one only earthly pleasure did he indulge. His love of botany amounted to a passion, and in his lonely rides he had collected and preserved specimens

of nearly all the native plants in several States. This collection of plants was the only valuable thing his cabin contained. And as Davie and we have now reached the cabin we will go on with our story.

'I am very glad to see you, Davie. How is the good mother and the other children? So she has sent me some doughnuts, has she? I thank her very much, for I haven't had time to do any cooking since I came home. I have brought home some new flowers with me that I want to show you after I finish sewing this patch on my sleeve. The poor old coat and its owner are growing old together, and the old man pained with a slight sigh.

'Father Perkins, why don't you buy some new clothes? Davie timidly asked.

'O, my boy, I can't afford to spend money for clothes when I see so many poor and sick people who need it, and the little I have goes such a short way.'

'Don't all the money in the world belong to God?'

'Yes, my lad, the silver and the gold are his, and he giveth it to whomsoever he will, to use in making the world happier and better.'

'Well, please, won't you ask him to give my father a great lot of it, as much as a hundred dollars? O, please do.'

'Why, Davie, what would your father do with all that money?'

'He would make me see.'

And when the old man answered sadly that he feared that could never be done, the child eagerly explained how a man had staid over night at their house a few weeks before, who had said that in the city of Philadelphia there lived a famous doctor who had cured a great many blind people.

'And he believed he could cure me,' said Davie, 'but it is so far, and the doctor's bill would be so large, that father and mother said he might as well have told them to go to London or Paris. Just think! father says it would take a hundred dollars. But won't you please ask God to give it to him some way?'

'Indeed I will,' said the old man, who knew well that God could provide the necessary means for the costly experiment.

'We will ask him now,' and kneeling down with Davie, he told the Lord, with childlike simplicity, why they wanted the money, and asked him to send it.

'Do you think it will be there when I get home?' Davie asked.

'I don't know; God answers us in many ways, but he always answers.'

'But now, Davie, it is getting late, and after you have looked at the flowers you will have to start for home, or the good mother will wonder what has become of her pet lamb.'

It was a touching sight to see the blind child tenderly touching with his sensitive finger-tips the pressed blossoms, while the old man, with the enthusiasm of a boy, explained to him their botanical names and structure, colors and habits of growth.

'There my boy,' he said as he closed the book, 'that makes the nine hundred and ninetieth; I hope I shall finish the thousand this summer. Ah! I many are the years that have gone since I gathered the first one.'

Davie went home to dream that a raven flew into the window with a little bag in its bill full of gold dollars, and he was not surprised when, a few days later, his father brought a letter from the office containing nothing but a check for \$100. But though Davie took it as a matter of course, his parents did not, and they tried in every possible way to find out who sent it, but without success.

'Speaking of herbariums, I have a very fine one of nearly a thousand specimens I should like to show you,' said Professor Cummings to his guest, a young Professor from a neighboring college, who, as he opened the book, read on the first leaf the name Joseph Perkins.

With a wondering look he turned to Professor Cummings and asked:

'Where did you get this?'

'I bought it,' was the reply.

'From whom?'

'The collector himself. I got it a good many years ago. An odd old chap he was, I remember.'

'I knew him well, and I wish you would tell me all about it, for I cannot

think what could have induced him to part with it. I know that he valued it above every earthly possession.'

'Well, about fifteen—no, it was seventeen—years ago this spring, I took a trip through Ohio and Western Pennsylvania. One night I stopped with this Mr. Perkins, a minister, I believe he was. Our conversation turned on the wild flowers of the region, and he showed me this herbarium. I had just lost a fine one of my own by fire, and I offered him a hundred dollars for this. He at once accepted my offer; though it seemed to give him so much pain that in the morning, before I started, I proposed to take back the money and leave him the book, but he would not consent, saying that it was the answer to a prayer, and so—but, what's the matter; are you sick?'

'Do you know who I am? was the only reply his young companion made. 'Why, yes, you are Professor Keane, who occupies the scientific chair in T—College, author of a standard text-book on botany and—'

'That will do; now listen. Seventeen years ago this spring, I was a poor blind boy, and had just heard that there was hope that I might recover my sight if I could reach a skilful oculist in Philadelphia. Almost insurmountable difficulties lay in the way of my doing so principally want of funds. I confided my trouble to our old minister, who prayed with me that the necessary one hundred dollars might be provided. After a few days my father received the money through the post-office. I have never been able to find the slightest clew to the human instrument God used in answering our prayers, until your story this evening has convinced me that to the sacrifice of dear old Father Perkins' only treasure I owe the greatest blessing of my life.'

'Well, that is truly an interesting history. How little I ever dreamed that I was connected in any way with your success in life. But what became of Mr. Perkins?'

'I never saw him again, for during my absence at Philadelphia he went to visit a sister in Virginia, where he sickened and died. I have often wondered what became of this herbarium. Noble old man! how much I owe to him—not only sight, but it was from him that I caught the enthusiasm for botanical studies to which I attribute whatever success I have attained.'

If you visit the cemetery in Virginia where the Rev. Joseph Perkins sleeps, you will be attracted to a solitary grave covered with choice flowers, and marked by a neat stone bearing his name and the single line, 'There fairer flowers than Eden's bloom; and the loquacious old negro in charge of the grounds will talk as long as you will listen of the fine young gentleman who erected the stone and pays him for keeping the grave covered with flowers.—Advocate and Guardian.

A First Lesson in Handling a Gun.

The first thing to be learned is to stand properly. Plant both your feet naturally and firmly on the ground, so that the joints of your legs are neither stiff nor bent; then lean the upper part of your part of your body slightly forward. Grip the gunstock just behind the guard with the right hand, the fore-finger lightly touching the foremost trigger, that is, the trigger of the right-hand barrel. The stock of the gun, a few inches in front of the guard, must rest easily in the hollow of the left hand. Hold the muzzle of the gun up and slanting away from you, so that the lower end of the butt is just lower than your right elbow. Now, if both hammers have been cocked, and you gently and swiftly draw the butt of the gun up to and against the hollow of the right shoulder, you will find yourself in good position for taking aim, which is best done by keeping both eyes wide open, and looking straight over the rib between the barrels with the right eye.

You will soon discover the trick of doing this, by fixing your aim with both eyes open, and then holding it perfectly steady, closing the left eye; if the line of sight now changes, you have not sighted correctly; if it remains fixed, the aim has been taken with the right eye.

Be careful after firing never to set

your gun down with a hammer up. That is the cause of many deplorable accidents. To avoid accident you must be constantly on the alert and cautious, not overlooking even the slightest precaution.—From 'Marvin and his Boy Hunters,' by Maurice Thompson, in St. NICHOLAS for June.

Spiders.

Spiders are not insects, as most people think. There is precisely the same relationship between a spider and an insect that there is between a cow and a codfish. The cow and the fish are both vertebrates, and the spider and the insect are both annulates; but there the resemblance ceases. In every other point of structure, they differ widely from each other. The spider has eight legs, whereas an insect cannot have more than six. The nervous system is constructed on a totally different principle, and so are the circulation and respiration. The eyes are different, the insects having many compound eyes, and the spider never having more than eight, and all of them simple. Then, a spider has no separate head as in case with the insects, the head and thorax being fused together. Neither does the spider pass through the series of developments which we call 'transformations.' When the young spider is hatched, it is a spider, and retains the same shape through its whole life. Again, no insect that is at present known can spin silken threads. Take the silk-worm as a familiar example. The silk is spun by the caterpillar, and not by the moth. Now, the spider can produce threads throughout the whole of its life. It possesses, moreover, the faculty of producing different kinds of silk, according to the object for which it is needed. If we watch the first of these creatures, we may see all three silks produced. The web of the diadem spider is made of radiating cables, like the spoke of a wheel, and having a slight thread wound spirally over the spokes. The whole web is suspended by cables like those which form the spokes, and guy-ropes of similar structure support it on every side. A blue-bottle fly now comes buzzing along, and blunders against one of the supporting cables. It is not arrested by the cable, but falls upon the net, where it is at once caught. If we examine the web with a tolerably powerful magnifying glass, we shall see that the cables and spokes are quite smooth, while the spiral thread is covered with little globules of a gummy character. There are about fourteen hundred of these globules in each inch of thread; and on an average, a complete web contains eighty-seven thousand of them. These globules act just like bird-lime; and the moment that an insect touches one of them with its leg or wing, it is held tightly by the gum.—Good Words.

(From the Freeman, May 9th.) Baptism of Soldiers in Naples.

Most visitors to Naples have, in passing, noticed the palace, and sought to obtain a glimpse of the falls of Caserta, if they have not paid them a special visit, and wandered for a few hours through the spacious rooms of the building and the beautiful adjoining grounds. The town contains about 20,000 inhabitants, and is situated about twenty miles north of Naples, at the junction of the Rome and Foggia railroads, and is therefore seen by all who enter the city from the north. Founded by the Lombards in the eighth century, it became a favourite resort of the Neapolitan Bourbons; for whom the royal palace, the finest in Southern Italy, was erected by Vanvitelli in 1752. The presence of royalty in a town of such small dimensions, had, of course, a powerful influence on the population, who were largely dependent on the royal patronage; and the effect of this is still seen in their religious and political preferences; Caserta being reputedly the most Bourbonised town in all Italy.

In this refuge of Bourbonism, which means bigotry and superstition, a Mission was commenced by the Baptist Missionary Society about two years ago, under the superintendence of the Rev. W. K. Landels of Naples, who for some time past has been in the habit of visiting the station weekly.

Happily Caserta contains a much

more promising class than the ordinary priest-ridden inhabitants. It is the site not only of the royal palace mentioned above, but of a large military barracks, where regiments belonging to different parts of the country spend a portion of their time of enlistment. Much as the large army of Italy taxes her pecuniary resources, and great as is the hardship endured when young men, who are just starting in life, are by conscription dragged off from their several pursuits to serve their three years in the army, some of the best and far-seeing friends of Italy regard this military system as a ground of hope for her future. There is nothing which the Italians, especially of the South, need more to learn than habits of punctuality and promptitude; and for the promotion of such habits, their severe military drill, whatever else it may do, is admirably qualified.

Finding the inhabitants of Caserta largely inaccessible owing to priestly influence, Signor Lihonati has directed his efforts mainly to the evangelisation of the soldiers stationed there, and with a very gratifying measure of success. The Lord has blessed his labours to such an extent that last Sunday we had the pleasure of witnessing the very unusual but not less pleasing, spectacle of eight soldiers witnessing for Christ in baptism; and these eight we were informed are only half of the accepted candidates, the remainder of whom would have been baptized along with their comrades, could they have obtained leave of absence for the purpose. This will no doubt be granted before long, when they will have an opportunity of running down to Naples and confessing Christ as their brethren have done.

The reason of their coming to Naples for baptism we understand to be twofold. There is no baptistery in the Caserta Sala, and no very convenient place for baptism in the neighbourhood. Partly on this account Naples was preferred. But as the soldiers are men under authority, it was also thought undesirable to attract too much attention, lest their superiors, disliking the notoriety, might curtail their liberty in future.

As it was, the baptism was helpful to the Naples Church. The work in that city is attended with difficulties and discouragements to an extent unknown in the more northern cities. And as the mission in Caserta is a sort of offshoot of that in Naples, there was a certain fitness in the arrangement which allowed the brethren of the latter city to welcome, and rejoice over, some of the first fruits of the Gospel in the former. They certainly seemed to enjoy the occasion. The addresses and prayers of those who took part in the services were characterized by unusual fervor; and very earnest were the petitions offered for, and no less suitable the exhortations addressed to, the new converts.

Another valuable manuscript is reported to have been discovered. Dr. Harkavy, of the Imperial Library, St. Petersburg, announces that he has found a very ancient copy of the Old Testament. The present owners bought them at one of the Black Sea ports, from a Greek sailor, sailing from the Island of Rhodes. The manuscripts consist of some thirty rolls of vellum, which were probably once bound together. Mr. Neubauer, the assistant librarian at the Bodleian Library at Oxford, has prepared a short statement for publication pending the production of a fuller account. As yet the doctor is unable to fix even an approximate date for them, nor has he met with any important variations from the *textus receptus*. The 'Lamentations' of Jeremiah are comparatively fresh, and easily read, whilst some of the parchment is so crinkled and discoloured that nothing can be made out, though the professor hopes by means of re-agents to render the writing legible. The 'Book of Lamentations' is followed by an original poem on the same subject, 'The Fall of Jerusalem,' signed, 'Jacob, son of Isaac.' The other books which Professor Harkavy has made out so far are the prophecies of Hosea, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Haggai, and Zechariah, and the books of Ruth, Esther, Daniel and Zephaniah. The most puzzling feature is that the characters employed differ materially from all hitherto known, so much so that those who read with facility the square writing of the other Hebrew texts are at a loss to understand it.—London Freeman.