

THE OLD HOME.

MRS. SARAH B. FENCH.

[To my father in his declining years this poem is affectionately inscribed.]

"How dear to my heart" is the cot I was born in,

That little log cabin now voiceless and still,

Where Nature first gave me the "top to the morning"

A jubilant welcome, from valley and hill,

The wrens in the eaves re-echoed the greeting,

Where a sum-berry tree was crowned in its pride

With halo of rubies and (strange family meeting)

Had taken an apple tree home as a bride.

In the shade of the chestnut, whose prickly fruit bore us

An emblem to measure the lives of mankind,

Was the old fashioned oven that glimmered before us,

A warm-hearted monster with pump-our mother stood guard o'er the great, roaring fire.

other means; the employment of competent engineers, and the control of the Loup would be a mere cypher compared with many engineering feats which have proved a success.

The inhabitants of your city and county possess all the necessary vim, many of them considerable wealth, and all have good credit, I therefore expect soon to hear of the ball being put in motion.

Society here seem to take a good deal of enjoyment. Sociables and hops, private parties, club meetings and other amusements are of nightly occurrence.

The stage and rostrum are well attended and the best talent on the boards and lecture list can be seen and heard here.

A special train leaves to-morrow for Lincoln, giving our citizens the chance of a cheap ride to attend a camp-fire of the G. A. R.

The train will return the following morning. To-day the Sunday law is to be rigidly observed.

Of course the saloon keepers at first thought it was a shot aimed directly at them.

The original motion of one of the members of the Common Council was so intended but it was amended so as to include every business of whatsoever nature.

The amendment was passed, and the City Marshal issued his instructions to the policemen to enforce all ordinances having any bearing on the desecration of the Sabbath.

The saloon keepers are said, up to the present writing (8 p. m.) to have proved to be the most law-abiding citizens.

While out at the post-office at noon I saw fast young men in squads trying to get in several places to take a "smile," but were invariably balked.

As they would leave the door with an air of disappointment, and consequent vexation, I could hear them muttering something which to me sounded like

mob in the streets of Paris—I saw him at the head of the army in Italy—I saw him crossing the bridge of Lodi with the tri-color in his hand—I saw him in Egypt in the shadow of the pyramids—I saw him conquer the Alps and mingle the eagle of France with the eagles of the Alps—I saw him at Marengo—at Ulan and Austerlitz—I saw him in Russia, the infantry of the wild blast scattering his legions like winter's withered leaves—I saw him at Lepsic in defeat and disaster, driven by a million bayonets back upon Paris, clutched like a wild beast and banished to Elba—I saw him upon the frightful field of Waterloo where chance and fate combined to wreck the fortunes of their former king—I saw him at St. Helena, with his hands crossed behind him, gazing out upon the sad and solemn sea.

I thought of the orphans and widows he had made, the tears that had been shed for his glory—the only woman who had ever loved him, pushed from his heart by the cold hand of ambition. And I said I would rather have been a French peasant and have worn wooden shoes. I would rather have lived in a hut with a vine growing over the door, and the grapes growing purple in the kisses of the autumn sun.

I would rather have been that poor peasant, with my loving wife by my side knitting as the day died out in the sky, with my children upon my knees and their arms about me. I would rather have been that man and gone down to the tongueless silence of the dreamless dust—than to have been the imperial personation of force and murder known as Napoleon the Great.

It is not necessary to be rich in order to be happy. It is only necessary to be in love. Thousands of men go to college and get a certificate that they have an education, and that certificate is in Latin, and they stop studying, and in two years to save their lives they couldn't read the certificate they got. It is mostly so in marrying. They stop courting when they get married. They think we have won her and that is enough. After the difference before and after! How bright their eyes! How light their steps, and how full they were of generosity. I tell you a man should consider himself in good luck if a woman loves him when he is doing his level best.—Bob Tingersoll.

Origin of Christmas. The origin of our Christmas Festival is pre-historic. No one knows any thing certain as to it. The date of it was evidently not fixed by the birth of Christ, but by the movements of the sun. The day when the sun reached the limit of its southern movement and turned northward was the one fixed upon by the ancient world as a feast day. The sun worshippers of Persia doubtless gave the Festival to Old Rome, and the Christians naturally adopted the day, which they found made ready to hand, for festive purposes; and so the Roman Saturnalia became Christiana, or our Christmas. There is no reason to suppose that the date corresponds to the nativity of Jesus. Clemens, one of the Christian Fathers who lived some 200 years after Christ, expressed the opinion that the birth of Christ occurred in the month of May, which is quite probable.

But the festival is not dependent on any date. It lives in its own life derived from the amiable life of all peoples. For whether we find it in Persia or in Rome, among heathen or Christian people, we always find it presenting one and the same bright appearance. In every nation and age, having a different name in every language, we find it always inspired with the same spirit. It is always a day dedicated to friendship and affection—and expressed in giving. It is pre-eminently now, what it has always been, a day of love and of gifts.

It is a true Festival. That is enough to say of it. The innocent happiness it brings to households sanctifies it to us all, and will forever. All the sweeter and holier it seems to us because it antedates the religion which now fosters it. We receive it as a sweet creation of human affection, before humanity knew its connection with Divinity—a fragrant custom drifted to us from the current of time from the indiscernible distances, which stretch back toward the beginning of the world. How the Persian children enjoyed it! How the boys and girls of the old Pagan times and world laughed over their gifts and froliced around the tree, even as our little ones do to-day! We have connected it with a diviner event, but the sweet purpose it serves now, it served in all the dim days long gone. Let us remember amid the gayety of the Holiday Season that it is now among the least of Christ's triumphs that he has captured the joyfulness of the world, and holds it like a white dove in his hands.

"Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy that shall be to all the people."

In the country towns of New England the women strive to see who shall get their tubs under the water spout of the village church and catch wash-water for Monday.

Any actress can paint, but only a few can draw.

A Talk with Mothers.

As Irene Aroon has requested that I shall give my experience with children, I think I will continue my talk with mothers. But, dear Irene, I do not feel that I have finished, or shall finish while life lasts, the care-strewn road that you, perhaps, have just started on. True, my path may be compared to one that has opened out on a level plain. I know that the dear children try to smooth the rough places, and lead me gently down the western slope. A true mother is a mother always; no matter how old her children are, they are to be her children still. There will be care and anxiety for their welfare so long as there is one spark of motherly love in her bosom. The youngest of my children is so old that he handles, with a cool and fearless hand, a pair of gay young horses, and yet my children's actions say, as did the little boy, when asked to define the word "home." Said he: "Home, home—why, home is where mother is!" Yes, we should win our children's love so completely that no place will be home to them like that where mother is.

How shall we win that love? By yielding to their every wish and whim? By no means. This is just the way to spoil them, and lay up a harvest of sorrow for the mother. Nor should their wishes be all thwarted and the gay young spirits all crushed down by too severe discipline.

The mother should first discipline herself, and she should begin that discipline long before her child is capable of reading her face, and they can do that at a much earlier age than many think.

If the mother is in the habit of keeping her own tongue and temper under control, her child will be likely to inherit the same faculty.

Does the mother give way to using slang phrases or low language, her child will do the same. She is the first teacher, learns the child's first words, and she should be careful what those words are.

A kind-hearted nurse, as she laid a little babe in its mother's arms, said: "Now, Flo, for this child's sake, stop this way you have of using improper language and slang phrases, and use only such words as are chaste and good. You do not want your boy to use such language as you have been in the habit of using, do you?"

"No," said the mother, "I do not." "Then begin now to break yourself of the habit you have got into or it will be too late before you are aware of it."

The mother promised and seemed in earnest. Three years passed; her boy was a bright, fine-looking, little fellow. The mother's habits were unbroken, and she would laugh to hear him repeat her own words, words that made her old friend shudder and turn away with a sigh, for she loved the boy dearly.

It is natural for children to follow the example of their parents, but it does seem easier for them to imitate faults and imperfections. For that reason we should be doubly careful what we do and say.

A gentleman once took his little son to a public dinner. A waiter came around asking each guest what he would take to drink? He came to the boy before he did to the father. The latter was watching to see what the choice would be. The boy looking in the waiter's face said: "Please, sir, I will take the same as father does." Some had chosen wine, some brandy, but the father quickly said: "I will take a glass of water."

Thus he saw and acknowledged the importance of a good example before his child. IVY'S MOTHER.

Do Monkeys Swim? A correspondent of Land and Water, in reply to a question whether monkeys swim, says: "I was always under the impression that they did not like wetting their fur or hair, but, at Sangar, Central India, when I was stationed there, I had a little monkey that was exceedingly fond of swimming and diving. One day, on taking him to the pond at the bottom of my compound, he jumped off my shoulder and dived (like a man) into the water, which was three or four feet deep; he had his chain on at the time, and when he dived in, the chain caught in some grass or root at the bottom and kept the monkey down; he was just able to come to the top of the water. Feeling his chain had caught, he dived down, undid the chain and continued the swim with the chain in his hand. He swam just like a man as far as I could see from the motion of his arms. Several of my brother officers came to see him swimming very quietly, and cunningly trying to catch the frogs that lay floating on the top of the water."

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