

THE HOME DEPARTMENT.

Silent Sounds.

You do not hear it? Unto me
The sweet, low sound comes cease-
lessly,
And, floating, floods the earth and sky
With tender tone.
You do not hear the restless beat
Upon the floor of childish feet—
Of feet that treat the flow'ry street
Of heaven, alone.

At morn, at noon, at eve, at night,
I hear the patter, soft and light,
And catch the gleam of wings, snow
white,

About my door.
And on the silent air is borne
The voice that from my world was
torn—
That left me, comfortless, to mourn,
Forever more.

Sometimes, there floats from out the
street,
A burst of laughter, shrill and sweet,
And I, forgetting, turn to greet
My darling fair.
Soft as the ripple of the stream
Breeze-kissed beneath the moon's pale
beam,
How strangely real doth it seem!
And he not there.

Ah, no; you cannot hear him call;
You catch no laugh, no light footfall;
I am his mother—that is all.

And He who said
"I will not leave thee desolate"
Has, somehow, loosed the bands of
fate,
And left ajar the golden gate
Which hides my dead.

His Primrose

An old man sat before the table in
a little green house. No sound was
heard except the drowsy hum of in-
sects among the flowers and the tick-
ing of the fat Dutch clock on the dusty
shelf. The old man bent over the ac-
count book with puzzled brow. Then
making the necessary preparations for
the night and laying his hands on the
primrose in a trembling caress, the
owner of the little establishment went
away, leaving the shop in darkness.
When the sound of his steps had
grown faint and finally died away,
the plants began to speak to each
other.

"Have you noticed how worried our
master has seemed, of late?" the little
primrose asked.

"I have, indeed," answered the
geraniums by the window, "and have
been whispering it to each other. Is
it because so few purchasers are com-
ing here now, do you think?"

"That may be the reason," the tall
palm answered, "but it is no wonder
that we have few customers, for from
here I can see the door of the big
florist's on the avenue. People are
going in and out there all day long
and maybe they go in and out at night,
too, but it is so dark that I can't tell
then, though I often have tried."

"His face has looked worried ever
since we came here," the pansies an-
swered, when asked their opinion, "but
we have not been here long. How was
it before we came? Can you tell us,
century plant, you have been here
longest?"

"Yes," the century plant began, "I
have been here longest and will tell
you all I know about our kind master.
It has been many years since I was

first brought here. It was when the
green house was new; the master's
face was young and there were no
lines of care upon it. A very pretty
young girl always was near him in the
afternoons, there by the desk. The
girl would read to him or sew and
sing softly and they both seemed very
happy. In those days a little golden-
haired child was with them, also. The
child played happily around among
the plants, and in the evening the
young master would take the child
upon his shoulder, and with the young
lady go home. We were all very hap-
py in those days. But one time for
several days the master did not come
to the green house and when he did
the first deep lines of care showed
upon his face. Then only the child
came with him. He seemed lonely
and was very tender and loving to his
Primrose, as he called her. The little
girl grew more beautiful every day, it
seemed, and as time went on, and she
grew older, she seemed even prettier
than the flowers themselves. She al-
ways loved the primroses best, as a
child, and used to care for them her-
self. One day the master began tak-
ing care of the primroses, and it was
a long time before we saw the little
girl again. Each week a letter came
to him which he read with great
pride, always looking very glad when
it came. We guessed that they must
have been from Primrose. I have seen
a good deal of the world, being a cen-
tury plant, and when she came back
after several years, I was sure she
had been away to some college. Her
golden hair was coiled on top of her
head and she looked tall and stately.
Then the other great sorrow came to
the master. His Primrose went away."

"And did she never come back?"
the flowers asked.

"No, she has never come back. The
big maple tree whispered it all to me,
and he saw in the clear moonlight.
A tall young man came to the gate
and waited that night and Primrose
came out of the house and the young
man took her hand and kissed it. The
maple said that Primrose looked sad
for a moment, but when the man whis-
pered something to her she smiled and
went away with him. After this the
master looked much older and sadder.
He used to forget all about us, and
talk to himself, and murmur, 'she may
come back.' But one day a letter
came, and after he read that he shook
his head and said, 'She will never
come back.'

After that time all you plants who
are here now, came. The master
bought more primroses, and cared for
them most tenderly. Then customers
were less and less frequent. Can you
be surprised that the old master looks
sad and worried?"

There was a silence among the flow-
ers after the century plant finished,
and then the primrose spoke.

"We did not understand all this.
We have not looked our prettiest to
try and attract customers. He has
done all he can, but we have not tried
our best to help the master. Let us

all do it now, let us begin and look
our best for his sake."

"We will; we will," the flowers an-
swered and all of them straightened
up. Even the frowsey chrysanthemums
shook their heads into pretty atti-
tudes. All the flowers awaited the
morning, expectantly.

As the first streak of light pene-
trated the soiled sky-lights, they asked
of the geraniums by the window, "Is
he coming?"

"Not yet," the geraniums answered.
Again when the sun shone full upon
them, the flowers asked, "Is he com-
ing?"

"Not the master, but some one is
coming," they answered.

It was a man who stopped only a
moment and when he left, a black
ribbon fluttered from the door knob.

"Why is this?" the flowers asked.
And the century plant explained it
to them.

"And will he never come back
again?" the primrose asked.

"Never," the century plant an-
swered.

"Then we are too late?" the flowers
all asked.

"We are all too late," the century
plant replied.

It was evening again; all day the
flowers had wilted with sadness. The
pink glow of the sky was reflected
upon the flowers. A woman stepped
quietly into the green house and sink-
ing on her knees beside the prim-
roses, buried her tear-stained face
among the blossoms. The soft glow
of the sun shone in the woman's
golden hair.

"That must be his Primrose," the
flowers whispered.

After Graduation.

Now that the commencement exer-
cises are over, and schools and col-
leges closed for the season, many of
our young girls will be putting away
their school books for the last time—
never to be opened again for routine
work, and the "sweet girl graduate"
is thinking, with a sigh of relief, that
her lessons are ended, her education
finished—that there is nothing more
for her to learn!

We older women, who are standing
upon the verge of life's hill, whence
the path leads inevitably down to les-
sened usefulness, cannot but feel a
thrill of anxious pity as we realize,
as they cannot, that the real schooling
of life has but just begun for these
dear daughters; that the harder,
sterner lessons which many of them
must learn through tears and tribula-
tions, are but now opening before
them.

These girls all wish to be real, live
women, and the brighter the intellect,
the higher the ambition to be among
the useful, helpful, successful ones in
the years to come; to shine socially
and intellectually, to be the peer of
cultured men and women with whom
they must now take their place, and
to broaden, brighten and make beau-
tiful all the life about them.

Every one of these bright young
girls expects to marry, and to have
a home of her own. Many of them do
marry, but few of them can marry

exceptionally well, so far as money is
concerned. The majority of them will
marry men of mediocre means, and
will literally have to make their
homes, and keep them, with their own
hands. No small number will marry
men who are poor in purse, and these
will be compelled to do, if not all, at
least the larger share of all the work
that must inevitably be done to make
a home of the house they occupy. This
will include much of the menial labor,
the common, coarse drudgery which
must have its place in every house-
hold. These girls will, most of them
plunge thoughtlessly into these per-
plexities, without an idea but that they
are only pleasures, easily to be learned,
or lightly to be thrown upon imagi-
nary shoulders.

But the sweetest lassie of them all
will find, after she is married, that,
unless her table is properly cared for,
her viands nourishing and appetizing
and the home surroundings clean and
comfortable, she will fall from the
exalted position in her young hus-
band's estimation, and will learn
through bitter heartaches, to wish
she had understood more clearly her
duties as a wife, and had been better
trained to meet the exacting demands
made upon the successful housekeeper.
Men, moving about in the world, ac-
tive intellectually or physically, use
up an immense amount of vitality,
which must constantly be replenished
by a usually healthy appetite, and, as
head of the household, it is her duty
to see that the means of repair are put
before her husband in the most nour-
ishing and appetizing form. Many a
young wife's trouble in domestic life
begins with her ignorance of the
proper preparation of the indispens-
able articles of food placed upon her
table. She may know perfectly the
art of cake baking, making dainty
confectionary, and concocting deli-
cious desserts, but if her knowledge
and practical skill in bread-making,
roasting or boiling of meats, and pre-
paring vegetables has been neglected,
she will find herself wretchedly hand-
capped, and will find many a cloud
upon her matrimonial sky which it
will need but a slight show of temper
and impatience to round into disas-
trous storms.

It is with a touch of sorrowful fore-
boding that we see these dear, un-
thinking girls carelessly throwing
aside advantages and opportunities,
and, through ignorance or defiance,
following methods and forming habits
that must make them the helpless and
burdensome instead of the helpful and
courageous in the great struggle into
which their lives must inevitably
merge, and we long to save them, even
from themselves, if words of admon-
ishing may reach them.

We know they all wish, and intend
to be all that is good and true and
wise, in the new life their dreamings
call up. But wishing is without
avail, if will is lacking. To attain
their ideal, there is a work to be done,
honestly, earnestly and courageously.
There must be a weeding out of faults
of temper, of self-indulgence, and
habits of indolence and indifference.
Lessons of self-sacrifice, of thought-
fulness and patient care-taking; of