

Poet's Corner.

NOW-A-DAYS.

Alas! how every thing has changed
Since I was sweet sixteen,
When all the girls wore homespun frocks,
And aprons nice and clean;
With bonnets made of braided straw
That tied beneath the chin,
The shawl laid neatly on the neck,
And fastened with a pin.

I recollect the time when I
Rode father's horse to mill,
Across the meadow, rock and field,
And up and down the hill:
And when our 'folks' were out at work
(It never made me thinner),
I jumped upon a horse, bare back,
And carried them their dinner.

Dear me! young ladies now-a-days
Would almost faint away
To think of riding all alone
In waggon, chaise, or sleigh:
And as for giving 'pa' his meals,
Or helping 'ma' to bake,
Oh dear! 'twould spoil their lily hands,
Though sometimes they make cake.

When winter came the maiden's heart
Began to beat and flutter;
Each beau would take his sweetheart out
Sleigh-riding, in a cutter.
Or, if the storm was bleak and cold,
The girls and beaux together
Would meet and have the best of fun,
And never mind the weather!

But now, indeed it grieves me much
The circumstance to mention,
However kind the young man's heart,
And honest his intention;
He never asks the girls to ride,
But such a max. is caged;
And if he sees her once a week,
Why surely 'they're engaged'!

Secret Story.

Do Good to Others.

A Tale for Young and Old.

"Philip, cousin Philip, don't!"

The speaker was a little girl, scarcely five years old, who was sitting on a stone step of a farm house door, watching very intently the motions of a boy four or five years older than herself. And what was Philip Dale doing? Why, he had found a poor little stray kitten, which had wandered into the court-yard, and boy like was driving it hither and thither shouting, throwing sticks and pebbles at it, while the hunted and terrified little creature ran one way and another, mewing piteously, and every sound went to the heart of the compassionate little child who heard it. At last she could endure it no longer; and running to her cousin, with eyes filled with tears, and a voice which trembled from its very earnestness repeated.

"Don't Philip, it is God's kitty."

The boy stopped, and looked in her face in amazement; then suddenly seizing the fugitive, which had taken refuge in a tree, he laid it gently in the child's arms, and saying, "there's your kitten Clara," he turned and left the yard. Little Clara ran back into the house, showed her treasure to aunt and sister Fanny, and asked and obtained permission to keep it. Fanny kindly took upon herself the office of making it clean. She softly washed off the dirt, brushed the fur dry, and brought from the kitchen a saucer of milk to feed it; and in no long time the kitten was lying contentedly in Clara's lap purring loudly, and quite as happy as the little girl herself.

Nothing was seen of Philip till dinner time, and when he came in he cast a sly glance at Clara's new pet, as if he almost feared it would complain of him. But he was safe from any reproof save that of his conscience; for kitten could not tell. Clara would not, and no one else knew anything of the matter. After dinner he tried to make friends with Clara, by offering the kitten some bits of meat, which she took very gladly, and lapped his hands in gratitude, while Clara looked up with a face so bright and smiling it was plain she had forgotten the affair of the morning. Philip set off for school, and seeing a robin, picked up a stone to throw at it, when a sudden thought checked him, and the stone fell from his hand.

"I suppose Clara would say that is God's robin too," he said half aloud; "and the squirrels and the cows, and everything else. What a queer little thing she is! I won't even kill a fly, because she says she couldn't make it alive again if she should."

And he went on pondering the matter. He was not a cruel boy naturally. He loved his parents

and his gentle little cousin dearly; and no one could be kinder to the horse, and the fowls, and his dog Bruno, than was Philip Dale. But he had learned from his companions, the wicked habit of tormenting animals for sport, without giving a thought to the pain he was inflicting; and though his mother's soft "Don't do so, my son," always present when he was indulging himself in such amusements. Not one word said Philip of the subject which had occupied his thoughts all day, until evening when Fanny had gone to put Clara to bed, and all was quiet. Then he came to his mother and laying his head in her lap, and looking up in her clear loving eyes, told her of his conduct in the morning, and of Clara's entreaty. And Mrs. Dale entered with ready sympathy into her boy's thoughts and feelings, conversed with him about the animals, and his duties to them, and so deepened the impression on his mind, that Philip resolved never again to ill-treat any animal; and he kept his resolution, too.

Some months after, when Clara had been for some time at her city home, Mr. Dale asked Philip one bright morning if he could go to town for him to do some errands. They lived within two or three miles of the town, and it was by no means a long walk for a healthy active boy, and Philip joyfully consented to the proposal. He took his basket and went merrily on, whistling the prettiest he knew, and speaking with the numerous acquaintances he met, and in good time he reached his destination. As he went forward he chanced to spy a boy whom he knew, cruelly beating a dog, which howled with pain as Philip crossed the street.

"What is the matter, Jerry?" he asked, "what has Ponto been doing?"

Jerry glanced round at him; but Philip's pleasant face and kind tone disarmed his anger and he answered rather sullenly.

"He stole my breakfast, and I'll punish him for it."

And he raised his stick again, but Philip caught his arm.

"I wouldn't beat him Jerry, he was hungry, poor fellow, and did not know he was getting your breakfast. Here's a nice luncheon mother gave me, take it, Jerry, for I had my breakfast long ago; and don't beat Ponto any more. He is one of God's creatures, you know, and we must not abuse them."

Jerry hesitated, took the offered gift and began to eat; for, as Philip suspected, he was as hungry as the dog; and after a minute he stooped down, and patting the poor creature, shared his meal with him; while his young friend, pleased to see it, ran merrily on to do his errands in town, without giving a thought to the loss of his luncheon. Philip little knew how much good he had done. While he was talking with Jerry, two men passed in different directions; one a ragged looking man, with a face bearing the marks of intemperance; the other, handsomely dressed, with a pleasant, open countenance, and cheerful smile. This was Frank Howard, a thriving young merchant; the other was Joe Dennis, a poor laborer, who made himself still poorer by wasting his earnings in liquor. Howard glanced at the man as he passed with disgust and scorn; and Dennis, on his part, looked at the young merchant with despairing envy.

"I might have been as well off as he perhaps," was his thought; "his father and mine were schoolmates and playfellows once; but it's no use now."

It was just as they met and passed each other, at the very spot where the boys were talking that Philip had said the last words to Jerry.

"One of God's creatures," repeated Howard involuntarily turning to look after the drunkard. "One of my brethren, then; can I do nothing to save him?" One instant he hesitated and then slowly followed Dennis.

"One of God's creatures," said poor Joe to himself. "Well, I suppose I'm that, only no one seems to think so; and why should they? I'm worse than that brute, for I take the food from my wife and children." He paused; for he was close by a dram shop, where he had too often stopped.

"No I won't," he said energetically, "I'll try once more to leave off. One of God's creatures? If he takes care of the dumb beast why shouldn't he of us? I don't know who else will."

Joe marched on with a firmer step, for his resolve to do right had given him courage, and soon reached his wretched home. Mrs. Dennis looked up, basily, one or two glanced timidly at their father.

"I haven't taken a drop to-day, Martha," said he, "and by God's help, I won't again. Here Joey take this fourpence and get a loaf of bread." Mrs. Dennis, too happy to speak, could only throw her arms around her husband's neck and cry. "Don't, Martha, don't," said the poor man. "You've noth-

ing to be so glad about; for that's the last cent I've got in the world, and I don't know where the next will come from. Ah, yes! answering her broken words, 'it's easy for you to say, 'Trust in the Lord,' for you're a good woman, but it isn't so easy for me.'

Just then a knock was heard, at the door, and Frank Howard walked in. "Does not Joseph Dennis live here," he asked. "Are you at liberty to-day, Mr. Dennis, and could you do some jobs, at my store? The man I have heretofore employed has left town, and I must get some one to supply his place. Will you come to-day and try? Perhaps we may make some agreement?"

Poor Joe Dennis! he almost worshipped Howard as an angel from heaven. He looked one way and another, and finally burst into tears.

"I'll come, Mr. Howard, I'll come; it's very good of you, for there isn't many who would employ a drunkard like me; but I mean to be sober in future. I was just telling Martha that I could get no work, and we'd got to starve, may be; and she, good soul, said the Lord would provide. I believe, Mr. Howard, God sent you to us just now."

"I have no doubt he did," answered Howard gravely, who having followed Dennis, had heard and seen all that had passed before he entered. "Mr. Dennis, if you will go to my store, and say to my clerk, Mr. Reid, that I sent you he will employ you; and I will be there directly myself. And as soon as Dennis had left the house, the young merchant turned to the happy weeping wife and putting five dollars into her hand, bade her regard it as a gift from heaven, and provide what she most needed, adding with a smile, "your husband will return hungry, no doubt; I should advise you to have a good dinner ready."

We need hardly to say that this advice was followed; and that Dennis found a smoking dinner on the table when he returned at noon. But it may be necessary to add, that their new friend kept Joe in his employ, and aided his efforts at amendment, until, in a few years, the neat, nice dwelling, and comfortable, happy looking family which Dennis eagerly sought after his day's labors, bore but slight resemblance to a cheerless hovel, and pale, starving faces he had left. Nor was this all. Frank Howard having once tasted the pleasures of benevolence, could not resign the luxury of being the dispenser of God's bounty to others. And many were the hearts cheered, many the homes preserved, many characters saved from ruin, by kindly and unsought assistance. He sought no public notice of his good deeds; he was pleased to labor in secret. But Philip Dale often wondered why Mr. Howard always spoke so kindly to him and invited him so frequently to his pleasant house. Philip never suspected that his kind care for a suffering animal had been the means of saving many human beings from worse suffering, and just as little did Clara think when she played with her kitten Friskie, now grown quite a cat, that her compassionate pleading for her was the first link in a long chain of benevolent actions. Only believe that no good word or deed is ever lost; and, in his own good time, God will make it bring forth rich fruit.

THE DUEL.

"Shall it be in this room?" said Latreaumont, also drawing his weapon. Then he added, in a solemn manner: "For the last time, Monsieur le Marquis, I ask you to give me that Gazette."

"Again?" cried the Marquis, in a perfect rage, for he considered the urgent request on this subject as an insulting joke; "No! no! a thousand times, no! Defend yourself! defend yourself!"

"Ah! then it is decidedly to come off here—in this room?"

"Yes! yes! the sooner the better."

"Well, well! my pretty impatient one, I will be at your service in a moment," said Latreaumont, taking off his peruke, so as to be more at his ease.

The colonel and the Marquis prepared for the combat.

The three windows which lighted the grand saloon of the cabinet coming down near enough to the floor for those outside to observe all that was going on within, the servants very prudently drew to the curtain of crimson serge, and the light passing through this warmly-colored stuff, cast over the room and all the eager countenances by which it was thronged, a dark-red reflection, perfectly in keeping with the bloody scene about to be enacted.

At length, the spectators and seconds placed themselves on the tables and seats ranged along the wall, and awaited with anxiety the commencement of the duel.

Latreaumont stood heavily on his guard; his trunk strong as that of Atlas, set squarely upon his large and well-formed loins, seemed so immov-

ably, so solidly fixed upon his herculean legs, that it appeared like a tower upon the arch of a bridge.

The spectators could not but admire the masculine and vigorous attitude of the partisan, which word I have excited the terror or the envy of the most refined swordsmen.

The Marquis on the contrary, slender, light and elegant, having a hand like a woman's, and a waist which one of Latreaumont's garters would have encircled, appeared as graceful as he was active; and the only position which he took, when placing himself on guard, seemed at first to disconcert the colonel, who a vigorous and skillful fencer, had assumed the guard prescribed by the Academy, in all the excellent purity of the principle adopted in Paris, Venice, and Toledo.

In fact, M. de Chateaufort, seeing that the strength and colossal stature of Latreaumont, skillfully employed, must give the latter an immense advantage, inasmuch as he could touch his adversary at a great distance, could keep him off, or master his sword by his extraordinary strength of arm—M. de Chateaufort wishing, then, to equalize the chances of the duel, by opposing quickness and lightness of hand to the iron arm of Latreaumont, and by the agility of his fence to neutralize the advantage of his adversary derived from his gigantic height, took his position, with his head bent down, and his body crouched down so close to the floor, that he might have rested the hilt of his sword upon it; and then with a bound, he could retreat out of the reach of Latreaumont, or again spring upon him.

Thus the colonel, instead of finding himself face to face with his enemy—instead of being able, by crossing swords with him, to feel beforehand, to anticipate or parry the intended blow, by means of that exquisite tact, that feeling so delicate, yet inexplicable, (electrical perhaps,) which, upon an almost insensible pressure of the sword, seems to shudder and answer instinctively to steel—instead of being able to try upon his adversary, by a constant and fixed look, that sort of magnetic fascination, which often confuses or discourages the weak, Latreaumont was obliged to lower his eyes to the ground, in search of an enemy of whom he often saw nothing more than the nape of his neck, and who sometimes advanced, creeping towards him like a reptile, sometimes bounding away from him like a wild-cat, and who never touched his sword.

After some few minutes, the colonel, from his great experience in arms, discerned that he had to fight with a man, as skillful as he was intrepid, full of prudence and coolness, who could give as good proof as himself of great knowledge in the art of fencing, according to the strictest rules, but who expected to derive more advantage from this absurd and strange mode of fighting, which was terribly dangerous for Latreaumont, who excelled less in vivacity of attack than by a return thrust, prompt and impetuous as a thunderbolt.

Thus this duel, in which strength and address were opposed to each other in such a deadly contest, was a spectacle of terrible and thrilling interest; the lookers on scarcely breathed, and awaited the issue in the profoundest silence.

This silence, which for some moments had only been interrupted by the rare clashing of swords, was undoubtedly anything but agreeable to the colonel, who always felt the need of being, as it were, excited by his own words.

Still remaining on the defensive, for the purpose of studying the play of the Marquis, watching all his motions with an admirable presence of mind, parrying or returning his passes with calmness, but never attacking, nor wishing to do so but with a certainty of success, Latreaumont said in a mocking tone to the Marquis:

"Ah! noble infant! what a valiant mode of fencing is this! It must have been taught you in a school kept by a lizard and a toad, for you crawl like one, and leap like another. Ah! that last thrust was capitally made, had it but touched me," added the colonel, parrying a violent attack of his adversary, who, with a bound, was again out of his reach. "Come on! come on! by a thousand devils! there you are, a league from me again, my beautiful gilded butterfly!" continued Latreaumont, walking toward his enemy. "Take care! for if I put my foot on you, by the mess! there will be nothing left of you, but the dust of your wings."

"Well struck! babbling elephant!" said the Marquis, at the same time avoiding a pass of the colonel's; that was a regular ram's butt against the plume of a cap! While saying this, M. de Chateaufort crossed the sword of Latreaumont, quickly, and darted upon him with the rapidity of a thunderbolt.

The pass was terrible! but it was coolly and adroitly parried by Latreaumont, who returned