

ALICE CARY'S SWEETEST POEM.

Of all the beautiful pictures
That hang on memory's wall,
Is one of a dim old forest,
That seemeth best of all;
Not for its snarled oaks olden,
Dark with the mistletoe;
Not for the violets golden
That sprinkle the vale below;
Not for the milk-white lilies
That lean from the fragrant hedge
Coquetting all day with the sunbeams,
And stealing their golden edge;
Not for the vines on the upland
Where the bright red berries rest;
Not the pinks, nor the pale sweet cowslip,
It seemeth to me the best.

I once had a little brother,
With eyes that were dark and deep—
In the lap of that olden forest
He lieth in peace asleep;
Light as the down of the thistle,
Free as the winds that blow,
We roved there the beautiful summers,
The summers of long ago;
But his feet on the hills grew weary,
And one of the autumn eves
I made for my little brother
A bed of the yellow leaves.

Sweetly his pale arms folded
My neck in a meek embrace,
As the light of immortal beauty
Silently covered his face;
And when the arrows of sunset
Lodged in the tree tops bright,
He fell, in his saint-like beauty,
Asleep by the gates of light.
Therefore, of all the pictures
That hang on memory's wall,
The one of the dim old forest
Seemeth best of all.

HOW MEG CHANGED HER MIND.

Little Meg lay on the sofa in her mother's pleasant sitting room, with a very discontented expression on her plump, round face.

Everybody knows that a sprained ankle cannot be cured without perfect rest. Meg had not been allowed to put her foot to the ground for a week. Her father carried her into the sitting-room every morning, and Mamma read aloud, and played games and devoted herself to Meg's pleasure; but on this afternoon, Mamma was obliged to go out for an hour or two, and it had just occurred to Meg that she was very tired lying still, and moreover, that this was the day Edith Perkins was having a party, and she imagined what fun they must be enjoying, while she was left at home with Jane, the maid. She had plenty of books to read and a large family of dolls of all kinds, from wax to paper, besides Snow-ball, the fat, white kitten, who was always ready to play, but she was out of humor and did not wish to amuse herself with any of these things; besides, her ankle ached.

And so it happened that when Aunt Mary arrived to spend the afternoon with her pet, she was greeted with a burst of tears and sobs, mingled with oft-repeated lamentations of "Oh! how horrid everything is! I want to go to Edith's party! There never was anybody in the world so unfortunate as I am!"

Poor Aunt Mary tried soothing and petting in vain, till at last she said, "Meg, dear, I want to tell you about some little sick children I saw in London. Wouldn't you like to hear? I can't begin till you stop crying."

One of Aunt Mary's London stories was not to be despised, and presently Meg said, in quite an altered tone, "Do tell me, Aunty, I won't cry now."

"Well, then, in the mighty city of London there are many people so dreadfully poor that they suffer from hunger and cold and dirt every day of their lives. Now, this is fearful enough for the strong ones, but fancy what illness must be in a crowded room, on a hard bed, with no clean linen; no cooling things to drink, or nice, nourishing food to give strength; without any doctor, very likely, and in short, with more misery of every kind than you and I could even imagine.

"Knowing all this, good people have built

hospitals where these unfortunate ones can have every thing done to them to soothe their sufferings and help them to get well. Some of these are especially for children, because it is thought that they can be better taken care of in an hospital suited exactly to their wants, than where there are sick people of all ages. In one that I went to see, there were about fifty little patients, divided among four large, airy, cheerful rooms, with pictures on the walls, and flower-plants in the windows. Each child had a neat little iron bedstead, with a white counterpane, and across each bed a sort of shelf-table was fixed upon which their play-things were arranged. Very queer play-things they were, generally old shabby toys that had been discarded by more fortunate children; but although most of the dolls were more or less forlorn, and the horses didn't look as if they could run very fast, they were highly valued by those little people, some of whom probably had never had a toy of any kind before. In one of the rooms, the little patients were too ill to play, but as they lay back on their pillows they gazed fondly at their small possessions; and the dolls who sat on the little tables, with their legs hanging over the edge, vacantly staring at their poor owners, I dare say did them as much good as did some of the doctors' medicines.

"In the other rooms the children were able to have a good deal of fun, if one could judge from the merry laughter one heard at the little jokes that went about from one bed to another, and yet, do you know, Meg, it often was saddest of all to see the children who seemed most comfortable, because one knew that while some of the few who were violently ill might get quite well again with the good care they were having, many of these would never walk or run, or be rosy, healthy boys and girls any more in this world.

"One little boy named Arthur, I was told, was a great favorite with all the rest, and I did not wonder at it when I spoke to him, and heard his sweet voice and saw the bright smile that lit up his pale, little face. He told me with delight that his mother and father and the baby came to see him every Sunday, upon which a little girl in the next bed, said sadly, 'I've no mother to come and see me, for she is dead,' but she added, brightly, 'Father comes, though, once a month.'

"I turned away to hide the tears that would get into my eyes. Of course, I knew that the kind doctors and nurses at the hospital did all they possibly could for the happiness of the poor little things, but it seemed to me so very, very hard, that they could not have their mothers, just when they were ill, and needed them so much!

"One thing that brightened all, was their sweet behavior to each other. Not one bit of jealousy or selfishness did I see, and there was a real courtesy in the way that each one seemed to care that the others should be noticed too. I could not help contrasting it with the rude, self-seeking of many children I have known who ought to do better and not worse than they.

"And how shall I tell you how patient they were? There was no crying nor complaining, though some were suffering dreadful pain; and the only noise I heard was a slight moan wrung from the white lips of a little hero, who had been brought in the day before, dreadfully injured by a fall. There was a kind, strong angel in that hospital, whose sweet presence, though unseen, was felt. Yes," whispered Aunt Mary, as she bent to kiss Meg's upturned, questioning face, "it was the angel of patience, darling, and he will always come to everybody who longs for him, and tries faithfully to keep him when he is here."

The story was finished, and Meg lay quite still for some minutes, thinking, with her hand fast clasped in Aunt Mary's. Then she said, softly, "I'm very sorry I was so naughty, I don't really think I am more unfortunate than anybody else, and I'll never say so again."

Meg did not forget her promise, and all through the remaining weeks of her confinement to the sofa, the angel of the hospital staid close by her side.—*Elizabeth Lawrence.*

THE BOY IN LOVE.

In man's life falling in love is a [revolution. It is, in fact, the one thing that makes him a man. The world of boyhood is strictly a world of boys; sisters, cousins, aunts and mothers are mixed up in the general crowd of barbarians that stands without the playground. There are few warmer or more poetic affections than the chivalrous friendship of schoolfellows; there is no truer or more genuine worship than a boy's worship of the hero of scrimmage or playground.

It is a fine world in itself, but it is a wonderfully narrow and restricted world. Not a girl may peep over the palings. Girls can't jump, or sag out, or swarm up a tree; they have nothing to talk about as boys talk; they never heard of that glorious swipe of old Brown's; they are awful milkops; they cry and "tell mamma;" they are afraid of a governess, and of a cow.

It is impossible to conceive a creature more utterly contemptible in a boy's eyes than a girl of his own age generally is. Then in some fatal moment comes the revolution. The barrier of contempt goes down with a crash. The boy world disappears. Brown, that god of the playground, is cast to the owls and the bats. There is a sudden coolness in the friendship that was to last from school to the grave.

Paper chases and the annual match with the old "fellows," cease to be the highest object of human interest. There is less excitement than there was last year when a great cheer welcomes the news that Mugby has won the prize. The boy's life has become muddled and confused. The old existence is sheering off, and the news comes slyly, fitfully. It is only by a sort of compulsion that he will own that he is making all this "fuss" about a girl. For a moment he rebels against the spell of that one little face, the witchery of that one little hand.

He lingers on the border of this new country from whence there is no return to the old playing fields. He is shy—strange to this world of woman and woman's talk and woman's ways. The surest, steadiest foot on the playground stumbles over footstools and tangles itself in colored wools. The sturdiest arm that ever wielded bat trembles at the touch of a tiny finger. The voice that rang out like a trumpet among the tumult of football bushes, trembles and falters in saying half a dozen commonplace words. The old sense of mastery is gone; he knows that every chit in the nursery has found out his secret, and is laughing over it. He blushes—and a boy's blush is a hot, painful blush—when the sisterly heads bend together and he hears them whispering what a fool he is. Yes; he is a fool; that is one thing that he feels quite certain about. There is only one other thing he feels even more certain about; that he is in love, and that love has made him a man.—*Home Journal.*

METEORIC IRON IN SNOW.—Observations of snow collected on mountain tops, and within the Arctic circle, far beyond the influence of factories and smoke, confirm the supposition that minute particles of iron float in the atmosphere, and in time fall to the earth. By some men of science these floating particles of iron are believed to bear some relation to the phenomena of the aurora. Gronemann, of Göttingen, for instance, holds that streams of the particles revolve around the sun, and that, when passing the earth, they are attracted to the poles, thence stretching forth as long filaments into space; but, as they travel with planetary velocity, they become ignited in the earth's atmosphere, and in this way produce the well-known luminous appearance characterizing auroral phenomena. Prof. Norlén, of Spitzbergen, says that he found in it exceedingly minute particles of metallic iron, phosphorus and cobalt.