

Notches on The Stick

Among the most beloved women of Maine, and among her sweetest singers, must be named and numbered our Lucy Larcom, the school-mistress of Strong, — Julia Harris May. The towns of Strong, and Farmington, in Franklin County, with which her life has been chiefly associated, lie in one of the most highly cultivated, and scenically beautiful districts of the State, which has been noticed also for the excellence of its people. Miss May has imbibed the spirit of her native landscape, and the legends of the early time of Indian and of Frenchman. She is in love with the hills and the woods of her childhood, and her songs are redolent of this affection, as well as "aromatic with fragrance of pine, resonant with the babbling brook, and pregnant with lessons of faith and love." Like Mrs. Stowe and Mrs. Prentiss, she is a clergyman's daughter, and grew to womanhood amid books, and in a refining mental and spiritual atmosphere. Born in the old parsonage at Strong, where she and her sister Sarah lived in such harmony during later years, her father, Rev. William May, carefully superintended her education, till she went to Mt. Holyoke Seminary, from which she was graduated in 1856. She was well furnished for her life vocation; but in the lore of song to which she was also a votress, the hills and woods and streams of her own Sandy River were preceptors, and well she repaid their devotion. From her "song of the valley" we choose some favourite stanzas,

Sweet valley of my birth!
Thy green hills heavenward rise;
Where clouds come whispering to the earth
The secrets of the skies.

The Sandy River winds
Around the mountain's feet,
The brooks and rills together bind,
And makes the meadows sweet.

Mount Abram cools thy head;
Old Blue makes warm thy breast;
A hundred hills untoured
Keep watch from east to west.

Within thy clasping arms,
Close clinging to thy side,
White villages and fertile farms
Safely and warmly hide.

Over thy night's sleep
The same soft starlight plays
That loving watch was wont to keep
In forgotten days.

Pressed to thy beating heart
A happy village clings,
Just where Mount Day's dark shadows start,
Sheltered beneath its wings.

That village holds a nest
Where turel memory sings
The song I love to hear the best
Of all earth's pleasant things.

Hush! I can hear its trill;
It is the valley fair,
From north to south, from stream to hill,
Around and every where.

Sweet valley of my birth!
The skies thy hill tops meet;
And thought sent daily o'er the earth
At nightfall seeks thy feet.

After her school-days at Mount Holyoke her teaching years began, eight of them having been passed at the South, in Kentucky, during the time of reconstruction. Assisted by her sister Sarah, "she founded the Wendell Institute at Farmington, which had a successful career of thirteen years, embracing among its students young men and women from all parts of the State. Subsequently the sisters were induced to move their school to Strong, where it was known as the 'May School.' To the home of their girlhood they were most cordially welcomed. A schoolhouse was built for them on the home lot near the little parsonage, and here the school grew and flourished." Many a young woman counts herself fortunate to have been brought in touch with these "elect ladies," by whom she has been lifted to higher conceptions of life and to nobler aspirations after excellence. What Mary Lyon, whom Julia May commemorates in her verse, did in her larger measure for education in Massachusetts, these associate sisters did in Maine. "School Time," one of her most pleasing productions, exhibits her in the character of preceptress. She describes herself as sitting in the school-room. "It is a sunny May-day morning. The fragrance of Spring and the song of the robin are coming in at the open window. My thoughts arrange themselves to the sweet

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accompaniment of reviving nature in humble, happy rhyme":

The sunny day is beginning,
And the schoolroom is full of its light;
At my desk I'm sitting and spinning
The thought I was spinning last night.
Through the door comes the scent of the morning,
And the song of the robin steals in,
While the clock in the corner gives warning
It is time for the school to begin.

They are coming, my lads and my lasses,
The door yard is full of their noise,
Their feet wet with dew from fresh grasses,
And the girls just as glad as the boys.
They are brimming with innocent laughter,
They are blushing like blossoms of spring;
Will the fruit of their distant hereafter
Be as sweet as this blossoming?

In reverent silence they're sitting,
Grave Bertie and frolicsome Lee;
We are reading the verses so fitting,
"Let the little ones come unto me."
Our heads on our hands we are bowing,
We are speaking the time hallowed prayer,
And the Father in Heaven is knowing
Whether the spirit is there.

We are singing the airs of the May-time,
The children are singing, and I
Am listening to songs of the play-time,
And the songs of the by and by.
Their voices are ringing with pleasure,
Their hands and their feet beating time,
And my heart is made glad with their measure,
As my soul to their joy makes a rhyme.

We are opening our books and our papers,
We are ready to read or recite;
The boys have forgotten the capers
That troubled me so yesterday-night.
I am listening, and looking, and listening,
And spinning my thread as I look,
And the tear in my eyelid is glistening,
And hiding the words of my book.

The sunny day is beginning,
And the school room is full of its light;
At my desk I am sitting and spinning,
But not as I spun yesterday-night.
Through the door come the scents of the dawn
And the oriole's song to the sun,
But I'm spinning new thread this morning
Like the one the children have spun.

Very beautiful was the home-life of the two sisters, and in mutual affection there was nothing wanting. One might say of the other, "Very pleasant hast thou been to me." In one of her poems Julia foreboded the falling of the shadow that darkened her home, when, in 1888, her sister was taken away:

If we could know
Which of us, darling, would be first to go,
Which would be first to breast the swelling tide,
And step alone upon the other side.

If it were you,
Should I walk softly, keeping death in view?
Should I love to you more oft express,
Or should I grieve you darling, any less—
If it were you?

When Sarah was gone, the home was solitary, and our singer's note was more plaintive. Some of her "saddest, sweetest songs" were in memory of her life-long companion.

One of us, dear, but one
By an open grave will drop a tear,
And homeward go,
The anguish of an unshared grief to know;
Darling, which one?

Beloved! when we pass away
From this familiar spot
I wonder who will come and stay
In the deserted cot!
Beneath these elm trees, who will stand,
And think that home is sweet,
When we have gone into that land
Where parted households meet?

She has gone—my life and light;
Under the clover she lies.
The sun is no more at morning bright,
Nor the moon of the evening sighs;
The days are long and drear,
And the nights no sweetness bring;
The wearisome weeks are cold and dark,
For the year has lost its spring,
For the year has lost its June,
And the harp of my heart,
In its sweetest part,
Is forever out of tune.

Unlike Blanche Willis Howard, (lately deceased in the German town of Stuttgart,) who could be expatriated in heart, and come to regard her native land with something like the critical spirit of a foreigner, Julia May has the patriotic passion, and her Pine Tree State and her home by Sandy River are inexpressibly dear:

O, hills of Strong! my native hills!
Wherever I may be,
The thought of you forever fills
The depths of memory.
I long to stand upon your slope
When right seems merged in wrong,
And bury doubt and lift up hope
Above the hills of Strong!

I seem to see "the Sandy" wind
Among the rocks; I see
A home;—inside its doors I find
Remembered melody.
I walk the bridge that spans the stream,
Where swaying memories throng,
Until I waken from a dream,
Upon the Hills of Strong!

My happy hills! your rocks have felt
The presence of her feet,
Who once beside my fireside knelt,
And whispered, "Love is sweet."
I call her name, the rocks reply,
The woods the sound prolong;
I almost hear her passing by,
Upon the Hills of Strong!

The Sandy River.

A drop from the summer rain-cloud,
And a drop from the summer dew,
Kissing and running together
Far up the mountain blue.

A tiny spring on the hillside,
Stealing down to a tiny lake,
And crooning the quiet murmur
That baby brooklets make.

A thread of silver water
Strung round the rocky hill.
Twisting in with another,
And curving onward still.

A whisper of meadow lilies,
A breath from the garden rose,
And down the smiling valley
The Sandy River goes.

She makes an appeal to her compatriots in other lands, with stanzas rich in feeling: From mountain heights your feet have climbed, from Abraham and Blue, She looks across the continent and strains her eyes for you. Above the prairies of the West, she calls and calls again: "Come back! my children: Come to me, O! Wanderers of Maine!"

"My hills are high, but from their tops the sky-fed waters run, My snows are deep and soft and white, and warm my summer sun, My springs are like the crystal clear, my clouds are full of rain, Come back from yonder sun-burnt sands, O! Wanderers of Maine!"

Come back! The peaks will welcome you; the valleys laugh with joy, The snow-flakes leap to touch your hands as when you were a boy, The cow-bell's music, faint and sweet, is tinkling down the lane, To meet your footsteps coming back, O! Wanderers of Maine!

Come back! There's room enough! O! hear the voice of Kennebec! The ocean calls. She looks for you on every home-bound deck. The Androscoogin murmurs, "Come!" Aroostook's fertile plain Is beckoning her Wanderers to the motherland of Maine.

Come back! Come back! Though ye might stay but for a little while, And give your mother yet once more the gladness of your smile; For she will clasp you in her arms and beg you to remain Beneath the perfume of the pines, O! Wanderer of Maine!

"Come back!" she cries. Alas! to-night, along the west-wind's swirl A bell's deep tone is echoing,—"O! mother Maine farewell!" The weary wanderer lieth low. He cannot come again To rest among the apple-blossoms beneath the skies of Maine.

In 1894 Miss May issued her "Songs From the Woods of Maine," from the house of G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London. This book met with a warm reception from her many friends, and was well received by the press and public of her native State. Her aim and spirit appear in such sentiments as these:

If it is never mine
To sing a lofty song,
Shall I blot every loamy line
And tuneless move along?
The common song the common folk hath won
And soothed their sorrows—
Let me then sing one.

Sometimes I sing a very simple song,
And send it outward to the east or west;
Although in silence it rolls along,
I do my best.

When buds begin to blow
Where last year's leaflets lie,
When fields grow green, when violets show
The color of the sky,
When fragrance fills the air,
When twinkling stars can see
Shine upon the meadows bare
The star anemone:
O! then the happy heart can sing
To sleep its winter sorrowing;
And joy's spring up, and hopes mount high,
When buds begin to blow.

Never does she sing more sweetly than when she is inspired by native scenes or the changing beauty of the seasons. Such simple and natural lyrics as, "Dreaming," "Beyond The Pines," "A Summer Song," "When Leaves Are Lying Low," "A Win-

Delicate children! What a source of anxiety they are! The parents wish them hearty and strong, but they keep thin and pale.

To all these delicate children Scott's Emulsion of Cod-liver Oil with Hypophosphites comes with the best of news.

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ter Lullaby." "When April Showers Come Down," with others we might mention, cannot fail to please the lovers of verse.

"Miss May," writes her friend, Mrs. Beedy, "spends her summers in Strong, where she delights to entertain the many friends who visit her. The white parsonage, with its green blinds and massive chimney in the center, is nestled among the lofty elms that tower above it in front. The broad grounds surrounded by trees, stretch behind it to the river bank, where a descending path winds far down to the little stream of water that ripples over the rocks as it hastens to join the Sandy River, the pride of the beautiful valley. On the almost precipitous sides of the bank grows one of the monarchs of the Maine forests—a venerable pine, in whose top the 'century-living crow,' through many successive generations, 'has grown old and died'; beneath its shade, Pierpole, [a chieftain of the Tarratines,] gathered his dusky warriors; on its spreading branches the cradles of many generations of Indian babies have swung. Still verdant, surrounded by a miniature forest, the old pine points its needles heavenward and imparts its fragrance. On a platform overhanging the edge of the bluff, Miss May has her retreat, and here many of her poem's so near to nature's heart, have been written. Through the opening in the trees her favorite Mount Abram can be seen. One of the most popular of Miss May's poems—one that has touched many home sick hearts—is, 'O Wanderers of Maine!'"

O wanderer from the land of Maine! the perfume of the pine Is mingled with your memory—Her violet vales entwined Memorial wreaths—She calls for you—O! must she call in vain? Come back, your mother longs for you, O! Wanderers of Maine."

Miss May continues to give the public the fruits of her musing through the Portland Transcript and other journals; and there are many to witness how her songs makes the lives they live sweeter, brighter and better.

PASTOR FELIX.

Lifeboats of the World.

The lifeboat service is one of the very noblest of philanthropic institutions, and many civilized nations pay special attention to these means for the rescue of perishing mariners. England's lifeboat service is a voluntary one. The Royal National Lifeboat Institution, which controls the bulk of British lifeboats, was founded in 1824. It now has over 300 lifeboats on the shores of the kingdom, and has been instrumental in saving nearly 30,000 lives. The French lifeboat service was established in 1865, and has eighty-three stations, whilst it has been the means of saving over 900 vessels and 7,500 lives. The French service has one great advantage over ours: it is that the Public Board of Works always builds the first lifeboat house at each station as it is established, consequently relieving the service of a great outlay. The German service was established in 1865, and has 104 lifeboat stations. The United States has 233 lifeboat stations; the cost of the United States service is about £290,000 a year.

One Way of Getting a Pair of Boots.

A certain politician was once at a loss how to provide himself with a new pair of understandings, for bootmakers, in common with other tradesmen, absolutely refused him further credit. Eventually he hit upon an ingenious expedient. Going to one bootmaker, he ordered a pair of boots, to be paid for on delivery, and then, entering another shop, ordered a similar pair to be paid for in similar fashion. When the first pair of boots came home, the politician tried them on in the hall, and, finding that the right boot was a misfit, he sent it back to the shop for a slight alteration. When the second pair arrived he found fault with the left boot, and it was likewise sent back for alteration. He thus retained a pair of boots. In each case the messenger had been instructed not to leave the boots unless he received the money for them; but he imagined naturally enough that there was no harm in leaving one boot.

Slight Skirmish.

The war with Spain has served to popularize in common language many terms usually employed only in a military sense, and has frequently furnished the smart men of the press with a new figure of speech.

"I shall have to ask you, Mr. Paddem," said a city editor, looking over a large bundle of manuscript which a new reporter had turned in as a description of a trivial occurrence, "to deploy that stuff."

"To deploy it?" said the new reporter. "I don't understand."

"Turn that column into a line," rejoined the editor.

Another Story.

Many amusing stories are being told of the recruits in service. The New Orleans Times Democrat tells one of a German in the naval reserve, who was walking his post and calling the hours as required.

He called, "Seven bells and all's well." The next call, however, was a variation. It was: "Eight bells, and all is not well; I have droppit my musket o'erboard."

A Nova Scotia Farmer.

TELLS HOW HE WAS CURED OF SALT RHEUM.

His Fingers, Hands and Wrists Were a Mass of Cracks and Sores, by Reason of Which He was Unable to Work.

To the Editor of the Enterprise:—

I have read from week to week in your paper, testimonials from those who have been cured through using Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and as I have experienced much benefit from the use of that medicine, I believe it my duty to let others know how they can be relieved from a very painful malady. I am now 75 years of age, and am at the present time, and in fact ever since I took a course of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills about two years ago, have been enjoying excellent health. Before that time I had been ailing for some months, finally I was attacked with salt rheum, which came out mostly on my hands. It was not long after its first appearance before I was unable to do any work at all with my hands. I resorted to all the domestic cures I could hear of, but the disease kept on its course, getting worse and worse, until the palms of my hands and my fingers were a mass of cracks, open sores and hideous scabs. I then got medicine from the doctor, which I used for several weeks, with no benefit whatever—my hands still becoming more and more crippled with the disease. My general health, too, at this time was poor and I got discouraged altogether, believing there was no help for the terrible complaint that was gradually spreading over my hands and up my wrists towards my arms. It happened one day in conversation with an acquaintance that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills were mentioned in connection with some other case in the neighborhood and it was suggested that I try them for salt rheum. I had not much faith in the trial, but concluded to get a box and see what good it might do. To my great delight, after using the box I found an improvement in the condition of my hands, and I got six boxes more. I did not use all these, for before they were gone the disease had vanished and my hands were as sound as ever. The new skin came on as smooth and fresh as if nothing had been the matter. I took no other medicine while using the pills and the whole praise of the cure is due to them. My general health was also greatly benefited by their use and I attended to my work with more energy and in better spirits than I had done for a number of years. I have been in excellent health ever since for a man of my years, and no sign of salt rheum has since appeared. The box or two of Pink Pills which I left unused were taken by my wife and did her much good. I cannot speak too highly of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills and am pleased to give my testimony to their merit, hoping others may thereby be induced to use them in cases like my own.

HENRY CHESLEY.

(The editor of the Enterprise can add that Mr. Chesley is a representative farmer living about three miles from the town of Bridgewater, N. S., and that the utmost reliance can be placed on his statement.)

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Magistrate: "I seem to know your face!" Prisoner: "Yus; we were boys together." Magistrate: "Nonsense!" Prisoner: "Yus, we was. We're both about the same age, so we must have bin boys together!"

mother's medicine.

What distress and anguish come to the mother when her little one wakes up at night with a nasty croupy cough. Wise mothers always keep on hand a bottle of

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It's so pleasant to the taste the youngsters take it without any fuss, and at the same time its promptness and effectiveness are such that the cough is checked before anything serious develops.

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