

STRENGTH FOR TO-DAY.

BY MRS. M. A. RIDDER.

Strength for to-day is all that we need.
As there never will be a to-morrow,
For to-morrow will prove but another day,
With its measure of joy and sorrow.

Then why forecast the trials of life
With such grave and sad persistence,
And watch and wait for a crowd of ill
That as yet has no existence.

Strength for to-day—what a precious boon
For the earnest souls who labor;
For the willing hands that minister,
To the ready friend or neighbor.

Strength for to-day—that the weary hearts
In the battle for right may quail not;
And the eyes bedimmed with bitter tears,
In these arch for light, may fail not.

Strength for to-day on the down-hill track
For the traveller near the valley,
That up, far up on the other side,
Ere long they may safely rally.

Strength for the day that our precious youth
May happily shun temptation,
And build from the rise to set of sun
On a sure and strong foundation.

Strength for to-day—in house and home
To practice forbearance sweetly—
To scatter kind words and loving deeds,
Still trusting in God completely.

Strength for to-day is all that we need,
As there never will be a to-morrow,
For to-morrow will prove but another day,
With its measures of joy and sorrow.

Serial.

FIFINE.

BY LOUISE SEYMOUR HOUGHTON.

CHAP. VI.—SCHOOL LIFE, CONTINUED.

"What do you do on Thursdays and Sundays?" she asked, after the dinner had been cleared away, the plate and cup cleaned and restored to the basket, and their own hands and faces washed at the sink behind the kitchen door.

"I hold out one hand," said Marie, using the ordinary French expression for begging, "Down on the exterior Boulevard, you know. Sometimes I get a good many little sous. I saw you there, Fifine, one day. How pretty you dance, and what a lovely dress you wear. I think you must be very happy, Fifine."

"I am happy," said Fifine; I like to dance, and I like to see the people on the boulevard. It is like a fete every Sunday and Thursday. But I must tell you something so strange that happened one Sunday, Marie."

The school bell began to ring. "I will tell you another time," said Fifine, as they ran toward the door of the *classe* (school room). "You must eat your dinner with me again some time when I have enough."

The afternoon was devoted to sewing. The elder girls read aloud by turns, and the children listened or not, as they liked. By four o'clock Fifine's back was aching, and she could hardly see in the waning light. She did her best, however, and the teacher gave her a "good point" (good mark) when she went up to show her work.

As for Marie, hers was very badly done, and she was kept in when the others went out at four o'clock for an hour's play. Fifine had been carefully taught to sew by Mamma, long before she came to school. But Marie, who had no mother, had learned nothing except by accident, and hated every kind of work, it never having been made pleasant for her. Fifine hardly thought of Marie, however. She was very busy jumping the rope with the other girls, chasing the fox, as both French and American children call it, and the hour seemed very short.

At five they all went into the now lighted school room for an hour's work. Fifine had her dictation and her sum to copy into her neat books. She had finished her work and was almost asleep with her head upon her desk, when six o'clock struck, and the children were all dismissed. Fifine ran gayly home after her long school day, eager to tell her godmother of her luncheon with Marie, and quite sure that a nice little dinner would be awaiting her in the parlor of her wagon home.

CHAP. VII.—CHRISTMAS IN PARIS.

The shortening days slipped rapidly by, and Christmas was at hand. Fifine in her wagon house, and Ernest in his mother's pretty apartment, looked eagerly forward to the holiday. Ernest expected to hang up his stocking, and though he was old enough to understand who gave him his presents, he liked to talk about Santa Claus coming down the chimney with his pack of toys. As for Fifine, she had already put her shoes before the porcelain furnace in the little kitchen, for St. Nicholas to fill; and she had not neglected to place beside them a bundle of hay for the saint's beast of burden.

This had been done on St. Nicholas' Day, the 7th of December, and she had found *bon-bons* enough in her shoes to make her very happy. She expected no more presents till she should receive what she called her *etrennes* (New Year's gifts) on New Year's day. But she had looked forward with the utmost delight to the festival of Christmas, for her godmother had promised to take her in the evening to walk upon the Grand Boulevard, to see the Christmas barracks.

And now Christmas Eve was come, and Fifine had brought her books and work home from school for the twelve days holiday. At her godmother's direction she had lain down upon her little bed and slept through the evening, and now, at eleven o'clock at night, a most surprising thing was happening. She was walking at Mamma's side through the brightly-lighted streets which were quite as crowded as they ever had been in the daytime. They were going to the midnight mass and were hastening to get good places. Early as they were, they found the large church already filled to the doors, and were thankful to get stand-room where they could see the high altar. Fifine, however, could not have seen anything, and would have been in danger of being suffocated in the crowd, had not a good-natured looking man lifted her into a niche in a pillar, and held her safely there through the long service.

What a marvellous experience that service was to the little girl! The gorgeous church was brilliantly illuminated, all its pictures, statues and gilded mouldings brought out into the strongest relief by the artistically-managed light and shade. The high altar was one blaze of brightness, in which mingled gold, precious stones, tall wax candles and splendidly embroidered vestments of priests who passed and repassed continually before it.

Fifine gazed entranced, and was so wrought upon by the wonderful vision, that she almost screamed aloud when, at midnight, precisely, the deep notes of the organ broke the expectant silence. Then came a burst of music, the like of which the child had never heard, and the chanting of the priests before the altar and the responses from the singing gallery followed in rapid succession. Then came a moment of thrilling silence, while all the vast assemblage bowed in silent adoration, and again that rapturous burst of music woke every heart to ecstasy. And then, oh, marvellous to relate, the glorious strains were taken up and repeated—where? by whom? Did those mysterious voices come from the sky? Was it the angels' song which Fifine heard? Again and again it came, the rich monotonous chant of the priests around the altar, the answering strains from the singing gallery, and then, that distant, heavenly echo which thrilled the souls of more than one in that vast audience.

"O Mamma!" said Fifine, as they were almost swept out in the throng which poured from the church at the close of the service—"O Mamma, did you hear the angels? I did not know that the angels ever sung so loud that one could hear them in Paris."

"Those weren't angels, child. They were only boys, hidden away somewhere in the crypt, most likely; or in some of those little top galleries, so that their voices sounded far away, like angels. A precious lot of scamps those choir boys are! But it doesn't signify what they are, nor how it sounds, so long as one gets it set down to one's credit that one has been at the midnight mass."

"Is that a good action, too, Mamma?"

"I should think it might be, standing about on those cold stone floors all night, till one's feet nearly freeze off. How my legs did ache! But the merit is just as great as to attend all the six masses of to-morrow; so in the morning one may lie abed and take one's ease with a clear conscience. But hasten, little one. Father Touton is sure to have something nice for supper."

Father Touton was in fact, waiting for them, with the cloth spread and a nice crisp salad and a loaf of white bread upon it, while a delicious odor of roast chicken issued from the tin oven before the fire.

Fifine's enjoyment of the feast was doubled by the strangeness of eating at two o'clock at night; but, when, at last, she lay down in her little bed, it was not the supper she thought of, but those sweet angel voices, which sang to her in her dreams all night.

To be Continued.

Time is short, your obligations infinite. Are your houses regulated, your children instructed, the afflicted relieved, the poor visited, the work of piety accomplished?—*Massillon.*

CHRISTMAS AT THE NATIONAL SURGICAL INSTITUTE.

Christmas I was permitted to pass with my family. And we had a very merry time at our winter home. There was a great Christmas tree in the parlor of the institute that reached from floor to ceiling, and its green branches sparkled and glittered with presents for everybody. Some of the bright little faces that were turned so eagerly toward the tree wore the patient look that is taught by pain, and there were some helpless feet that could not patter about the room with the other little people. Some of the presents that hung on the tree were precious with the suffering that pain-stricken fingers had wrought into them; the stitches in the bit of satin might have been so many sighs, and the daisies or dainty birds on the handkerchief might have been worked over a pattern of tears. There was a tender pathos under the childish shouts and merry laughter about our Christmas tree. In this home of suffering, where human gentleness and human skill and science strive to drive away pain and bring back health and strength to the stricken life, the story of the Christ child is told with beautiful meanings; He whose mission was to "bind the broken hearted," "to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning and the garment of praise for heaviness; the healing one whose loving hand touched the limbs of the palsied man with health, and brought back the cool blood and the measured pulse to the heavy fevered veins of the leper, and touched the eyes of Bartimeus with light, who a voice called Lazarus and the daughter of Jairus back from the shadowy land of death; who blessed the little ones, who healed the sick and forgave sins, what a meaning had the story of His life to the little ones in our family at the institute, the little ones with nervous hands and heavy feet, with cruel pains that rack their little bodies, and wakeful hours sometimes during the long night—the birth of the Christ child has a meaning to these pilgrims of suffering that they can understand and appreciate better than we can while beyond the Christmas day they look to—

A land far away, 'mid the stars, we are told
Where they know not the sorrows of time;
Where the pure waters wander through valleys of gold
And life is a treasure sublime."

Well, Christmas passed off happily and merrily with us all. Dr. Johnson and Dr. McLean were excellent representatives of Santa Claus, and the invalids and the healthy members of the institute's family were equally happy. And the evening was whirled away most delightfully with speeches and recitations.—*Burdette.*

"A PLEASANT GIRL."

A TRAVELLER in Norway, last summer, came to a village early one morning, and was struck by the air of gloom which pervaded the streets. Unable to speak a word of the language, he could not ask the cause of this and concluded that some sickness or financial trouble had fallen upon the community.

As the day wore on towards noon, however, the houses were closed, shop windows were covered; all trade and business ceased. It was death, then.

Presently he saw the people gathering for the funeral. There were the village officials, the nobleman from the neighboring chateau, and, apparently, every man, woman and child in the village. It must be some dignitary of the church who is dead, or some other county official.

As he stood watching the crowds passing down the little, rocky street, he caught sight of the face of a German known to him. He beckoned to him.

"The town has lost some great magnate, apparently?"

"Ah, no. It is only a young maiden who is dead. No. She is not beautiful nor rich. But, oh, such a pleasant girl, monsieur. All the world seems darker now that she is dead."

It is a singular fact that when we reach middle life and look back, it is not the beautiful, nor the brilliant, nor the famous people whom we have known, that we remember with the keenest regret, but some simple sincere, "pleasant" soul, whom we treated as an everyday matter while she was with us.

Go into a family or social circle, or even into a ballroom, and the woman who has the most friends there as a rule, is not the belle, nor the wit, nor the heiress, nor the beauty; but some homely, charming little body, whose fine tact and warm heart never allow her to say the wrong word in the wrong place.

The "pleasant woman" are the attrac-

tion that everywhere holds society and homes together. Any woman, however poor and ugly, may be one of them; but she must first be candid, honorable, unselfish and loving. If she is these, the world will be happier and better for every day of her life, as in the case of this poor Norwegian, it will seem darker when she is dead.

Smiles.

A minister who had preached several times in an asylum for the insane, was especially drawn toward one of the patients who had listened intently to his sermon. The last time he preached there he referred to the custom of Hindoo women throwing their children into the Ganges. After service he sought an opportunity for a personal conversation with his eager listener. The patient grasped his hand warmly, and said: "I couldn't help thinking while you were telling that story that it was a great pity your mother didn't chuck you into the river when you were a baby."

An old miser, having listened to a powerful discourse on charity, said: "The sermon so strongly proves the necessity of almsgiving that I've almost a mind to beg."

"Son, to his father, who asked him where he is in his class now. "Oh! Papa, I've got a much better place than I had last quarter. "Indeed! Well where are you? "I'm fourteenth." "Fourteenth! lazy-bones! You were eight last term. Do you call that a better place?" "Yes," sir. It's nearer the stove."

Visitor Pastimes.

Contributions are solicited for this Department. The person sending the best six contributions during the first quarter of the year will be entitled to a prize volume, and the person who sends the most correct answers to puzzles during the same time will also be entitled to a prize volume.
Address: "VISITOR Pastimes," St. John, N. B.

CHARADE NO. 10.

My first though your house and your life it defends,

You ungratefully name as a wretch to despise.
My second, I say it with grief, comprehends.
The good, and the learned, and the brave and the wise.

Of my whole I have little or nothing to say
Except that it marked the departure of day.

ENIGMA NO. 11.

There's not a bird that cleaves the sky
With crest or plume more gay than I,
Yet guess me by this token:
That I am never seen to fly,
Unless my wings are broken.

CONUNDRUM NO. 12.

How will a diet of herbs make a man healthy, wealthy and wise.

Answer to pastimes in Visitor Feb. 2.

PUZZLE.

Gad.
Eli.
Dan.
Ara.
Lud.
Irr.
Ada.
Ham.

Answer, Gedaliah.

Answered correctly by Horace Colpitts, St. John.

ENIGMA NO. 8.

1. Zedekiah, 2 Chron. 36: 13.
2. Obed-edom, 1 Chron. 26: 4.
3. Hanun, 2 Sam. 10: 4.
4. Aeneas, Acts 9: 33.
5. Lucius, Acts 13: 1.
6. Eunice, 2 Tim. 1: 5.
7. Tubal-Cain, Gen. 4: 22.
8. Havilah, Gen. 10: 7.

The initials spell Zohaleth, 1 Kings 1: 9.

Answered correctly by Tilley Kierstead, Collingwood.

TRANSPPOSITION NO. 9.

To guild refined gold, to paint the lily
To throw a perfume on the violet,
To smooth the ice, or add another hue
Unto the rainbow; or with taper light
To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish

Is waste and ridiculous excess.

Answered by Ella Finlay, Carleton; Horace Colpitts, St. John, Tilley Kierstead, Collingwood.

CANT PREACH GOOD.

No man can do a good job of work, preach a good sermon, try a law suit well, doctor a patient, or write a good article when he feels miserable and dull, with sluggish brain and nervous nerves, and none should make the attempt in such a condition when it can be so easily and cheaply removed by a little Hop Bitters. See "Truths" and "Proverbs," other columns.

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