

Poetry.

THE OLD MAN'S MEDITATIONS.

BY C. C. COFFIN.

The Old Man walked with weary feet,
And gazed with clouded eye;
Slowly with the waves did beat,
He thought perhaps the winding sheet
Would soon o'er him its foldings meet,
That soon he was to die.

He thought of childhood's happy hours,
And knew that they were fled;
He played once more amid the flowers,
He built again the airy towers,
And sat within the shady bowers
With friends who now were dead.

He thought upon the distant land,
Which he had travelled o'er;
He asked—"Where is that happy band
Which started with me hand in hand,
Who left their foot prints in the sand,
And then were seen no more!"

He thought how fast the time had sped,
He saw the setting sun;
Where was the wife which he had wed,
Would she stand by his dying bed
And pillow up his aching head
When life's last sand had run?

Where was the mother, who had prayed
To God to bless her child;
Who soothed his sorrows when afraid,
And then in joy with him had played,
And called him back when he had strayed,
And looked on him and smiled?

Where was the father, whose kind hand
Had over him been cast;
Who in his arms his child did bear,
Who taught to him his evening prayer,
Who rocked him in his little chair,
And loved him to the last?

He looked upon the sea of years
O'er which he long had sailed:
The new-born hopes and pregnant fears,
The sudden joys and scalding tears,
And tales of love again he hears,
For memory has not failed.

He sees the wrecks upon the shore,
And every thing is drear;
The rolling waves around him roar,
The angry clouds their torrents pour,
His friends are gone for evermore,
And he alone is here.

Yet through the long and gloomy night
The Old Man saw a star;
It is a happy cheerful light
That gleams upon his misty sight;
It nearer comes, and shines more bright—
Heaven's light-house from afar.

The Family.

The Bird and the Child.

"Cherry is dead, father," said a little prattler to us the other morning, with a tear in her eye, and sorrow in her tone; "ain't you sorry Cherry is dead? He will never sing for us any more."

The favorite bird that we had nurtured for many a year, that was ours before it began to sing, and whose sweet notes had enlivened the house and filled our hearts with sympathetic music, was indeed dead. Sincere mourners were the children, as they hid away the little senseless creature in some by-place of their own, where no living thing might molest it, and as they expressed their regrets that they could no longer share with Cherry their daily food; and with their sorrow came the questions of a child's philosophy, as to whether the bird had gone, and whether they should ever see it again.

Our thoughts flowed deeper, and took a wider range. In the chamber where the little bird had died, lay a sick and suffering child, and to the heart that yearned over that little one, there was unspeakable relief in the thought that the bird and not the child was dead. Never did the compassionate interest of the Saviour in little children appear to us so lovely and consoling. Indeed, God careth for the little bird, and not a sparrow falleth to the ground without Him; but for children he has covenanted grace and mercy, and has said, "Suffer them to come to me."

You have a favorite bird that relieves your solitude by his merry song, that feeds from

your hand, perches on your shoulder, and gambols on the carpet at your feet. You are conscious of a warm attachment to the little creature, which he seems to appreciate and to return. Some morning you miss his cheerful note; his matin warblings do not greet the rising sun; and going to his cage you find him dead.

A feeling of sadness comes over you. You grieve at the extinction of life in a creature to which life was all enjoyment; you grieve at the loss of a companion upon which you had become more dependent for your own enjoyment than you were before aware. And yet you do not once think of that bird as living still in other climes. You do not imagine that you shall ever see it again, nor think it strange that its existence has come to an end. For affection's sake you may bury it in your garden, instead of throwing it into the street, or may have it embalmed for preservation. More than this would be a profane burlesque upon the most solemn and tender rites. It gives you no shudder to think that the being of that bird is annihilated. Neither the exquisiteness of its structure, nor the softness and richness of its plumage, nor the melody of its song that enlivened your dwelling, suggests to you the thought that it cannot be utterly and forever dead.

But God has given you another favorite dearer far than bird of richest plumage and sweetest song; a prattling child, that breaks your morning slumbers with its happy voice attempting to speak your name; that tries to win your notice by a thousand pretty arts; that manifests intelligence and affection, though it knows not yet the use of language; that climbs upon your knee, or totters by your side, or gambles at your feet in boisterous glee. That child has not yet lived so long as your bird, nor has it made any like progress towards its maturity, yet hath that child a hold upon your heart that no other creature can ever gain.

Some morning you awake, but not at its call; you listen for its voice, but hear it not; you go to its cradle to find it dead. Perhaps you had watched over it in sickness and had seen it fall its last sleep, and having lain down to rest, had awoke from a dream, forgetting for the instant that the child was dead; or perhaps some sudden and unknown cause had terminated its life when you knew it not. But ah! what grief and anguish now come over you! No song of bird can relieve your aching heart. A sweet voice is hushed in death; a brighter, sunnier life, has been extinguished. And yet you cannot for one moment feel that your child is utterly and forever gone. You seem to see his spirit hovering nigh. You know he is not dead. You call your friends and neighbors, and with solemn and decent rites commit his body to the dust—not for affection's sake alone, but for hope's sake also; for a voice within you says, I shall see him yet again. And has God implanted in us these unutterable yearnings of affection, only to be crushed and disappointed for ever? Nay; the fond hopes that gush out with our tears, and so relieve our loss, and make us serene in sorrow, are angel voices, whisperings to us of immortality in the mansions of the blessed. Weep not, fond heart, for the child departed; "he is not dead, but sleepeth;" "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." The voice of nature teacheth thee what God had forborne to reveal in his Word. It needs no revelation to assure thee that thy child hath not met the fate of thy bird, but hath soared to the empyrean of the blessed, which wing of bird essays in vain.—[Independent.]

A CAPITAL JOKE UPON THE D.D.'s.—In one of the Southern States there is a colored preacher of considerable note, whose eloquence is generally acknowledged, and who has more influence on a colored audience than any other man. He is generally called Dr. Jordan. He did not receive this title from any university or college, European or American, but from a meeting of colored class leaders. Their white pastor, while meeting one evening with the leaders, observed that, in conversation among themselves, they spoke frequently of "de Doctor," and inquired of whom they spoke. One of the company replied: "We's 'cluded bein's how Brudder Jordan is the olest man 'mongst us, and de most knowinist 'pon the Scriptures, to 'fer on him de Doctor, so we calls him Dr. Jordan."

A joke never gains over an enemy, but often loses a friend.

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