

Family Reading.

Preserving-time.

Said Mr. Baldwin Apple To Mrs. Bartlett Pear, "You're growing very plump, madame, And also very fair. "And there is Mrs. Clingstone Peach, So mellowed by the heat, Upon my word, she really looks Quite good enough to eat. "And all the Misses Crab-apple Have blushed so rosy red That very soon the farmer's wife To pluck them will be led. "Just see the Isabellas! They're growing so apace That they really are beginning To get purple in the face. "Our happy time is over, For Mrs. Green Gage Plum Says she knows unto her sorrow, Preserving-time has come." "Yes!" said Mrs. Bartlett Pear, "Our day is almost o'er, And soon we shall be smothering In syrup by the score." And before the month was ended, The fruits that looked so fair, Had vanished from among the leaves, And the trees were stripped and bare. They were all of them in pickle, Or in some dreadful scrape; "I'm cider!" sighed the Apple: "I'm jelly!" cried the Grape. They were all in jars and bottles, Upon the shelf arrayed, And in their midst poor Mrs. Quince Was turned to marmalade. —St. Nicholas.

"A Darling."

BY EARNEST GILMORE.

Two gentlemen, friends, who had been parted for years, met in a crowded city thoroughfare. The one who lived in the city was on his way to meet a pressing business engagement. After a few expressions of delight, he said: "Well, I'm off. I'm sorry, but it can't be helped. I will look for you to-morrow at dinner. Remember, two o'clock sharp. I am anxious for you to see my wife and child." "Only one child?" asked the other. "Only one," came the answer, tenderly—"a daughter. She's a darling, I do assure you." And then they parted, the stranger in the city getting into a street car bound for the Park, whither he desired to go. After a block or two, a group of five girls entered the car; they were all young and evidently belonged to families of wealth and culture—that is intellectual culture—as they conversed well. Each carried a very elaborately decorated lunch basket; each was attired in a very becoming spring suit. Doubtless they too were going to the Park for a spring picnic. They seemed very happy and amiable until the car again stopped, this time letting in a pale-faced girl of about eleven and a sick boy of four. These children were shabbily dressed and upon their faces there were looks of distress mingled with some expectancy. Were they too on their way to the Park? The gentleman thought so; so did the group of girls, for he heard one of them say, with a look of disdain: "I suppose those ragamuffins are on an excursion too." "I shouldn't want to leave my door if I had to look like that. Would you?" This from another girl. "No, indeed! But there is no accounting for tastes. I think there ought to be a special line of cars for the lower classes." All this conversation went on in a low tone, but the gentleman had heard it. Had the child too? He glanced at the paleface and saw tears glistening in the eyes. Then he looked at the group of finely dressed girls, who had moved as far from the plebeian as the limits of the car would allow. He was angry. He longed to tell them that they were vain and heartless as they drew their costly trappings closer about them, as if fearful of contact with poverty's children. Just then an exclamation—"Why, there is Nettie! Wonder where she is going!"—caused him to look out upon the corner, where a sweet-faced young girl stood beckoning to the car driver.

When she entered the car she was warmly greeted by the five, and they made room for her beside them. They were profuse to their exclamation and questions. "Where are you going?" asked one. "Oh, what lovely flowers! Who are they for?" questioned another. "I'm on my way to Belle Clark's. She's sick, you know, and the flowers are for her." She answered both questions at once, and then, glancing toward the door of the car, she saw the pale girl looking wistfully at her. She smiled at the child, a tender look beaming from her beautiful eyes; and then, forgetting that she, too, wore a handsome velvet skirt and costly jacket, and that her shapely hands were covered with well fitting gloves, she left her seat and crossed over to the little ones. She laid one hand caressingly on the boy's thin cheek as she asked interestedly of his sister: "The little boy is sick, is he not? And he is your brother, I am sure, he clings so to you." It seemed hard for the girl to answer, but finally she said: "Yes, miss; he is sick. Freddy has never been well. Yes, miss; he is my brother. We're going to the Park to see if 'twon't make Freddy better." "I am glad you are going," the young girl replied, in a low voice meant for no one's ears except those of the child addressed. "I feel sure it will do him good; it is lovely there, with the spring flowers all in bloom. But where is your lunch? You ought to have a lunch after so long a drive?" Over the little girl's face came a flash. "Yes, miss; mebbe we ought to, for Freddy's sake; but, you see, we didn't have any lunch to bring. Tim—he's our brother—he saved these pennies purpose so that Freddy could ride to the Park and back. I guess mebbe Freddy'll forget about being hungry when he gets to the beautiful Park." Were there tears in the lovely girl's eyes as she listened? "Yes, there certainly were; and very soon she asked the girl where they lived, and wrote the address down in a tablet, which she took from a beaded bag upon her arm. After riding a few blocks the pretty girl left the car, but she had not left the little ones comfortless. Half the bouquet of violets and hyacinths was clasped in the sister's hand, while the sick boy, with radiant face held in his hand a precious package, from which he helped himself now and then, saying to his sister in a jubilant whisper: "She said we could eat 'em all—every one—when we get to the Park. What made her so sweet and good to us? She didn't call us ragamuffins, and wasn't 'fraid to have her dress touch ours; and she called me 'a dear,' she did. What made her?" And she whispered back: "I guess it's 'cause she's beautiful as well as her clothes—beautiful inside, you know." The gentleman's ears served him well. He heard Sue's whisper, and thought: "Yes, the child is right; the lovely young girl is 'beautiful inside'—beautiful in spirit. She is one of the Lord's own, developing in Christian growth. Bless her!" When the Park was reached the five girls hurried out with laughter and merry talk. Then the gentleman lifted the little boy in his arms, and carried him out of the car, across the road, and into the green, sweet-smelling Park the sister with a heart full of gratitude following. It was he who paid for a nice ride for them in the goat carriage; he who also treated them to oyster soup at the Park restaurant. Upon his return to the city he was surprised and gratified to see get into his car the kindly young girl who had so tenderly remembered the "least of these." Again he saw her light shine—only a cheery word or two to a poor, trembling old woman, an orange to a fretful teething child who was torturing his mother and every one else in the car until that orange soothed his hot gums and his turbulent spirit—only these little tender services; and yet how plainly they stamped her as the Master's own! At two o'clock sharp the next day, the two gentlemen as agreed, met again. "This is my wife," the host said,

proudly introducing a comely lady, "and this," as a young girl of fifteen entered the parlor, "is my daughter Nettie." "Ah!" thought the guest, as he extended his hand in cordial greeting. "This is the dear girl I met yesterday in the street car! I don't wonder her father calls her a darling. She is a darling, and no mistake, bless her!"—Forward. An American "Giant's Causeway." The elevation known as Orange Mountain, in New-Jersey, is a section of the Blue Ridge, rising some 600 feet above the sea-level, and running nearly north and south. At a point directly west from the city of Orange, and near the top of the mountain, quarrying has been carried on for many years. Gradually, as the stone has been removed, a geological wonder of unusual interest has been disclosed, consisting of a series of basaltic rocks closely resembling the celebrated Giant's Causeway on the Irish coast, but on a much larger scale. Although the quarrying operations laid a large part of this remarkable formation bare some years ago, it is only recently that public attention has been directed to it. Two or three weeks ago Professor George H. Cook, of the New-Jersey Geological Bureau, paid a visit to the quarry, and his report has awakened wide interest in the discovery. And none too soon, for the lessee of the quarry, intent only on fulfilling his contract for supplying broken stone for road-making, had already begun to blast away the great columns, and the beauty of the structure would soon have been destroyed. The rock is basaltic trap, and presents to the eye a gigantic perpendicular wall, formed of closely-set symmetrical columns from fifteen to forty feet high, as perfectly cut as if moulded in forms. The face of the rock has been uncovered for a space of about seven hundred feet, and the out-cropping heads of columns are traceable still farther toward the north. The columns are mostly hexagonal, although there are some with only five sides. The largest of them measures full four feet across a single side, while some of the smaller ones are twelve to fifteen inches. As compared with the columns of the Giant's Causeway, these are therefore colossal, the former being only about twenty feet in height and from fifteen to twenty inches in diameter. At about the middle of the formation the rocks are quite differently disposed. They are much broken and curved, and converge, with an upward trend, toward a common centre. The face of the wall at this point is about one hundred feet high. The formation is such as at once to suggest the crater of an extinct volcano, and this Professor Cook believes it to be. In fact, the face of the rock, as now exposed, seems to be a section cut directly through the centre of an ancient crater. It is to be made, we understand, the subject of careful study by eminent geologists, when no doubt further light will be thrown upon its origin. In his letter to the Orange Journal Professor Cook says that underneath the trap rock which forms the crest of the mountain there is a great platform of red sandstone extending back and slanting downward into the mountain. At the quarry this rock is only from four to eight feet below the working bottom, and the gigantic pillars of trap-rock seem to stand upon it. The trap appears to have been melted beneath the surface, and then forced through fractures, or between the inclined layers of the overlying rock, out to the surface, during some period of volcanic upheaval. It is thought, also, that the rock was not all forced out at once, but that there must have been at least two or three successive eruptions. Steps have already been taken by the New-England Society of Orange to save this remarkable formation from further destruction. It is hoped that the State may be induced to purchase it. If not, it is probable that private liberality will secure its preservation. It would be a shame indeed if so interesting and unique a natural curiosity were to be broken up for making and repairing roadways.

Old Friends. It was the saying of Abbe Morellet that "if the gods were to permit him to return again to earth in whatever form he might choose, he should make, perhaps, the whimsical choice of returning to this world as an old man." Whimsical as this may seem, there are some reasons that would justify such a choice. It does not necessarily follow because a man is old, he is therefore incapacitated for enjoyment or for improvement. There is the steady vitality and reliability. His experience is a storehouse of knowledge. As the explorer actually enjoys more, because he knows more, after his return than while in active and anxious pursuit, since he can gather it all up and think it over calmly, yet with a vividness as great as at the first sight, and again and again with increasing enjoyment, so an old man has a full store-house in his experience, and can be continually using it to the profit of others and his own enjoyment. Things that were matters of uncertainty and perplexity in his youth are now settled, and afford a solid satisfaction beyond the most dazzling anticipations of youth. There is no want of material for comfort and joy even in the sorrows that often overshadow his path. And when we come to friends, we can endorse the experience of Maria Edgeworth: "In the world in which I have lived nearly three-quarters of a century, I have found nothing one-quarter so well worth living for as old friends." Youthful friendships have their charms, and often their disappointments, but old tried friends are a permanent joy. It is the oldest cask that has the sweetest wine. It is the ripe fruit that is the most luscious. It is the old violin, whose practised strings have seasoned the instrument, and filled every pore with melody, that the gentlest touch awakens to a rapturous harmony. And that immortal harp of a thousand strings in the souls of men gives sweeter strains by the mellowing touch of age. Old friends are prized for their worth, through many trials. Their love is tempered to an even firmness that does not change. You can lean upon it without doubt or suspicion. It has lost none of its power. Coals contain the strongest heat with their covering of ashes, and there is a beauty in their glow superior to flame. God bless our old friends. We wish they could know how much we prize them. The very remembrance of them is the charm of our past life, and the hope of meeting them in the endless future fills the soul with joy. —Watchman. S. W. F. A Crooked Day. "Mother, what has been the matter with the day? It has been the longest day of my life, and such a very crooked one." "It is very easy for me to see where the fault lies. Can you not see it also?" "I know, dear mother, that I was very naughty to read the book," Abby answered gently. "But what did you omit to do to-day?" Abby said: "What do you mean, mother? I know everything has gone wrong?" "My darling, did you ask your Heavenly Father to forgive your disobedience to me? Did you ask His loving care over you to-day? Did you ask to be helped through the day?" Abby hung her head, and confessed that she was in such a hurry to get to breakfast that she forgot the prayer. "Ah! little girl, there is reason enough for a crooked day! I, and all grown up folks who love God, have to ask for help all the time, that we may be shown how to take each step, as well as how to live each moment. And I know you do not forget how the Saviour listens to the little children when they call upon Him." Abby has lived a good many years since she had that talk with her mother; and she does not forget her morning prayer, she no longer wonders that she has so few crooked days.—Early Dew. Open your hearts to sympathy, but close them to despondency. The flower which opens to receive the light of day, shuts against rain.

Farmer Crocker's Wagon. A SHORT STORY FOR THE BOYS. It was only an old-fashioned lumber-wagon, without cushions or springs. The paint was rubbed off from it, at which we need not wonder when we take into consideration that it had been out at service for over a quarter of a century, doing its duty at all times and seasons. Yet to the Benton boys—Joe and Ted—no equipage that was ever seen in Central Park could compare with it. Even the President's carriage sank into insignificance when brought into comparison with it, and Ted Benton said he knew that a ride in Queen Victoria's most elegant turnout would be a tame affair, and not to be thought of when Farmer Crocker's wagon was on duty. The boys' mamma said she would not ride a quarter of a mile in it, it jarred and jolted so, and she failed to see wherein lay the wonderful fascinations of that certain wagon. But people are very apt to judge of the same things from their own different stand-points, and how could a mother see everything in the same light that her boys did. The Benton boys were summer boarders at the Mountain House in Greenville. Every morning they could be heard singing as they stood upon the broad piazza of the hotel, "Wait for the wagon, wait for the wagon. Wait for the wagon and we'll all take a ride." About seven o'clock in the morning the wagon would come to the back door of the hotel, laden with butter, eggs, potatoes, and other farm products, and after it had been unloaded the boys would climb into it for their morning ride. Farmer Crocker was a wholesome man who loved children, and a man who had a particular faculty for entertaining boys. "A great many people," he said, "didn't like to bother with boys, especially when they were at that age, between 'grass and hay,' but for his part there was no time in a boy's life that they were not interesting and agreeable to him." The boys soon found out the chord of harmony and sympathy between the old farmer's heart and their own, and they were not slow to show their appreciation of it. I doubt whether there was any other living man that stood as high in their ideas of manhood, and was held in such sacred respect as this same Farmer Crocker. On the first ride they took together, he told them that one reason why he was drawn towards boys and was so fond of them, was because of the sweet memory of a little fellow that came to his home nearly forty years ago, and only staid long enough to show him the bright side of boy-life. "There's a little mound over there in the burial-place," said he, "and his mother and I have kept flowers growing on it." The old farmer wiped a tear off from his face upon his coat sleeve when he told them this sad reminiscence of a child's love and life. Every ride the boys took in Farmer Crocker's wagon strengthened the tie of love and sympathy between them. One day they rode on the bags of grist, and went to the mill to have the corn ground into meal. They had to wait quite a while for the corn to go through the "hopper" and come out meal, and after they had made themselves familiar with the process of grinding, they went out with Farmer Crocker to look over the ground. This mill was built on a pretty stream that ran down the mountain. On both sides of the stream were trees and rocks, mosses and ferns. The boys thought there could not be such a beautiful spot anywhere else. While they were talking a red squirrel ran swiftly past them. "Catch him, Joe, catch him!" screamed Ted. But the farmer laughed. "The squirrel is far too spry and cunning for city-boys to catch," said he. "He is over there on the other side laughing at you and congratulating himself on his powers of out-generaling these city young gentlemen. Did you know that the squirrel is a planter of forests? In the autumn when the nuts are ripe, go out to the woods and watch them, and see how the great tall oaks from little acorns grow." The squirrel puts the acorn just deep enough in the earth for it to sprout, if it is left there. After the squirrel has planted an acorn, you cannot find it if you watch him every

minute he was at work. When I was a boy I tried to find a nut I saw a squirrel plant, but I couldn't do it. He outwitted me completely. Hickory trees, chestnut trees, and even pines are planted the same way." "Do the pines have nuts in them?" asked Joe. "No," replied the farmer, "they are propagated by seed. I did not intend to include them in the animal planting. The birds and the winds are the transporters and planters of our pines; the animals are the heavier planters—they carry the nuts about. Our Father in heaven is a wonderful Creator and Preserver of nature. In pines a very thin membrane, in appearance like an insect's wing, grows over and around the seed. It is like a thin sack woven over the seed with a handle to it, such as the wind can get hold of." "How wonderful!" said Ted, whose eyes had been constantly watching the spot where the red squirrel had disappeared. "But is there any way, Farmer Crocker, to catch that red squirrel?" I want to put him in a cage and take him to New York with us." "New York is a great city," said Farmer Crocker. "There is a wonderful sight of interesting things to see there, and a great deal of knowledge to be obtained; but if this little squirrel is after the mind of your friend here, he would hate to be put in a cage and carried to New York to spend the winter. I think I could understand his feelings on the subject. He and I were both born in the country; we have spent our lives in the country, and whatever remnant is still left of it for us we beg to be allowed to fill out in the open free country our Father has made. I wouldn't help you trap him, boys, for all I think so much of you. But come now, our grist must be ground, and we must be off." As they rode along, the kindly old farmer told them of his boyhood days. "Many and many a morning when I was a boy, I've been called at four o'clock to hunt sheep up in the mountains there. Some of our sheep would get off, and I would be sleeping so soundly, when I would hear my father say, 'Ass, you'll have to get up and go after the sheep.' I never dared to resist that voice, although I was often tempted to say to myself, 'A little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep.' But my aunt had given me a primer, with a picture of a boy on it asleep in an old-fashioned, high-post, curtained bedstead, while through a window the round sun was shining and its rays were falling over his bed. Under this picture was printed, 'The Sluggard.' I thought that primer was a wonderful book. We didn't have such books in our day as you have now. We didn't have such nice clothes, either. My grandmother lived with us, and she used to spin the wool we got from our sheep, and mother used to have it woven at Deacon Brown's. Mrs. Brown kept a loom. Grandmother and mother went to make our suits. We always went bare-footed in the summer. It was thought to be a reckless expenditure for boys to wear shoes after spring set in." "I wish we had such an order of things now," said Joe. "I want to go bare-footed so much, but mother won't let me; she says she would be mortified enough to see us bare-footed." "And old clothes?" said Ted. "A boy never feels as happy in his life, in my opinion, as when he has on old clothes, and can go about without being all the time afraid he will get a spot on them. I just envy those boys who go along to school bare-footed, with patched pants, and their dinner pails in their hands." "They have lots more fun than we do," said Joe, "lots more, and I wish I had been born in the country, too." "And on a farm," said Ted. "Yes, and on a farm," rejoined Joe. "Well, boys," said Farmer Crocker, "whatever your condition or position in life, make the most of it; make your lives tell. The best way of doing good is by being good yourselves. Be honest and upright and truthful in all your dealings. Begin now when you are boys, for habits that begin in slender strings soon become cables that can't be broken." After one of these good talks, as the boys called them, Farmer Crocker would lift out a little wicker basket from under the seat, and "treat the crowd," as Joe said. Such doughnuts! Such seed cookies and such round white balls of cottage cheese as kind Mrs. Crocker used to put in the basket for the Benton boys to eat when they took their long rides. Was it any wonder they had such a high appreciation of Farmer Crocker and his old lumber wagon?—N. Y. Evangelist.