Family Reading.

Calling the Spring Flowers.

BY AUGUSTA MOORE.

The sun looked forth one day in spring,
When merry winds were blowing,
And shouted, "Winter, haste away!
Soft streams, begin your flowing.

"Lift up, lift up, fair flowers, your heads,
Each in your destined order;
In forest aisles, in garden beds,
In meadow, lawn and border."

Beneath the dead leaves of the past,
Under the snows departing,
A *stir* began. Oh, glad and fast,
The listening flowers were starting.

Anemone and Liverwort
Rose in their woody places,
With soft white mantles on their heads,
Veiling their tender faces.

Arbutus, best belov'd of spring,
Shook off her snowy cover,
And laughed to hear red robin sing—
The brisk, courageous rover!

She spread her waxen garments wide,
And touched with fragrant fingers
Meek Violet, sleeping near her side;
"My dove-eyed sister lingers."

Blood-root, with pallid cheeks, arose,
And Star-flower, pure and tender,
Shone out from cool, damp shelters, where
Soon bloomed Wood-sorrel slender.

The yellow Cowslip hasted on,
With tufts of wholesome bitter;
Then golden King cup marched along,
Rank after rank a glitter.

But first came laughing Dandelion,
Arcturus of the meadow;
Till, suddenly, his golden plumes
Changed to a winged shadow!

Sweet Violet awoke, and smiled
At Innocent beside her;
Waiting for Wild-rose, fair as wild;
For Violet must guide her

Along the dim and shady way,
Where eerie voices, calling,
Charm all the beauteous flowers to stray,
Where leaves and lives are falling.

And there, when June's sweet music rose,
And through the land was ringing,
The spring-flowers passed, to find repose
Reached not by summer's singing.

Sparrow's Nest, Poultney, Vt.

Giving an Allowance.

There is no surer way of teaching economy and forethought to children than by giving them a weekly or monthly allowance of spending money; while the opposite method too often practiced of giving them money only now and then (if ever), or only when in a particularly genial mood, is sure to make them early learn and practice the art of begging, and all the meanness, deceit, and wastefulness that are the natural outcome of this mode of getting money. There are, it is true, some children as well as grown persons who would rather suffer for what they really want than stoop to beg for it. Surely it is unjust, as well as unwise, to put our own children in the position of beggars.

'Ah!' says the parent, 'I take care that my children shall not have to beg, by attending to their wants.'

You can not possibly know all their wants any more than your neighbor can know yours, and by your method your children will either do without what they wish, or, which is far more probable, will acquire a disagreeable habit of teasing continually for every foolish thing that strikes their fancy, but which costs them nothing while they do not pay for it.

A lady of my acquaintance gives an allowance to each of her children, from the eldest girl of eighteen, who has her five dollars a month, out of which she pays all expenses for her clothing, etc., consulting with her mother, of course, and she certainly is well and tastefully clad, down to the little fellow of six, who has his two cents a week for spending money, and three if he is very good. This has effectually broken up his old habit of begging daily for pennies to spend. He has his income of no more, unless he earns more by doing errands; for his mother believes in teaching children early to be industrious, and to think it no disgrace, but rather honorable, to earn money for themselves and for others. And so well have lessons of prudence, economy, and industry been learned, that he and his little brother next older have to-day purchased a new croquet set out of their savings. It was entirely their own plan.

Charlie, nine years old came to his mother and said: 'Mamma, do you not think it would be a good plan for us to buy a croquet set? You know it is a nice, clean game; and if we had that to play with in the park before the house, Eliot would not get so dirty as he now sometimes does. It would keep him from playing with bad boys, and would save you a great deal of trouble. I can get a good set for seventy-five cents. Eliot will pay twenty-five towards it, he says, out of his money, and I will pay fifty.' The mother thought it over, and soon gave her consent and approval of their plan. The boys went to the store together, but sent up a set for ninety-five cents instead, concluding it was better worth the money.

'I will pay sixty and Eliot thirty-five,' said Charlie, 'only ten cents more each, and it is worth far more than the other. We will ask sister and cousin to play with us. If they owned it they might not trust us to use their set for fear we might hurt it, and they might not ask us to play; but now we own it and can play whenever we like out of the school hours, and can invite them or some one else to play with us.'

In these days of extravagance, selfishness, and dishonesty, when we so often see men living beyond their means in order to make a show in the world: dishonestly running up bills which they may never pay; when we see so many failures in business from want of prudence and diligence, or wrecked lives from want of honor and principle, it surely is most important for every mother early and fully to impress upon the hearts of her children lessons of thrift, forethought, honesty, and honor. Teach them Dr. Franklin's simple but infallible rule for growing rich and honorable. 'Earn more than you spend.' And in order to teach them always to live within their means, perhaps no more effectual method can be found than this plan of giving them an allowance.—*The Household.*

Allowed Sin.

It was a stormy evening, and the weekly meeting for conference and prayer was somewhat thinly attended. Only the 'stand-bys' were there, gathered about the glowing wood-stove; and after the opening prayer they fell into a social talk in this wise.

Said the pastor, 'I have a little confession to make, and I speak the more freely because only the tried members of our own church are present. For a year these meetings have been a source of disquietude to me on account of the regular attendance of our neighbor Jones. I was assured at first that he came from no good motive, and as the weeks and months have passed I have become convinced that he is a wolf in the fold. Yesterday, happening to open an old book, my eye fell upon this incident: 'One day as Whitefield was preaching out of doors in the full glare of the sunlight, he placed his hand in front of his eyes and said, 'This little hand hides all the lustre of the sun from my eyes; and so a little sin may involve the soul in darkness though the spiritual world be all as bright as heaven itself.' That showed me my own heart. I had lost the full measure of spiritual joy that was my portion, because I had allowed a feeling of disquietude to take the place of it. The sin was mine, and not that of the sinner whom I should have gladly welcomed in the name of my Master, even though he was my enemy and his. And had I done so we might both have received a blessing in this. I have been permitted to see, as never before, that anything that hinders our joy is allowed sin, and a great promoter of spiritual doubts and fears.'

'I never have thought of it in just that way before,' said Aunt Susie, an aged woman, who, as constant as the bell, was at the meetings with her stout hickory staff and her lantern, 'but I know that the little sins that we find excuse for and harbor in our hearts have great power to shut out joy. I never called them 'allowed sins,' but I see that they are. I have been made unhappy thinking how neighbor Jones must contrast my poverty with the wealth of some of my brothers and sisters in the church, and that has set me wondering why some should be intrusted with so much and I with so little; yet all the time I knew the dear Lord was caring for me, and there I was allowing that sinful feeling to hide my joy.'

Every one was surprised to hear that Aunt Susie's heart was not always running over with content, but her words seemed to help the young business man who sat next her to say:—

'I am afraid that the love of money is my allowed sin, and that I care more than I ought for laying it by. I battle with myself every time I give any away, trying to persuade myself that I cannot afford it, and so I lose all the joy of giving. Neighbor Jones, too, has been a trial to me. I have allowed my fear of him to keep me silent in the meetings, lest my daily walk should belie my words and he should make capital out of it.'

'Neighbor Jones has been a very large cloud shutting out my sunlight,' said young Mrs. Horton. 'My allowed sin is a love for preeminence in the society. I liked to go ahead, to be looked up to as a leader, to have our pastor say that I was one to be relied upon, and I always have felt that Mr. Jones was sharp enough to see through anything that I did for effect, and yet I sometimes allow myself to do things from that motive, and, of course, the sin shuts out my joy.'

The young girl who presided at the sweet-toned Estey organ sat next, and said humbly, 'I have heard that neighbor Jones said I did not sing as well as some of the other girls, who, in his estimation, could better fill my place. So I have allowed myself to give all my thoughts to the manner in which I sing and played, in order to impress him, so I have lost all the joy of praise and worship and prayer that I used to find in the meetings.'

Just then the outer door opened, and neighbor Jones came hurrying in. The little circle of tried friends about the stove exchanged glances; they felt that their sympathetic interchange was over. There was no welcome for the tardy comer; the half dozen who had not spoken looked distressed, and the pastor hesitated a little before saying:

'Should we be content to go on in darkness because of the little sins that we have allowed to hide the joy of Christ's love from our souls? Should we not rather set ourselves with resolution against all forms and degrees of sin?'

'That would be the course of duty, and, it seems to me, of wisdom also,' said an old man whose chin rested upon the head of his staff, and the pastor went on solemnly:

'Would it not be profitable for each of us to ask, What manner of person ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?'

This brought neighbor Jones out, to the great surprise of all, for he had never before been known to open his mouth to speak in the meetings.

'I know how that ought to be answered in my case,' he said. 'I believe in Christ. I ought to confess him before men and to live worthy of him, and I ought to say to you all that my motive when I began to come to these meetings was an unworthy one. I came as a scoffer, a gossip, a spy. But the courtesy with which I have been treated and the consistency you have all shown have softened my heart, and made me desirous of sharing that spiritual joy that I believe you all possess.'

The pastor tried to follow this little confession with a prayer of thanksgiving, but his voice was husky, and everybody was quite broken down at this entirely unlooked-for development. It was a profitable meeting. The minister took "Allowed Sins" for the subject of his next Sunday's discourse, and everybody was stimulated to search their own hearts for the allowed sin that hindered their spiritual joy.—*Illustrated Christian Weekly.*

As the tree is fertilized by its own broken branches and falling leaves, and grows out of its own decay, so men and nations are bettered and improved by trial, and refined out of broken hopes and blighted expectations.—*F. W. Robertson.*

Beginning and End.

The progress of dishonesty is not hard to trace. The only safety of character is in resisting the beginning of evil. There are three hundred and sixty degrees in the circle of a cent as well as in the circle of the equator—and so is there as much dishonesty in a boy's theft of a cent as in a man's theft of a thousand dollars. Two pictures below will illustrate this. Here is the beginning:

A schoolboy, ten years old, one lovely June day, with the roses in full bloom over the porch, and the laborers in the wheat fields, had been sent by his Uncle John to pay a bill at the country store, and there were seventy-five cents left, and Uncle John did not ask him for it.

At noon this boy had stood under the beautiful blue sky, and a great temptation came. He said to himself, 'Shall I give it back, or shall I wait till he asks for it? If he never asks, that is his lookout. If he does, why, I can get it again.' He never gave back the money.

The ending: Ten years went by; he was a clerk in a bank. A package of bills lay in a drawer, and had not been put in the safe. He saw them, wrapped them up in his coat, and carried them home. He is now in a prison cell; but he set his feet that way when a boy, years before, when he sold his honesty for seventy-five cents.

That night he sat disgraced, and an open criminal, Uncle John was long ago dead. The old home was desolate, the mother broken-hearted. The prisoner knew what brought him there.

How much does a Horse know?

That was the question I asked Professor Bartholomew, the successful horse-trainer, one afternoon, as I met him in the hall where he exhibited his educated horses. The question may sound like a vague one, but he answered it promptly enough.

'About as much as the average man—more than a great many. You don't believe it? Will you give me half an hour to prove it?'

'But,' I objected, 'you can teach a horse certain tricks, which become a mere matter of habit, and it proves nothing of a horse's knowledge.'

The Professor smiled pleasantly. 'I won't argue with you. Wait. Nellie!'

A slight scuffling followed in the stall at one side of the stage, and a beautiful little bay mare came trotting up to where he stood. She stopped beside the Professor, and rubbed her head against his arm caressingly, gazing curiously at me the while. 'Bow to the gentleman. Now shake hands,' the teacher continued, as she nodded her pretty head toward me, and then lifted her left forefoot.

'Is that the right foot?' asked the Professor reprovingly.

One could actually see a look of confusion on her intelligent face as she quickly corrected her mistake.

'Nellie is like some children. She can't seem to distinguish between her right and left hand,' said the Professor patting her affectionately. 'Now count one, two, three,' he added. Tap, tap, tap went the iron shod hoof on the stage. 'Good!' said the Professor. 'Now get the gentleman a chair.'

I must confess I thought this was going a little too far. The tricks she had exhibited were ordinary enough; they displayed careful training; but this quiet request rather surprised me. I watched to see what she would do. She trotted over to the opposite side of the stage, and in a few moments returned, bringing a chair in her teeth.

'Here,' said Professor Bartholomew pointing to the place where he wanted me to sit. 'Now,' he said, 'wait until I bring on the rest of my scholars;' and he crossed the stage, and put his hand on the swinging door which led to the stalls. Nellie started to follow him.

'Why don't you stay with the gentleman?' he said, quietly, without turning his head, just as one would speak to a child. Nellie turned obediently, and came back to my side. I must confess that I felt rather embarrassed, and in my confusion hardly knew how to treat this little lady-horse. Suddenly I thought of some candy which I had in my pocket, and soon we were getting on rather finely, eating candy together.

In the meantime Professor Bartholomew had returned, followed by about a dozen horses who marched solemnly on the stage, and ranged themselves along one side. Then came the exhibition.

It would be impossible to describe all the performances they went through; marching and counter-marching, dancing in perfect time to Professor Bartholomew's whistle, lying down, kneeling, bowing, jumping—all at the quiet command of the teacher. In fact, his voice was so low and gentle that it could hardly be called a command; it was more like a suggestion on his part with which they complied readily.

One handsome Arabian attracted my attention, and the Professor at once called him over to him. 'How do you do, Selim?' said the teacher.

The horse bowed.

'Is that the way you bow in Arabia?'

Selim at once dropped upon his knees and touched his forehead to the floor. The Professor gave him the signal for getting up. Then turning to me, he said:

'That is an extremely difficult feat. For some reason a horse hates to do it.'

'Does he understand what you say?' I asked.

'Does he not act as if he did?' was the Professor's answer. Then he continued: 'There is no doubt that the horses understand every word I say to them. I could see no reason why, if a horse can comprehend the meaning of 'Whoa,' 'G'long,' 'Huddup,' he could not learn more, so I began to teach two or three, and soon had this school around me.'

'I notice you speak in such a low tone, while so many who have to do with horses seem to think it necessary to yell at the top of their lungs.'

'A horse is not deaf; his hearing is more acute than a man's, and yelling at him only tends to make him harder to manage. You can lay it down as a certain rule that the louder a man shouts at a horse the less he knows about horses. But then half the men who have charge of horses now should be made to practice ten years on a clothes-horse before they are allowed to touch a live one.'

'How do you manage to teach them so much?' I asked.

The Professor smiled. 'Any one with patience can train horses, and almost any horse can be trained. The trouble is that most people have but very little patience, and a great many good horses are spoiled by half-witted owners who are not fit to have charge of a saw-horse.'

But the scholars are becoming restive, and the Professor said, 'School is dismissed.' Each horse left his place, came up to the Professor, and walked off the stage.

'Now, how much does a horse know?' said the Professor, turning to me, and repeating my question.

'A great deal more than some men, for he knows enough to do his duty cheerfully, and to the best of his ability,' I answered promptly, as I took my leave.—*Harper's Young People.*

The other Singer.

No bracelets nor necklaces had she; no white silk dress had she ever seen, and a common white muslin, even, she had never worn; she was barefooted and though the morning was warm she had wrapped an old shawl around her to hide the holes in her dress. A neat little girl was Mandy, or at least she would have been if she had known how; she always washed her feet in the fast-running gutter puddles after a hard rain just because she liked to see them look clean; but she had no needle and thread at home, nor patches; and her work, among the barrels picking for rags, was not the cleanest in the world. Yet on this very afternoon in which Miss Cecilia was getting ready for the concert, and frowning over her white silk because the trail did not hang quite as she liked, did this little, Mandy give a concert. Her audience was an organ grinder who stopped to rest a bit, an old woman who was going by with a baby, and a little boy with a load of chips. The words she sang were:

"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins."

And the chorus, repeated as many times as did Miss Cecilia's, 'I've been redeemed, I've been redeemed, I've been redeemed."

'Where did you get that?' asked the organ-grinder.

'What?' said Mandy, startled, and turning quickly.

'*That*; that you're singing.'

'Oh, I got it to Sunday-school.' And she rolled out the wonderful news, 'I've been redeemed, I've been redeemed—been washed in the blood of the Lamb.'

'I don't s'pose you understand what you're singing about?' said the organ-grinder.

'Don't I though?' said Mandy, with an emphatic little nod of her head. 'I know all about it, and it's all true. I belong to him; he is going to make me clean inside, and dress me in white some day, to stay with him forever and ever, I've been redeemed, I've been redeemed—been washed in the blood of the Lamb.'

Away down the street, as far as the organ-grinder could hear as he trudged on, there came back to him the faint sound of that chorus, 'I've been redeemed.' Nobody threw bouquets to Mandy; nobody said she had a sweet voice. But the organ-grinder kept saying the words over and over to himself; they were not new words to him. Years ago his old mother used to sing those first ones, 'There is a fountain.' He had never heard the chorus before, but he knew it fitted; he knew all about it, his mother had taught him; and away back, when he was a little boy, a minister had said to him once, 'My boy, you must be sure to find the fountain and get washed.'

He never had. He was almost an old man; and it was years since he had thought about it; but Mandy's song brought it all back. Was that the end of it? Oh no. The organ-grinder kept thinking and thinking, until by-and-by he resolved to do it. He sought the fountain and found it, and now, if he knew the tune, could sing, 'I've been redeemed.' Many a time he says the words over and over. Is *that* the end? Oh no. It will never end. When Mandy and the organ-grinder stand up yonder, and she hears all about the song that she sung as she picked over rags, it will not, even then, be the end. Nothing ever ends.—*Pansy.*

Learn to Untie Strings.

One story of the eccentric Stephen Girard says that he once tested the quality of a boy who applied for a situation by giving him a match loaded at both ends and ordering him to *light* it. The boy struck the match, and after it had burned half its length threw it away. Girard dismissed him because he did not save the other end for future use. The boy's failure to notice that the match was a double-ended one was natural enough, considering how matches are generally made; but haste and heedlessness (a habit of careless observation) are responsible for the greater part of the waste of property in the world.

Said one of the most successful merchants of Cleveland, Ohio, to a lad who was opening a parcel: 'Young man, untie the strings; do not cut them.'

It was the first remark he had made to a new employee. It was the first lesson the lad had to learn, and it involved the principles of success or failure in his business career. Pointing to a well-dressed man behind the counter he said:

'There is a man who always whips out his scissors and cuts the strings of the packages in three or four places. He is a good salesman, but he will never be any more. I presume he lives from hand to mouth, and is more or less in debt. The trouble with him is that he was never taught to save.

'I told the boy just now to untie the string, not so much for the value of the string as to teach him that everything is to be saved and nothing wasted.'

"Stonewall" Jackson was one of the most courteous men imaginable. His wife says: "He never passed a lady on the street, whether stranger or not, without raising his hat. One thing I remember of him—he never looked into a room that he happened to pass when the door was open—not even my own."

True liberty consists in the privilege of enjoying our own rights, not in the destruction of the rights of others.

Men of the noblest dispositions think themselves happiest when others share with them in their happiness.