A SONG.

Over the strings of my harp to-day
Floats a song that is half a sigh,
Like the sound of leaves when the winds sweeps by,
As they beat and sob
As they beat and throb,
Till I hear a voice in the distant roar
On that lovely stretch of sandy shore

Over the strings of my harp to-day
Floats a song for the dying year—
A song that thrills with an unshed tear
Thro' the winter twilight, cold and gray.
As the breakers sob,
As the breakers throb,
And I hear that voice with its old refrain,
For those days that never come back again.

Over the strings of my harp to-day
Floats a song for my sweet lost youth—
For, O, I would give in very truth
Riches, and fame, and power away
To dream once more
Those bright dreams o'er
"It is vain regret," sighs that old refrain,
For the days that never can come back again.

Over the strings of my harp to-day
Floats a song for the dying year,
A song that thrills with an unshed tear.
Like the sound of the breakers far away—
How they beat and sob!
How they beat and throb!
And I hear that voice with its old refrain,
For the days that never come back again.
—Isabel Hotchiss.

The Old Meeting-House.

We don't have any meeting-houses now. We have churches and places of worship instead.

When we were young, there used to be meeting-houses.

How well we can see that old meeting-house where first we heard the terrors of the law laid down, and very little, if anything said about the rewards.

It stood on a hill. All meeting houses used to be located on a hill, that their light might shine abroad. It was a square bodied building, with whitewashed walls, and two chimneys, one at each end, and set just as far apart as they could possibly be, just as if there was danger of their quarreling if they were in too close vicinity; and it had six long windows on each side, and one fad-shaped window over the pulpit, and two more of the same shape over the singing seats; and there were two doors in the end, and a flight of windy stone steps leading there to; and around those steps the young men used to congregate, to talk about the crops; and watch the female portion of the warshipers as they tripped along in their Sunday best, with their reticules on their arms, with lunches therein for the whole family. For in those days our ministers used to give us our money's worth, and two sermons a day of two hours long, and a shorter sernice in the evening, was considered a moderate allowance.

Inside, the structure was bare and monastic. The walls were white, and the windows are shadeless. The sun used to pour in as it bound to scorch us all to cinders in our sins; and the flies used to buzz like mad on the dingy panes, and the slim-waisted wasps crawled at their leisure through the filmy cobwebs up to their drab honeycomb homes in the upper corners of the windows.

The pews were large, and square, and high, and when once you were inside of them, and the door was shut, and buttoned on the outside, you felt as if doom had closed down upon you, and there you had to stay, let what might betide, until the sermon was over.

There were no carpets, no cushions, and the seats were made only for long-legged persons, and we used to sit on those hard boards, and twist, and wriggle, and try vainly to touch our toes to the floor, just to make sure it was there, and that we were not actually swinging on nothing, above that terrible abyss of which the preacher seemed so delighted to expatiate to us.

How long the time seemed! We counted the wasps' nests by way of diversion, and wondered if it would be possible to get our hair plastered down as tight and smooth to our face as Deacon Jones had his plastered; and we speculated on what the people would do if we should break loose and rush down the long, bare aisle, out into the sunshine, and give a whoop of intense relief, just as we wanted to do?

The pulpit was a work of art. It was placed at a dizzy height, and in those days only a man with a steady head was fit for a preacher. Over the head of the minister, like the sword of Damocles, hung suspended that invention of ancient times, a "sounding board;" and as the preacher waxed eloquent, the contrivance caught the inspiration, and began to go round, slowly at first, but increasing in vigor as the whacks on the pulpit-desk grew heavier and more frequent, and the denunciation of sinners more emphatic. We used to feel afraid for the preacher; we lived in momentary expectation that the "board" would fall and crush him where he stood; but we comforted ourself with the thought that he had so much religion he wouldn't mind it if it did.

In front of, and below the pulpit, was the deacon's seat, and here, Sabbath after Sabbath, the two venerable deacons, who had worked hard all the week, reminded themselves that the Sabbath was a day of rest, and slept as peacefully as children, with their red bandanas spread over their heads, to keep the flies from tickling the bald places. Up in the singing seats the bass violin player surreptitiously tuned his viol when the demonstrations from the sacred desk were noisiest; and the good-looking tenor made eyes at the first soprano, and the younger singers passed around cloves, and peppermint, and wrote tender messages on the fly-leaves of the hymn books.

And when the time came for singing, it was worth something to see and hear that choir! How they braced up to the effort! How they hemmed and hawed in preparation! How they drew in their breaths, and their faces grew red, and the veins in their foreheads swelled, and their necks lengthened out, and the way they gave nineteen verses of Watts' hymns—select—would make the hair rise on the heads of one of our modern quartettes!

After the service closed, neighbors greeted each other in a quiet, subdued way; and asks after Sam, and Tom, who had the measles; and Susan, and Maria, and Jane, who were wrestling whooping-cough. Everybody remembred it was Sunday, and secular conversation was avoided; but the good sisters could not help seeing if there were any new bonnet trimmings, or freshly "done over" leghorns, on the heads of the congregation.

There was a grove back of the meeting-house where we went to eat our lunch, and a spring supplied the liquid necessary to wash down the seed cake, and hard gingerbread, and solidified doughnuts. And thus fortified, we were ready for another two hours of oratory.

And when it was over, and the minister put on his tall, white hat and shook hands with the people, and we filed out into the fresh air and sunshine once more, everybody was secretly glad that Sunday was well over, and the requirements of a good conscience had been answered by attending meeting allday.—New York Weekly.

Eight Fascinating Girls.

While other sections of this healthy corner of the country are boasting about lone elderly ladies of great business capabilities, Belfast, down in Waldo County, points with pride to a whole family of women who are not only smart but young into the bargain. These are eight sisters, and they carry on an extensive farm just outside Belfast. Their mother is dead, and their father is barely able to do a few chores about the place, so that all the farm work practically is done by the girls. They keep several cows, a horse, four oxen that are never yoked, 500 hens, hogs in plenty, ducks and geese galore, and thirteen cats. They get out their own wood in winter, at which season only two of them are at home, the others being employed in Boston, two are teachers in the public schools. All spend their summers at home, where they have a good time as well as run the farm. The reason the four oxen on the place are never yoked is because there is nothing for them to do, and the reason why they are not sold for beef is that they are pets, having been raised as calves by the sisters. If there are any young men in the metropolis looking for wives who have "some get up and get" to them, as they say out West, the vicinity of Belfast will be found good prospecting ground.—Bangor (Me.) Letter.

A Right Kind of Boy

Springfield Union.

Don't laugh at the boy who magnifies his place. You may see him coming from the postoffice with a big bundle of his employer's which he displays with as much pride as if it were his own. He feels important and he looks it. But he is proud of his place. He is attending to business. He likes to have the world know that he is at work for a busy concern. One of the Lawrences of Boston once said. "I would not give much for the boy who does not say 'we' before he has been with us a fornight." The boy who says "we" identifies himself with the concern. Its interests are his. He sticks up for its credit and reputation. He takes pleasure in its work, and hopes some day to say "we" in earnest.

The boy will reap what he sows if he keeps his grit and sticks to his job. You may take off your hat to him as one of the future solid men of the town. Let his employer do the fair thing by him, check him kindly if he shows signs of being too big for his place; counsel him as to his habits and associates, and occasionally show him a pleasant prospect of advancement. A little praise does an honest boy a heap of good. Good luck to the boy who says "we."

Brains Needless for a Learned Pig

How much brain a pig possesses is a question which aroused spirited discussion in the town of Freehold, N. J. Finally it was decided to sacrifice the most intelligent pig in Freehold and have his brain scientifically analyzed. The animal selected was the property of Carson J. Emmons, who had long refrained from reducing it to bacon on account of that very cleverness to which he now owed his fate. A butcher slew him, and looked for the source of understanding. It was a vain search, and the conviction slowly forced itself upon local scientists that the pig was wholly brainless. The cavity in which the brain should have been was extraordinary small and was empty. Both doctors and butchers were astonished and "silenced the clamor of debate" in the presence of the queer fact that the wisest pig in Freehold had no brain tissue at all

Senator Vance's Wonderful Memory.

Senator Vance has a very good memory and seldom fails to recognize a person he has once met and observed, but one of his constituents got away with him a short time ago. The senator was standing with several of his friends in the rotunda at the Capitol, when a stranger approached and offered his hand, saying: "Why, senator, how are you?" The hand was taken and grasped warmly. "Quite well, sir; how have you been?"

"Oh, I've been fine, never in better health, but I don't believe you remember me."

"Oh, yes, I do, perfectly. Your face is quite familiar. It's only your name that escapes me."

"My name is John Buckwillen."

"Sure enough, John Buckwillen. Of course (and he shook the man's hand a little more vigorously), I don't see how I forgot it. Let me think—where was it I saw you last?"

"Well, senator, the fact is, you never did see me but once."

"Only once—you must be mistaken."

"Oh, no, I'm not. It was at the old church on Deer Creek. You remember when you spoke there to that awful big crowd?"

"Yes, perfectly. So it was."

"I'm the man who was sittin' up on the ladder in the back of the church. I was in my shirt sleeves and did a good deal of the shoutin'. That was as close as I ever got to you."—Washington Critic.

From Poetry to Prose.

Detroit Free Press.

"George, dear," she said a night or two before the wedding, "do you think it possible that our love and our married life can become the commonplace, coldly practical love and life of the married people we see around us? O, George, my heart would break if I thought so."

"But it will not be so," said George passionately. We love each other too tenderly, too fondly, for that. Our love is not of the ordinary kind, my darling, and our lives will not be so. Ah, no, no, my angel; that can never be."

And the other day she said:

"Say, George, how would you like baked beans for dinner, with pumpkin pie for dessert? You would? All right, then baked beans goes. And don't you forget that bottle of Mellin's food for the baby, or I'll send you back after it, and mind that you don't keep dinner waiting."

"All right, Lou; and I wish you'd sew a button on the back part of those striped trousers of mine; you'll find them hanging over a chair in our room. Don't have the beans as dry as the last were, and you watch the baby's cold. That watering of the eyes looks like measles to me. There's my car. Good-by!"

An Elevating Sort of Stage is That

Great mortality prevails among the actors who are playing in realistic melodrama. One Webb, while playing in Austin, Mo., in a part in which he was supposed to commit suicide, caught his foot on a loose board, and falling drove a knife into his heart, killing him instantly. In Wallick's "Cattle King," a weird border drama, the hero has been cut severely in a bowie-knife fight which takes place in the second act. A few weeks ago a man named Cone, who is playing the villain in an "Exile of Siberia" combination, was shot at on the stage. Frank Jones, who used to be a stock actor at the Walnut Street Theater, died from lock-jaw, brought on by his catching his finger in the trigger of a pistol, for the possession of which he was fighting with some one on the stage. Edna Carey, who has been playing the part of May Joyce in "The Dark Secret," had to leave the company on account of ill-health, her system being badly shattered through her nightly plunge into the tank. Very lately, too, Duncan R. Harrison was badly injured by jumping into the tank in "The Paymaster," and the star of a drama depicting life in the "Wild West," narrowly escaped being murdered by a drunken Indian, who represented an antagonist.

Secretary Seward's Adopted Daughter.

Washington Letter.

After the departure of Secretary Seward from Washington official life the name has seldom been heard here. One son resides in the old Seward homestead at Auburn, N. Y., and the other at Montrose, on the Hudson. Miss Olive Risley Seward, the adopted daughter of Mr Seward, lives here and owns a house on Pennslyvania avenue, near Georgetown, that was bought with the proceeds of the book describing Mr. Seward's travels around the world. She edited Mr. Seward's notes of his tour, and he gave to her the copyright and left her a share of his property. Miss Seward has lived a great deal abroad during the last 15 or 20 years, spending much time in England, where she has kept up her acquaintances made during her first visit with Mr. Seward. She is a tall, rather masculine-looking woman now, with strong features and iron-gray hair. Her later literary work has consisted in sketches and incidents of travel related in the Wide Awake and other children's magazines. Her own father, Mr. Risley, lives with her here and is totally blind.

CAUGHT IN A STORM.

"We might just as well have been standing behind the counter in New York all these ten days," sighed Barbara Hale, "for all the out-of-the way adventures we've had!"

"Who wants out-of-the-way adventures?" said Dorcas Dunn scornfully.

"Behind the counter, indeed!" chimed in Mary Vannecker. "Can you breathe in clover scented air like this behind the counter? Can you get the mountain view like this from Sixth Avenue? What more would the girl want, I should like to know?"

Barbara sighed once more and shook her head.

"It is all so tame," she said. "It isn't what I expected at all."

The three girls—Barbara, Dorcas and Mary—were sitting on a side hill under the shade of a grand old cedar tree. Barbara, who had once taken a quarter's lessons in drawing, had a sketch board on her lap and was trying—with but little success, it must be owned—to reproduce the lovely ribbon like curves of the river that wound its way through the valley below.

Mary had her needle work in her lap, and Dorcas, with her hands clasped under her head, had long given up all attempt to read the paper covered novel that she had brought with her

"The sky and the sunshine are so much better," she said.

They were three shop girls—bright, ambitious, spirited young things, full of life and aspirations, even though they were kept down by the force of circumstances; and they clubbed together their slender resources in order to enjoy their vacation to better advantage.

Dorcas, the business member of the firm, had bought an excursion ticket first, and traveled out to Schepp's valley to see what could be done. But it is needless to say that the hotel and boarding house prices were far beyond their simple means.

"Is there no place," said she, "where we could obtain one room and the very simplest fare for less money?"

"You might try Old Man Morris," said the portly dame who kept the Valley house. "It's a quiet place, and Mrs. Morris she ain't no great of a cook, but there's them as has boarded there, I'm told."

"Where is it?" eagerly asked Dorcas. And the landlady went to the door to point out a slender blue thread of smoke that was curling up heavenward from a mass of woods on a distant hill, and once more Dorcas set forth on her pilgrimage, this time with undoubted success.

She engaged one room. The board, to be sure, was plain, the beds coarse husk mattress, with a blanket spread on the floor for Dorcas herself, the furniture homemade and unpainted. But there was a grove of pine woods in the rear; the black birds piped their silver flutes all day long, and the bees darted in and out of the red lilies by the garden wall, and our three heroines believed themselves to be in paradise.

But even as Barbara Hale thus bewailed herself, a portentous shadow swept across the sun, and looking around, they saw that a mass of livid purple thunder clouds had piled themselves up along the western sky, while distant mutterings, and now and then a sudden flash, announcing the coming of a storm.

Dorcas sprang to her feet, Barbara sprang to her feet, Barbara began hurriedly to fold up her sketching apparatus, Mary put her thimble and scissors in her pocket.

"We must get home as quickly as possible!" cried all three.

But in availing themselves of a "short cut" across a patch of woods they got hopelessly lost. The sun set behind the purple battlement of clouds, the dusk fell rapidly in these dense woods, and the rain began to patter down in huge drops.

Barbara, the aspirant after adventure, began to cry.

"We are lost!" she said.

"Lost? Nonsense!" said brave Dorcas. "When I can see the railway track shining down below. Who ever got lost close to a railway line? Let's make for the track."

"And get run over," lamented Barbara.

"Not likely when there's only one train a day, and that at noon," laughed Dorcas. "If we walk along the railway line we must come out somewhere, don't you see?"

"And besides," added Mary, "there is a little ruined cabin not far from here where the railroad flagman used to live before they changed the location of the station. I remember Mrs. Morris showing it to me once."

"Oh! oh!" shrieked Barbara. "I couldn't go there! The flagman was killed on the track. There's a g-g-ghost there!"

"Would you rather stay here and be drenched through with rain?" severely demanded Mary.

"Or struck with lightning?" added Dorcas. And the upshot of it was that the three fugitives took refuge in a miserable old shanty close alongside of the railroad track, where weeds were growing up through the cracks of the floor, and a plentiful portion of the rain came pattering through the leaks in the roof, while the old stone chimney, all settling to one side, looked as if no stroke of lightning could harm it very much.

"But it's some shelter," said Mary cheerfully. "We'll stay here until the shower is over, and then make the best of our way home."

The shower however, showed no indictation of abating in its vigor. The rain still poured down in sheets; the thunder still bellowed through the rocky gorge where the cabin had been built; the lightning still lit up everything with sudden spurts of blue flame, like pantomine effects.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" said Barbara, wringing her hands; "it must be midnight!"

"It can't be 9 o'clock yet," said Mary.

"And I'm so hungry! Oh, how I wish I hadn't eaten the last of those sandwiches!

Oh, oh! what is that?" fluttered Barbarba.

An unusually vivid electrical flash had revealed something white and spectral at the window. All three girls jumped at once.

"The ghost!" shrieked Barbara, stopping her ears and shutting her eyes as tight as was practicable.

"A stray white cow," suggested Mary.

"A young man in a flannel tennis suit," said Dorcas, the closest observer of all.

"Don't let him come in," said Barbara. "We shall be robbed and murdered!"

"Not while we are three to one," said composed Dorcas.

And at the same moment a voice sounded hurriedly at the door:

"Please, may I come in? I know it seems intrusion, but it's raining a deluge and I'm wet through."

"Come in by all means," said Mary.

And the ghost entered, dripping like a fountain.

"All in the dark?" said he, groping his way.

"There are no gas jets here," said Dorcas ironically.

"But we might have a little blaze of sticks," hazarded the new arrival, shaking himself like a Newfoundland dog. "I saw by that last glare of lightning that there was a heap in the corner, and I've got my match box intact."

"Oh, that would be splendid!" cried Dorcas, who was wet and shivering.

"And I've got some fish on a string outside, and we could have some supper," suggested the ghost, cheerfully.

"I'm so-o-o hungry!" wailed Barbara.

The stranger was evidently used to mountain camping. He had a fire kindled in no time, and the fish cleaned by aid of his pocket-knife and washed in one of the pools outside, were presently boiling over the coals, emitting a most savory smell.

"You must be a good genius!" cried Mary.

"I'm only a tramp," said the ghost, I'm ever so much obliged to you young ladies for letting me in."

"We couldn't have kept you out if we had tried," said Dorcas, frankly.

"You don't think I would have thrust myself in here against your wishes? Even a tramp wouldn't do that," said the young man.

The sticks had blazed cheerfully up; the ghost economized them to keep the flames alive as long as possible. He told thrilling tales of his experience in these woods; he made himself a most agreeable companion.

"Are you from the Valley house?" asked Dorcas.

"No; I am camping just where it happens."

"Oh!" said Mary. "Then you are poor like us? We are shopgirls on our vacation."

"For," she said to herself, "I am determined he shall not take us for other than we are."

"And," observed the ghost, "I should think you were having a very jolly time of it. A little more trout, Miss—Hale? And how did you come out in these wildernesses?"

So then, of course, little Babara, who was generally the spokeswoman of the assemblage, related all her efforts to secure summer board.

"You see," said she, "Mr. Archer pays us so small a salary that we haven't much margin for luxury."

"He ought to pay more," said the ghost. "I'm in business myself. I know how it is. People can't be expected to live on nothing."

"I do believe," cried Dorcas, "you are the tailor's young man from Cutt to Fitt's, next door to Archer's! I thought I had seen your face before! But if you ever get to the head of the firm—and a man can achieve almost anything he please—do pay your employees a decent sum!"

"I will," said the young man in the white flannel tennis suit:

And he spoke as if he meant it.

And then Dorcas discoursed still more learnedly about the rights and wrongs, the injustices and petty trials of life behind the counter.

"We are ladies you see," said she, "and we expect to be treated like ladies. But I suppose you have your troubles too."

"Lots of 'em," said the young man, gazing absently into the fire. "Every one has, I suppose."

So that they all became great friends.

At midnight the rain ceased, and the moon burst in a flood of glory on the dripping scene.

"We can go home now," said Dorcas, clapping her hands. "And I dare say, young man," with a pretty air of patronage, "Mr. Morris could make you up a bed on the kitchen floor at our house, without charging very much for it."

"I should be delighted if he could," said the young man meekly.

And so it was arranged.

The girls made an extra toilet next morning to meet "the ghost," as they called him, at the breakfast table.

But to their infinite disgust he was gone when they descended.

"Ye see," said old man Morris, "that there white flanning suit o' his'n had shrunk up with the wet, so it wasn't fairly presentable, and he just cut across lots afore daybreak an' cleared out."

"I told you so," said Barbara. "He was a ghost, and being such he dissolved into thin air at cock crow!"

"And I had put on my blue cambric gown," sighed Mary.

"And my hair was crimped so nicely," said Dorcas.

"But he gave me this ere," said Old Man Morris, displaying on the horny palm of his hand a gold half eagle.

"Rather extravagant for a tailor's clerk," said Mary.

"That is just the class of people," said Dorcas, loftily, "who don't know how to spend money properly."

"I thought he was very nice," said Barbara; "and I thought perhaps he was going to be the beginning of a real adventure."

September set in sultry as the tropics this year, and the three girls returned to Archer's great store with unwilling footsteps.

But the cashier met them with a smiling face.

"I've received instructions," said he, "to raise the salaries of all the girls in this department 10 per cent. Young Mr. Archer himself told me to do so."

"Young Mr. Archer!"

"There he is now," said the cashier.

And the next minute the hero of the rainy night had come up and was cordially shaking hands with them.

"Then you are not the tailors's young man after all?" said Mary, a little taken aback.

"Did I say I was?" said Archibald Archer.

At the end of the autumn little Barbara Hale had a confession to make.

"Girls," said she, "when I thought that young Mr. Archer was going to be the beginning of an adventure I was right. He has asked me to marry him, and when we go on our summer vacation next year we shall go together."

And Mary and Dorcas kissed little Barbara and congratulated her from the very bottom of their hearts.

"This," said they, "is an adventure worth having.—Saturday Night.

Quite Content.

Perhaps the occupation of the traveling clock-mender is not entirely gone, but at any rate, he is seen for less frequently than he used to be seeking a job in the country regions. One such wandering mechanic says that, by the aid of a persuasive tongue, he could usually obtained permission to exercise his skill. In one case, however, the owner of the patient proved to be so well satisfied with a bad time-keeper that she remained quite obdurate to his eloquence.

She was a placid-looking old lady, and she sat paring apples in her kitchen when her clock-mender arrived,

"Why, ma'am," said he, in a shocked tone, as he stepped up to to the door, "did you know your clock was wrong?"

"Oh yes," said she pleasantly, glancing up at its deceptive face. "It al'ays gains an hour or so in the mornin'."

"Now how lucky it is I happened to come along this way! I can fix that clock for you double quick."

"No, I guess I won't have it meddled with," replied she, still amiably but with decision. "I set it by the sun at noon-time, and in the afternoon it don't make any great difference whether I know what time it is or not."

"But how are you going to set it on cloudy days.

"We're not very busy when it storms, and we don't mind if it ain't set.

"I hope you're not afraid I should hurt it," continued the repairer.

"No, not exactly afraid," said the old lady, prudently, "but Hiram and me had that clock when we was married, and I guess we won't have it touched."

As the traveling tinker was about to leave, he made one more effort.

"Why, ma'am," said he, "you won't even know when it's mealtimes, unless you give me a chance at that clock!"

The old lady looked at him with a twinkle in her eye.

"Young man," said she, "when you're as old as I be, maybe you," have sense enough to eat when you're hungry."

Graceful Story of the Spanish Queen.

The Queen-Regent of Spain is the subject of a graceful story apropos of the death of the sister of Senor Emilio Castelar. Her Majesty received the news in the midst of the bustle of the birthday festivities of the little King, as she entered the reception-room where the guests were assembled for the great banquet. She did not call for one of her high functionaries, but said to the president of the council himself, "Go and tell M. Castelar that I forget that he is the head of the Republican party; that I only see in him a National glory, a great orator, an artist who has no peer, and that I have the deepest sympathy with him in his loss, both as Spaniard and as Sovereign."