

Poetry.

ARE THE CHILDREN HOME?

Each day, when the glow of sunset
Fades in the western sky,
And the wee ones, tired of playing,
Go tripping lightly by,
I steal away from my husband,
Asleep in his easy chair,
And watch, from the open doorway,
Their faces flash and fair.

Alone in the dear old homestead,
That once was full of life,
Ringing with girlish laughter,
Rejoicing boyish strife,
We two are waiting together,
And oft as the shadows come,
With tremulous voice he calls me—
"It is night! are the children home?"

"Yes, love," I answer him gently,
"They're all home long ago."
And I sing, in my quavering treble,
A song so soft and low,
Till the old man drops to slumber,
With his head upon his hand,
And I tell, to myself, the number
At home, in a better land—

Home, where never a sorrow
Shall dim their eyes with tears,
Where the smile of God is on them,
Through all the summer years;
I knew, yet my arms are empty
That fondly folded seven,
And the mother heart within me
Is almost starved for Heaven.

Sometimes, in the dusk of evening,
I only shut my eyes,
And the children are all about me,
A vision from the skies!
The babes, whose dimpled fingers
Lost the way to my breast,
And the beautiful ones, the angels,
Passed to the world of the blest.

A breath, and the vision is lifted
Away on wings of light,
And again we two are together,
All alone in the night.
They tell me his mind is failing,
But I smile at idle fears,
He is only back with the children,
In the dear and peaceful years.

And still as the summer sunset
Fades away in the west,
And the wee ones, tired of playing,
Go tripping home to rest,
My husband calls from his corner,
"Say, love, have the children come?"
And I answer, with eyes uplifted,
"Yes, dear! they are all at home!"

GATHERINGS OF GOLD.

Teach me to live! no idler let me be,
But in thy service hand and heart employ;
Prepared to do thy bidding cheerfully,
Be this my highest and my holiest joy.

They, who, like the thunder of a sultry day,
Smite to restore,
And they, who, like the gentle wind, uplift
The petals of the dew-wet flowers, and drift
Their perfume on the air,
Alike may serve Him, each, with their own gift,
Making their lives a prayer! —Whittier.

The Fireside.

KATE'S TEMPER.

"You shan't have it!" and Kate snatched a beautiful large doll with blue eyes and faxen hair, which had been given her four years before for a Christmas gift, from her peevish little sister, who was getting over a severe illness.

She had been so afraid little Etie would not be spared to her, that she had promised never to get angry with her again.

"You shan't have it!" she repeated, more vehemently than before.

"O Kate, please!" Etie pleaded.

"No," said Kate.

"What is all the noise about?" asked Mrs. Castle, who just then entered the room.

"Etie wants my large doll, and I shan't give it to her. I'll give her to understand she can't have everything of mine," said Kate, her face red with anger.

"Hush, hush!" said her mother; "Do you remember your promise? I think you have almost forgotten it."

"I don't care," said Kate.

"Kate," said her mother, sternly, "go to your room and think over your conduct."

Kate went out of the room as mad as ever, while Mrs. Castle set to work to clean up the room and soothe little Etie at the same time.

"Never mind, daughter, Kate has kept her doll very nice, and she does not like to lend it."

"Well, I would not hurt it," said Etie, beginning to cry.

"I know, but she has been angry all day, and you must not mind her," said her mother.

"Well, I wanted it so badly," answered fretful Etie.

Mrs. Castle said nothing, for she knew it would be of no use to argue with the child. Meanwhile, Kate was thinking deeply of what she had done, and her thoughts ran thus:

"I don't care, yes, I do care, I'm sorry; but Etie thinks she must have everything I have got, and I don't propose to give them to her."

Very soon the tea-bell rang, and Kate went timidly down, not knowing whether she was welcome or not; but no one said anything to her, and she went in.

She ate her supper silently, and no one spoke to her. Her mother had told Mr. Castle when he came from his place of business, and while he ate, he was thinking what should be done with Kate. After he had finished, he said to her:

"I wish to see you in the library, Kate."

"Yes, sir," she meekly replied.

He rose and she followed him into the library. It was very cold, and a bright fire was blazing in the grate.

"Come here, my child," said Mr. Castle. Kate did so, and seated herself on his knee. "Kate," said father, gravely, "What is this little affair about?"

"Why, papa, Etie wanted my large doll, and I would not give it to her, and she commenced to cry, and mamma came into the room and sent me to my own think over my conduct; but I don't see what I've done sin."

During this long speech a grave smile had come over Mr. Castle's face, and then it was stern again.

"Well, Kate, don't you think it would have been better if you had spoken more pleasantly? You must try and control your temper; it is getting the better of you, and if you do not curb it now, it will follow you through all your life. I suppose you remember your promise, and here, before we have passed, you have broken it."

"I am very sorry, papa," said Kate, a few tears dropping silently, "and I will try to overcome my fault by being kind to Etie in the future."

"Very well, I think that will be the best plan. You may say now," said the father.

Kate went silently from the room. Before she went to her own room, she went to the nursery

and found Etie busily engaged in dressing a small doll.

As Kate entered Etie looked up with a smile. Kate went to her, put her arms around Etie's neck, and, kneeling down, said:

"Will you forgive me, dear, for being so cross? I will go and get the doll and give it to you, but you must not hurt it. But will you forgive me?"

"Yes," said Etie, "I did that long ago."

"All right," and Kate went out to get the doll. She soon returned and gave the doll to Etie, who began to kiss and pet it with childish delight, and Kate went, satisfied, from the room to her own.

Before she went to bed, however, she knelt down and asked God to forgive her, and help her to control her temper. She then rose comforted from her knees and went to bed.

Ten years have elapsed. Kate is now a young lady of eighteen. Kate has learned to control her temper, and is as gentle as a lamb. She took the lesson of that day to heart, and many a time when she is half tempted to get angry, she thinks of that day when she spoke so crossly to Etie. Etie is fast growing to be a woman, and of oftentimes she is peevish, but when she sees the grave smile on her sister's face, the cloud passes away.—*Idle Hours.*

ALWAYS BEHINDHAND.

"Bertha! Bertha! come, breakfast is on the table, your father is waiting, the carriage is at the door."

A bright, intelligent looking girl of twelve came leisurely into the dining-room as her father was rising from his chair, having finished his morning meal.

"I am very sorry, daughter, to disappoint you, but I have an engagement of great importance, and shall be unable to delay my departure one moment."

And Bertha's father was seated in the carriage and whirling out of sight before she recovered from her surprise to say, "It is too bad; I did want so much to pay that promised visit to Nellie, and tears came in the bright blue eyes—and overtook too."

Her mother in great kindness, but with a very serious look in her motherly heart, said, "Bertha, your great fault is tardiness—a little too late—always behindhand. I fear this fault will be the means of a life-long sorrow to you. Just look at the past month. How many times have been heard, 'Bertha, it is time to start for school!'"

"Yes, ma'am, as soon as I finish this page."

"The book, no doubt, interesting; then the hurry to get wraps and bonnet, a delay of a few seconds to find gloves, not in place to see them at a glance; off with a rush to reach school and find the door closed through the opening prayer—consequently marked late. The rising bell is unheeded, tiny naps thought to be so delicious, then in great haste you put on your clothes, and make your appearance in the dining-room after the blessing has been asked. This, my daughter, is not an unusual, but an almost daily occurrence. And you surely have not forgotten the sad day you spent after seeing the train move from the depot as you drove in sight. All your friends disappointed as well as yourself, that you could not go to school with them the glorious day spent at the seashore. You thought you could never forget that lesson, and I was greatly in hopes it would be so; but here it is again. Your father has been compelled to leave you, when he would have enjoyed your company."

For months Bertha's parents congratulated themselves that their daughter, so dear to them, was overcoming her great fault, and then again would break forth afresh the dreadful habit of delay.

Not long after this came a telegram:

"Nellie is dangerously ill; come immediately."

"Oh, dear, I am very sorry, for I do love Nellie dearly, but I must go to Lucy's birthday party tonight; all the girls will be there, and I want to wear my lovely pink dress. I know it will be the most beautiful dress of the evening; and if I start with the early train to-morrow I shall get there almost as soon as if I go this evening."

So, fully persuaded in her own mind, she would not listen to her mother's advice. A twinge came more than once during the party of the evening, notwithstanding the admiration she received, for independent of her dress, Bertha's manner was very attractive.

"I do hope nothing will happen to Nellie, but her parents are so frightened if the least thing is the matter, and she was the picture of health a few days ago. I will start bright and early to-morrow morning."

Alas! When Bertha reached the house of her friend, one glance at the bell handle told the story before the door was opened.

Oh, the bitter, bitter regret when she was told that Nellie had watched so anxiously for the coming of the evening train to give the good-bye kiss to her life-long friend, never thinking that Bertha's fault of delay, and the vain desire to appear in more beautiful attire than her friends at the party, was the reason for her not coming to see her before she died.

In the terrible grief that followed, with earnest pleading for the help of the great Teacher who so willingly assists all who come to learn of him, Bertha overcame the great fault of her life.—*Mrs. E. P. Runk.*

NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND.

Socrates, at an extreme old age, learned to play on musical instruments.

Cato, at about eighty years of age, learned to study the Greek language.

Plutarch, when between seventy and eighty years, began the study of Latin.

Boccaccio was thirty-five years of age when he commenced his studies in light literature, yet he became one of the greatest masters of the Tuscan dialect—Dante and Petrarch being the other two.

Sir Henry Spelman neglected the sciences in his youth, but commenced the study of them when he was between fifty and sixty years of age. After this time he became a most learned antiquarian and lawyer.

Dr. Johnson applied himself to the Dutch language but a few years before his death.

Ludovico Monaldesco, at the great age of one hundred and fifteen years, wrote the memoirs of his own times.

Ogilby, the translator of Homer and Virgil, was unacquainted with Latin and Greek till he was past fifty.

Franklin did not fully commence his philosophical pursuits till he had reached his fiftieth year.

We could go on and cite thousands of examples of men who commenced a new study, either for livelihood or amusement, at an advanced age. But every one familiar with the biography of distinguished men will recollect individual cases enough to convince him that none but the sick and indolent will ever say, I am too old to learn.

FOR WANT OF A LATCH.

An old step-ladder lesson, setting forth the sad import of little neglects, worth a thousand repetitions:

"For want of a nail the shoe was lost;
For want of a shoe the horse was lost;
For want of a horse the rider was lost;
And all for the want of a horseshoe nail."

This is said to be originally taken from actual history—of a certain side-de-camp whose horse fell lame on a retreat and delayed him until the enemy overtook and killed him.

Another actual case, embodying the same lesson against the lazy and shiftless habit of "letting things go," is related by the French political economist, M. Say.

Once, at a farm in the country, there was a gate enclosing the cattle and poultry, which was constantly swinging open for want of a proper latch. The expenditure of a penny or two, and a few minutes' time, would have made all right. It was on the swing every time a person went out, and not being in a state to shut readily, many of the poultry were from time to time lost.

One day, a fine young porker made his escape, and the whole family, with the gardener, cook and milk-maid, turned out in quest of the fugitive. The gardener was the first to discover the pig, and in leaping a ditch to cut off his escape, he got a sprain that laid him up for a fortnight.

The cook, on returning to the farm-house, found the linen burned that she had hung up before the fire to dry; and the milk-maid, having forgotten, in her haste, to tie up the cattle in the cow house, found that one of the loose cows had broken the leg of a colt, that happened to be kept in the same shed.

The linen burned and the gardener's work lost were worth full a hundred francs, and the colt was worth nearly double that money; so that there was a loss in a few minutes of a large sum, purely for want of a little latch which might have been supplied for a few half-pence.—*Young's Companion.*

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STORY AND POETRY.

THE FIRST FRUIT.

A little girl was once made the owner of some grapes upon a large vine in her father's yard. Very anxious was she that the fruit should ripen and be fit to eat. The time came.

"Now for a feast," said her brother to her one morning, as he pulled some of the beautiful ones for her to eat.

"Yes," said she, "but they are the first ripe fruit."

"Well, what of that?"

"Dear father, what that he used to give God the first fruit of all the money he made, and then always felt the happier in spending the rest; and I wish to give the first of my grapes to God, too."

"Ah, but," said her brother, "how can you give grapes to God? And if you were able to do such a thing he would not care for them."

"Oh, I have found out the way," she said. "Jesus said: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' I mean to go with them to Mrs. Martin's sick child, who never sees grapes, because her mother is too poor to buy them."

And away ran this little girl with a large basket of the "first fruit" of the vine, and the good things all beautifully arranged, to the couch of the sick child.

"I have brought Mary some ripe fruit," she said to Mrs. Martin.

"Dearest child, may God bless you a thousand fold for your loving gift! Here, Mary, see what a basket of nice things she has brought you!"

The sick one was almost overcome with emotion as she clasped the hand of her young benefactress and expressed her sincere thanks.—*Presbyterian.*

A CHILD'S PRAYER.

[It affords us great pleasure to insert the following lines, not only for their beauty, but also because they are the composition of a scholar attending one of our secondary schools in Ontario.]

Father, keep thy little one
Safe this night,
Through dark hours, until the sun
Brings up light.

While the earth is fast asleep,
All at rest,
Thine Almighty eye doth keep
Vigil best.

And thine arm is strong to save;
We need fear
Neither darkness, storm, nor wave—
Thou art near.

In the morning may I wake
Fresh and strong,
Find new things to undertake
All day long.

In the rugged path of life
Guide thou me,
Bring me through its toil and strife
Safe to thee.

—S. S. Times.

Contributions from Young Folks.

THE MYSTERY.

No. 160.—BIBLICAL REBUS.
(FROM ED. Y. F. C.)

Please give the passage.

The LORD } light } MY
is } salvation } and

No. 170.—BIBLE QUESTIONS.
FROM "YAN," YORK.

1. How many knives did Nebuchadnezzar take away from the temple?

2. What thing was smitten by his two sons and killed?

No. 171.—BIBLE ACROSTIC.
FROM JENNIE MCGOUGHALL, ST. JOHN.

The initials give me what we need every day.

1. One of the apostles.

2. A high priest.

3. An apostle.

4. What some nations worship.

5. A beautiful queen.

6. A ruler.

7. A murderer.

8. A prophet.

No. 172.—FOUR CONNECTED PYRAMIDS.
FROM "MARIANNE," KINGS.

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