CALLING THE MEADOW BEAUTY.

Fair Jenny Dean came down the lane
Just as the dew was falling,
And o'er the meadow one could hear
Her sweet young voice a-calling:
"Co-boss! co-boss!"—her golden hair
Was o'er her shoulders flowing;
"Co-boss! co-boss!"—the clover thick
Was all about her blowing.

The pearly bloom of her fair face
Was flushed with earnest meaning;
The sun, with slanting beams afar,
Was lost in golden gleaming;
And still she cried: "Co-boss! co-boss!
You heed nor lads nor lasses,
With head so deeply buried in
The tender meadow grasses."

She turned to think of something new
With which to coax the beauty,
For Jenny never failed to do
A loving daughter's duty—
When, lo! their neighbor's handsome son,
To make his journey shorter,
Had crossed the field, and stood before
The farmer's sweet young daughter.

Her father watchful-eyed had been,
And lavish in his telling;
He did not wish to have the lads
Come oft about his dwelling.
He thought as fathers often think,
With wisdom great in measure,
To always be at mother's side
Should be a daughter's pleasure.

So Robert, rogue, had double aim
In coming through the clover;
He had a little plea to frame,
And longed to have it over.
He longed to know if Jenny's eyes,
With power of fine discerning,
Had e'er descried the semblance
Within his bosom burning.

"Forego for once your evening task,"
He said, with head averted;
"I have a little boon to ask,
A right to be asserted.
To yonder highway, waiting near,
We'll walk, for no one passes;
The dews are falling thickly here
Upon the meadow grasses."

So Jenny, wrested from the place
Where every evening found her,
Learned occupation far more sweet,
And words that were profounder.
For once her song, "Co-boss! co-boss!"
Its mystery was hated,
And Bess beside the meadow bars
For once was found belated.

How long they wandered in the gray,
How sweet he told the story,
Whether she answered yea or nay,
I can not set before you;
But in the morn her father said,
With grave and solemn duty:
"Hereafter"—nodding his gray head—
"I'll call the Meadow Beauty'"

—*Mrs. M. A. Page, in Interior.*

A DOUBLE CURE.

Wrought by the Kindly Advice of a Lady Physician.

"Dear me, what is the trouble now?"

Mrs. March raised her head with a look of worry on her face as very inharmonious sounds came from the room in which her older daughter Bertha was giving a music lesson to her younger one, Ruth. Words of fretful fault-finding arose from the one, provoking, saucy, rebellious ones from the other. At length Ruth burst angrily into the room, crying:

"Mamma, I wish you'd never make me take another lesson from Bertha. I'd rather never learn music as long as I live. She finds fault all the time, and I won't be scolded by her."

"Patience, dearie, patience," said her mother, with a smile. "Music-teaching is pretty hard work, you know, and if your sister is a little hasty with you sometimes you will try to bear it, I'm sure."

Ruth, quickly to fly up, was as quickly soothed by a few loving words.

"A *little* hasty," she said, half laughing, as she threw her arms around her mother's neck. "She is as cross as twenty bears, mother dear, but I'd stand forty bears rather than vex you. But do let me leave this lesson now," she coaxed. "Perhaps it will come easier next time."

"How long are you going to keep me waiting?" called the fretful voice from the parlor, at which Ruth, seeing half consent in her mother's eye, made her escape into the garden.

"You needn't finish the lesson this morning, Bertha," said her mother, turning now to pour oil on the other troubled spirit.

"Well, I'm thankful for that," said Bertha, rising from the piano. "Of all the teasing young ones in the world, I do believe she's the worst."

"I think, Bertha," said her mother, in a more serious tone than she had used in speaking to Ruth, "that you ought to try and exercise a little more gentleness and forbearance toward your sister. She is sometimes trying, I know, but she does love music, and is bright at it. And she is so affectionate that I am sure you could influence her very favorably, if you would."

Bertha shrugged her shoulders, as if to express her lack of anxiety to try.

"I do wish you would hire a teacher for her, mother. I can't do anything with her. I don't believe she will ever learn much of me."

"Indeed, I am afraid so," said her mother, with a sigh, "but it can not possibly be afforded. Will you take baby for awhile, Bertha, or do the up-stairs work?"

"Oh, dear! I'll go up-stairs, I suppose. I do think baby-tending is the greatest drudgery in the world. Or, no—my hands are getting hard and spreading out by sweeping—I don't think my talent lies in housework. I'll take him."

"Be patient with him, dear, he's a little ailing and fretful to-day."

"He's always fretful, seems to me. I do wish we could have a second girl, mother. I'm sure we need one."

"Perhaps so," said her mother, with a weary look. "But I did not expect to feel the need so keenly when my oldest daughter came home from school to be my help and comfort."

There was a pained and hurt expression on the pale face and in the discouraged tone which might well have touched the daughter's heart, but Bertha only turned impatiently away with the baby as her mother went up-stairs, saying almost contemptuously to herself:

"I am sorry mother made such a mistake as to rely on me for housework and nursery work, and to teach music to crabbed young ones. Is that all that my advantages have fitted me for, I should like to know?"

Bertha had never been able quite to make up her mind what her advantages had fitted her for, but seemed unfortunately to be continually beset by duties for which she felt fully persuaded they had not fitted her. She had never found her share in the sweet home cares and obligations during all the happy years in which she had pursued a very complete course of study in the schools in the town in which they lived. The discovery came after her proud and loving parents had strained every effort and practiced every self-denial in order to send her for two years to a school in a distant city; and at the end of that period she had made a long visit in the luxurious home of one of her school friends, where she had contracted tastes and habits which had effectually destroyed such fitness for a life in her own modest home, and the duties there devolving upon her, as the fashionable school had left.

Out in the garden Bertha made a few listless attempts to amuse the restless baby, and then drew from her pocket a letter she had recently received from her dear friend. Its glowing picture of the delights of an endless round of parties, operas and other pleasures, with its warm expressions of sympathy for herself in being condemned to endure the trials of an "uncongenial home," drew tears of self-pity from Bertha's eyes, and did not serve to increase her store of patience with her little brother.

As time went on she still quietly but persistently avoided interesting herself in the concerns of her home. She moped and pined for gayeties of which she had found a slight taste so delightful.

"Why don't you go out more with Helen Mayne?" asked her mother one day, anxious to interest her in something.

"I tried that once, you know," said Bertha "and that was enough to show me that our tastes differ entirely."

Mrs. March could not help mentally agreeing with her daughter, but did not speak.

"Yes," went on Bertha, "what a dance she did lead me that day! I saw enough sick, discontented poor people to last me for some time. She left me to attend to one of her pets while she went somewhere else. I had to wring out hot cloths to put on Susan Brown's sprained ankle—worked over her and bore with all her whims and complaints till I was completely tired out, and when I wished her good-bye she thanked me, but told me I did not seem to have a knack of 'taking hold' with sick people as Helen had. I told Helen I would not mind going a little among the poor if it were not that they were all so dirty and so whiny, and never satisfied whatever you do. And what do you think she said?"

"Well, what?"

"That if I could only be placed in a community of healthy, happy, wealthy poor, I might do a great and good work among them; but that I was not likely to do much for the Lord's poor as they really are."

Her mother laughed at Helen's sarcasm, then sighed at the realization of Bertha's utter failure in fulfilling the sweet hopes she had built upon the anticipation of what her womanhood might be. How different she was from the bright, cheery, loving, helpful girl, always, even in the pressure of school duties, making time for care and thought for mother and the younger ones—finding full satisfaction in the blessed ministrations of home life.

"I have been thinking, mother," continued Bertha, "that if my health was better I should take more interest in things."

"Why, are you not well, dear?" asked her mother, in quick solicitude.

"I don't believe I am. My head troubles me a good deal, and my back, too. I think I am running down, and a change would do me good."

"What kind of a change, Bertha?"

"Well, if I could go for a few weeks to Mrs. Dr. Grove's Sanitarium, for instance."

Mrs. March looked a little startled. It had not occurred to her that Bertha was in poor health; but in her always readiness to be anxious about her children she was quite prepared to reproach herself with having failed to perceive the real cause of Bertha's lack of energy. Still, it would be a great undertaking to send her to Mrs. Dr. Grove's.

"I will speak to Dr. Deane about you, Bertha. He might give you a tonic."

"Oh, please don't, mother. He is such an old fogy he would be sure to say it was all fancy. When I spoke to him one day of the condition of my nerves he told me all I wanted was plenty of good, lively exercise, and that if I had to earn my living at a washtub I'd be well enough. Coarse old fellow!"

"I have sometimes thought myself, Bertha, that you would be better if you took more exercise."

"Yes, I know you have," said Bertha, a little disdainfully, "but I don't think home exercise suits me. They ride horseback and exercise in a gymnasium at the Sanitarium. Do think of it, mother," she said, imploringly. "I know it would do me good, and I should come home better able to help you."

The thought of the additions to Bertha's wardrobe, which such a measure would make necessary, was a disagreeable one to her mother, but the idea of self-sacrifice was all-prevailing with her, and she would not let such a difficulty stand in the way when she believed the measure a necessary one.

More talk followed. Father was consulted, but shook his head in grave doubt; but Bertha held to her point, and the result of it all was that a letter was written to Mrs. Dr. Grove.

"I have a bad headache," said Bertha, coming down late one morning. "Can't Nora get me some breakfast?"

"Stop, dear," said her mother as she opened a door to call. "Nora is very busy, and can not wait upon you. Watch baby for a few minutes, and I will get your breakfast."

"Sit still, Harry," said Bertha, as her mother left the room. She lay down on the sofa with a book, and as he remained quiet gave herself little further concern about him until her mother came back carrying a tray with her breakfast.

"Oh, Harry, what are you about?" she said. "Why, Bertha, how could you let him get at my work-basket? It took me nearly two hours yesterday to cut and baste those cuffs—they require such careful measuring—and now he has torn them all apart."

"He's a mischievous little fellow," was Bertha's only remark as she proceeded to eat her breakfast, and then resumed her book and her place on the sofa, while her mother, in the intervals of amusing Harry, tried to do a little work on the sewing-machine. Just as Bertha had made up her mind that the noise was too much for her and that she must find a quieter place, Ruth opened the door and announced:

"Mrs. Dr. Grove."

A cheery-faced wholesome looking person followed the name one of those who impress one as happily combining the character of lady with business woman. Mrs. March introduced herself and her daughter, and then carried the breakfast tray from the room, while the visitor occupied herself with a friendly, but keen and comprehensive glance at the young girl, under which Bertha's embarrassed consciousness of dishevelled hair and dress untidy to an extent not excusable even under plea of a headache, increased every moment.

When Mrs. March returned to the room the visitor engaged in a half hour's chat with the two on indifferent topics, contriving in that short interval to draw some shrewd conclusions with regard to both mother and daughter.

"I had business which called me to this place," at length she said, "so I thought I would reply to your letter in person. You are, of course, the invalid?" she asked, addressing Mrs. March.

"No," was the answer, "it is my daughter."

But the clear, kindly eyes still remained fixed upon the mother's face as a few questions were asked, and the answers listened to with an expression which grew a little more sober. Then, at Mrs. March's evident anxiety to direct attention to her daughter, the visitor drew her chair closer to the young girl, and had soon drawn from her a full description of her physical difficulties. With the best account she could give of them, Bertha could not help feeling that they made but a poor showing.

"My dear child," said the lady, when the end of the small list was reached, "I saw a young girl some time ago who was in much the condition in which I find you, and what do you think I recommended for her?"

"A course of treatment, I suppose," said Bertha.

"Not the course you are thinking of. I advised her mother to send away her girl, and allow her daughter to do the housework for awhile."

A flush of anger and disappointment arose to Bertha's face as her mother asked:

"Did she try it?"

"Well, no, more's the pity. But she had the good sense to go to work, although in a less radical way than that would have been, and give her poor, flabby muscles a little chance to get out of their half paralyzed condition and become more like what the good Lord intended they should be. Now, my dear," she turned again to Bertha, "I have no doubt that a few weeks spent under my care would do you a great deal of good, but that would take you away from your mother, which would be a great pity, for she surely needs all you can do for her here."

With a few words of advice in the matter of fresh air, food at regular intervals, and a suggestion or two as to the care of the person which gave an added tinge to the color on Bertha's cheek, Mrs. Dr. Grove took her leave.

"I do believe that woman meant to insult me," said Bertha, springing from her sofa with eyes ablaze with indignation as soon as the door had closed upon her.

"Oh no, my dear," said her mother, soothingly. "I am sure she meant to be kind. And how thankful I am to find there is nothing serious the matter with you."

"I don't believe she knows anything about it," cried Bertha, escaping to her room to hide her tears of vexation and mortification. She was angry with Mrs. Grove, and angry with her mother for being so ready to believe all she said. If her dear friend in the city had been ill, her polite physician would have made it his concern to find out whether she preferred the seaside or the mountains, and ordered her there at once.

She lay down for awhile, but found her own thoughts such unsatisfactory companions that she got up and hurriedly dressed herself. Helen Mayne lived next door, the gardens of the two houses adjoining. She did not care much for Helen Mayne, but she was better than nobody, so she went to a vine-covered piazza in which she found her sitting with a lap full of gayly-colored silks.

"Oh, is that you, Bertha," she said. "Sit down—I have a new book I want to show you. Just wait till I gather up my silks, and I'll get it. Can you read to me a little? You are such a good reader I always like to hear you."

Bertha knew she read well and liked to be told of it, so she assented very willingly.

"Mother has company, so we'll go out into the arbor, where we shall disturb nobody and nobody will disturb us," went on Helen.

Mrs. Mayne and her friend were talking in the room which opened upon the piazza, and Bertha raised her head as an unpleasantly familiar voice fell upon her ear. Surely those clearly-cut words could come from only one person.

"Isn't it Mrs. Dr. Grove?" she asked motioning toward the curtained window.

"Yes," said Helen, "she is one of mother's old friends. Now—I'll be back in a moment."

"——any friend of mine," the words came distinctly through the open window, "I should feel the most serious anxiety about her. She is wearing her life out, and if she goes on as she is going on now she will soon be past all help."

"But," said Mrs. Mayne, in a voice of great concern, "did you tell her she ought to do something—ought to have a rest, and treatment? Did you?"

"No, it is not my place to tell her. She was not seeking my advice."

"But somebody must say something—they ought to know it," said Mrs. Mayne, in a tone of still greater distress and perplexity. "I've seen how miserable she has looked this long time, and I've talked to her myself sometimes. I've said: 'Mrs. March you must take care of yourself.' But she isn't the sort—she never thinks of herself, she's always doing for"—

The neighborly words broke suddenly off, for Bertha had parted the curtains, and stood with a white face before the two speakers.

"Why, Bertha," said Mrs. Mayne, looking greatly disconcerted, "you here child?—Sit down, do"—

But Bertha gazed in her face like one suddenly aroused from a dream to the realization of some waking terror.

"Is it—is it *my mother* you are talking about?" she gasped.

"Why Bertha, we only meant that—that your mother needs a little care and change to make her quite well. Yes, I'm sure she'll get well, Bertha"—Mrs. Mayne's confused assurances poured forth rapidly.

Bertha turned a piercing glance upon Mrs. Grove's face, but did not read much encouragement there. For a moment it seemed as if she would have fallen, then with a cry of "Oh, mother—mother!" she darted from the open window.

"Stop her, Helen," said Mrs. Mayne to Helen, who was just coming around the house with her new book. Helen threw an arm around the excited girl's waist, and drew her back into the room.

"Don't you know, dear," said Mrs. Grove, using a little gentle force in compelling her to lie down upon the sofa, "that it will never do for you to agitate or alarm your mother? Be quiet, until you can talk with your father and your friends about what ought to be done." Her voice had lost all its tone of sharp criticism, as she, in answer to Bertha's urgent insisting, gave her a clear idea of her mother's real condition.

After an hour's earnest talk Bertha went home, not in a paraxysm of vague alarm, but with the quiet of a mind fully awakened to a new sense of duties and responsibilities. In one dreadful moment had opened before her like a dark chasm a glimpse of what life would be to her and to the others without the tender care and lavish affection which she had held of such little value.

"Come here, Harry," she said, taking the fretful child. "Now, mother, you must go and take a rest until dinner time. If Mrs. Grove is right you must give me plenty to do, you know," she said, anxious to put an appearance of jesting upon the matter which had come with such startling earnest to her.

"Why, Bertha, I thought you were angry about it," said her mother, in surprise.

"Well, I was at first. But"—bending down with a kiss and embrace in which she did not dare to show one-half of her repentant yearning affection—she whispered: "do believe that I am your own daughter come back to be a comfort to you."

Later in the day she said:

"Mother dear, I think it needed all Mrs. Grove's sharp words to give me a stirring up, but now that I am stirred you will find me hard to manage, for I am going to have my own way. Now—*you* are going to have the new clothes, and you are going to Mrs Dr. Grove's, to stay till you are rested and strong. If she won't have me for a patient she must take you."

And Bertha had her way.—*Sidney Dayre, in N. Y. Examiner.*

A GREAT INDUSTRY.

The Wonders and Extent of the Boot and Shoe Trade in Massachusetts.

In 1836 the State of Massachusetts made, in round numbers, 16,000,000 pairs of boots and shoes; in 1844, 20,000,000; in 1852, 45,000,000; in 1864, 51,000,000; in 1874, 59,000,000; in 1880, 78,000,000, and in 1884 (estimated) over 100,000,000. If this is not progress it would be difficult to say in what progress consists.

The value of this vast product is estimated at $120,000,000; and good authority even places it at the superlative amount of $150,000,000. Such is the pleasant little sum gathered in by the boot and shoe manufacturers and merchants of Massachusetts every year. In the great production Lynn ranks first, with an annual business of nearly $30,000,000. Haverhill stands second, with more than $10,000,000. Brockton occupies the third place, with $7,000,000. Number four on the list is Marlboro, which does a business of $5,000,000. Worcester comes next, with over $4,000,000; then Weymouth, then Natick, while Boston stands eighth in the matter of production.

New England furnishes more than two-thirds of the total product of the country, Massachusetts the bulk of the New England product and Essex County the lion's share of the State's business. Lynn is still king in spite of all the changes that have occurred in the trade in the last half century.

The growth of this great industry to such a stage of importance is a matter of fascinating interest to all classes of readers, not more to those engaged in this branch of the trade than to the wider circle who enjoy the fruits of the general prosperity in which this business has been so large a factor. Particularly interesting to business men will be the record of the past few weeks and the prospect for the future. The boot and shoe trade, owing to the exhaustion of the stock, has come into a condition peculiarly sensitive to any increased demand for goods, and the figures show that that demand has been steadily increasing of late. Manufacturers who know whereof they speak are already welcoming the signs of the times as indicative of a gradual but sure restoration of confidence and business activity. If this is true of the boot and shoe business, it will also be true of business in general, and the facts presented in this direction are well worth the perusal of all classes of merchants and business men.—*Boston Globe.*

SHE WAS GLORIFIED.

How a Poor Detroit Colored Woman Passed Away.

You didn't heed the funeral procession the other day. Indeed, you could hardly have realized that it was one. A wagon with a coffin in it—another carrying an old man and a weeping daughter.

In the village it might have been different, no matter how poor and lowly the dead, but in a city the rush of business makes us selfish and hard-hearted. If we can not lose an hour on a legal holiday, our neighbors can not expect us to follow their dead to the narrow home.

"Wasn't sick werry long," said the old man, as he turned from the grave to make his way homeward. "She had dun got too old to stay wid us any longer."

"Did she crave to live on?"

"Deed she didn't, boss. It war jist like de sun gwine down arter a long summer day. She sunk away, an' sunk away, an' de Lawd he dun took her at de jiss' an' we didn't know it."

"How did she die?"

"She jist glorified. We war' chillen together back in de ole times. We growed up on de same plantashun, an' we'd bin mar'd ober fifty y'ars. She believed in de Lawd an' in Heaben. I've hearn folks mock her an' scorn her 'cekase ob dat belief, but she nebber let go. Fiah nor flood nor sickness nor hunger could shake dat belief. Sometimes, when de fiah went out an' we crept clus up to each odder to keep de cold away, I'd whisper to her:

"'Linda, do you still believe dar' am a Lawd who watches ober sich poor creeters as us?'

"An' she would answer me:

"'Moses, he eben notes de sparrows which fall to de ground.'"

"And she died believing?"

"Bel ebin'! Why, boss, she jist glorified! When de summons come an' she 'el she'd got to go her ole face lighted up wid de sunbeams of Heaven till I didn't know it. We gathered 'round her and sung de beautiful sho' an' den she prayed. She axed de Lawd to take her home arter all dese y'ars of tribulashun, an' she axed Him to bring me an' de little one safe frew de dark valley, an' den her face lit up some mo', an' her eyes sparkled wid joy, an' a crown of glory was laid on her brow. When we got de tears outer our eyes de Lawd had done took her."—*Detroit Free Press.*

—President Webb, of Mississippi College, was interviewed by a young man who wanted to go to school. "Well," said the President, "what do you know?" "Nothing," was the response. "Well, you are just four years ahead of some of the other pupils. It takes them four years to learn what you know to start with. Your prospects are fine, sir."—*N. Y. Post.*

A LA BERTHA CLAY.

A Romance Without Love, Concocted for the Sole Purpose of Making the World Better.

It was a cottage over-looking the sea. From its door, over which the roses climbed, one could look out on the white-winged ships sailing to and fro, and down upon a beach on which the waves were ever gently breaking.

[The only drawback was the fact that old Smith had a mortgage on the said cottage, and that the sewerage about the place was defective.]

It was early in the morning. The bright sun was just rising from his bed in the blue, blue sea; the lark rose from the meadow and soared toward heaven; the low of kine was heard on every hand, and the silent watches of night were about to give place to the bustle of a glorious day. One who stood and drank in the picture would have felt entranced.

[It doesn't cost a cent to get that way, and it is twenty per cent cheaper than working up an enthusiasm by the use of lager beer.]

Suddenly the door was opened and a merry laugh was heard. The fair Ethel had left her couch to greet the rising sun. As she stood amidst the roses, her brown eyes sparkling with enthusiasm—her cheeks glowing with health—her golden hair lighted up by the beams of the morning sun, she was the picture of a queen.

[I had forgotten to say that she had a sylph-like form. This is an oversight for which I can never forgive myself, and I hope the reader will not bear down in malice.]

Even the lark paused in his flight to look back at the beautiful picture, and the blue birds which flitted from rose to rose sang sweeter songs, as if to honor her. For a moment the fair Ethel stood thus, and then she descended the steps and glided toward the gate.

[She wasn't on roller skates, but glided is an expression which I hunted for half a day, and which I am determined to use if it breaks a leg.]

At the gate she paused. Once more she surveyed the placid sea—the romantic beach—the rosy eastern horizon. She was alone with Nature for the moment. Her bosom heaved, her eyes grew brighter, and it was evident that the inspiration was on her. She was about to speak. Just at the instant when her ruby lips were about to part there was a bang on the cottage door and a gruff voice called out:

"What in blazes are you doing out there when your mother is sick and I want breakfast in a hurry!"

The long eye-lashes of the beautiful Ethel hid the sparkle of her eyes; her classic chin drooped; a look of sorrow crossed her face; for a moment she stood the picture of despair, and the stoniest heart must have been melted by her attitude. Then she sweetly answered:

"I stuck my hunk of gum on the gate-post last night, and I'll be jugged if some slab sided slug of humanity hasn't come along and gobbled it!"

[This story didn't have any villain in it. There was no love. There was no grievous trials for any one to pass through, and no narrow escapes to chill the blood. The sole idea was to make the world better. Good-bye.]—*Detroit Free Press.*

SELECTION OF BOOKS.

Not What a Person Reads, But What He Digests, Increases Mental Strength.

A distinguished clergyman once remarked that if he were to be imprisoned for ten years with only two books, he would select Shakespeare and Matthew Henry's Commentaries on the Bible. While Frank Power, the correspondent of the London *Times*, was shut up in Khartoum, he wrote home that the three most welcome books they could send him would be Shakespeare, and the "Professor" and "Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table."

Kossuth, during his imprisonment in Turkey, studied two books, Shakespeare and the English Bible. When he went through this country delivering speeches, remarkable for their eloquence and idiomatic grace of expression, scholars asked in amazement how this man had learned English so accurately.

The art of reading is primarily the art of selecting the fittest books to read. What De Quincy calls "knowledge-literature" is undoubtedly useful, as dictionaries, encyclopædias and chronological tables are serviceable, when one desires facts. But the "books which are books" belong to the "power-literature."

They do not make a man omniscient—wise men are now content to die in ignorance of what many men have said and done. But they do brace the mind for original work, and they so toss off the imagination, as the falconer does the hawk, that it starts in a career from which it may return exhilerated with fresh and beautiful thoughts.

Young men are sometimes ambitious to devour many books—they might as reasonably be anxious to eat the contents of a market. The dead hero wrote a few days before his departure: "Doctor, I'm taking too much food, more than I can assimilate." Many readers are reading more than they can assimilate.

Not what a person reads, but what he inwardly digests, makes him stronger mentally. There are scores of learned parrots, who are ignorant and erudite. They are crammed full of facts, but they know little as to their meaning. A reviewer, whose duties obliged him to keep up with current publications, and not to let go his hold upon old books, can tell as soon as he hears these people talk what books they have read during a month.

It may be that a young man fond of reading is bewildered when he stands amid a great library. He will speedily recover himself, if he reflects that thousands of volumes are for specialists; and that other thousands are for the antiquary of the historian; that whole alcoves are curious books of no mental use, and that only a few hundred have any relation to his culture and work.—*Youth's Companion.*

—Johnny (who is spending the afternoon at the Smiths')—My mother says she'd like to look like you, Mrs. Smith. Mrs. S. (who is extremely plain, but not entirely aware of it)—Like me, my dear? I take that as a compliment, indeed, from so very pretty a lady as your mamma. You're quite sure it was I, Johnny, that she meant? Johnny (accepting another cruller)—Oh, yes'm. She said that if she could have your health and strength she believed she'd as lief look as you do.—*Harper's Bazar.*

—A dove flew in at an open window of a church in Danbury, Conn., on Sunday morning, and, perching upon a gas jet just over the preacher's head, remained there till the doxology was sung.—*Hartford Courant.*

A FOREST HYMN.

The glowing sun is riding high
Amid the arches of the sky,
Dreamy air lies still,
No sound disturbs the leafy glade
Save that by busy woodbill made
Upon some ancient trunk, decayed—
Calm broods o'er vale and hill.

In such an hour I love to stray
From haunts of toiling men away,
'Mid forest depths profound;
There, in a bliss of solitude,
Where no dull cares of earth intrude,
And Nature breathes sweet quietude—
The grand old trees around—

The heart by daily cares oppressed,
The wearied spirit findeth rest,
As, pillowed on the sod,
With nought above but leaf and sky,
And loving look of Heavenly Eye,
Perchance with angels hovering nigh,
I dream of Nature's God.

—*Edward N. Richards, in Current.*

"STAR-SPANGLED BANNER."

The Thrilling Event Which Inspired This Patriotic Song.

A piece of news was borne across the Atlantic Ocean in May, 1814, which chilled with apprehension every American heart: Napoleon Bonaparte had been overcome by the allied armies of Europe, and was safely imprisoned on the island of Elba! This intelligence notified the American people that the fleets and armies of Great Britain, which for twelve years had been waging war with France, were now disengaged, and would have little to do, and would be free to overwhelm and crush the Republic of the United States. We were then in the second year of that contest with Great Britain which we still call the War of 1812. It was a summer of alarm, and the whole coast was alive with the bustle of defensive preparation.

The invasion came. The enemy's ships entered Chesapeake Bay about the first of June, a fleet of frigates and lighter vessels. In August Admiral Cochrane entered the bay in a great ship of eighty guns, bringing with him a fleet and three or four thousand soldiers, which increased the British force in those waters to twenty-three men-of-war and an army of ten thousand troops and marines.

Every one knows what followed. The country was invaded, Washington was sacked and pillaged and its public buildings burned. The enemy retired with considerable loss, it is true, but triumphant and exulting. It was a dearly-bought victory, for it silenced opposition to the war, kindled the national feeling and enlisted every heart in the country's defense.

A few days after, the British forces made their second attempt upon that coast. Baltimore, then a city of forty thousand inhabitants, enriched by the prosperous commerce of the last quarter of a century, would have been a valuable prize; and would have given the foe a hold of the shores of the Chesapeake, from which they would have been dislodged with difficulty. Washington was but a straggling village, without military value. Baltimore was a commanding position, capable of being defended. Two miles below the city, on a point of land jutting into the water, stood then, and now stands, Fort McHenry, so named after one of the early statesmen of Maryland. Sturdy arms and willing hearts had been laboring there for many weeks to strengthen its fortifications and get additional guns into position, under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel George Armistead. The time had been well employed, and the gallant commander had a modest confidence in his ability to repel the imposing fleet of Cockburn, which now consisted of more than forty vessels, and carried seven thousand troops. The fate of Baltimore depended absolutely upon his holding this position.

The star-spangled banner which floated over the fort had been made by a lady of Baltimore, Mrs. Mary Pickersgill, aided by her daughter. These ladies, full of the patriotic feeling of the hour, made a flag worthy of the importance of the occasion. It contained four hundred yards of bunting. It was so large that the ladies were obliged to spread it out in the malt-house of a neighboring brewery.

When Mrs. Pickersgill's daughter was an old lady of seventy-six years, she used to describe the scene.

"I remember," she wrote, "seeing my mother down on the floor placing the stars. After the completion of the flag she superintended the topping of it, having it fastened in the most secure manner to prevent its being torn away by balls. The wisdom of her precaution was shown during the engagement, many shots piercing it, but it still remained firm to the staff. . . . My mother worked many nights until twelve o'clock to complete it in a given time."

The reader will see in a moment the significance of this statement. But for the firm and faithful stitching of these two patriotic ladies, we should probably have had no song of the Star-Spangled Banner.

September the 6th the great British fleet left its anchorage in Chesapeake Bay and sailed for Baltimore; and entered the Patapsco River, upon which the city stands, five days after. Twelve miles below Baltimore, they landed seven thousand men. Happily, the brave Marylanders and Pennsylvanians were ready for them. Three thousand militiamen, volunteers from Maryland and Pennsylvania, commanded by General John Stricker, well-posted and well-intrenched, withstood this great force, killed their commander, General Ross, and forced them finally to abandon the attack.

While these events were occurring, the great vessels in the British fleet moved up the river, anchored before Fort McHenry, and began to pour upon it that tempest of shot, shell and rockets, which the author of our song has commemorated. Every gun was heard in Baltimore. We can well imagine the feelings of its inhabitants during the twenty-four hours of its continuance.

The author of the song, Francis Scott Key, was not a combatant in the battle, although he witnessed it from beginning to end. During the first operations on that coast Admiral Cockburn and several officers of the British army occupied as their headquarters a house at Marlborough, belonging to an aged physician of the place, Dr. Beanes, whom they detained as a prisoner, lest he should send the news of their landing to Baltimore. He was a particular friend of Mr. Key and of his family. Hearing that the doctor was about to be carried off by the enemy, Key obtained permission from the commanding General of the American forces to go to the British fleet under a flag of truce, and make an attempt to procure the old gentleman's release. In a letter to his mother, written just as he was about to start upon this errand of friendship, he wrote:

"I hope to return in about eight or ten days, though it is uncertain, as I do not know where to find the fleet."

He set sail from Baltimore about the third of September, and found the British fleet at the mouth of the Patuxent bound for the attack on Fort McHenry. He went on board the vessel of Admiral Cochrane, to whom he stated his errand, and asked for the release of Dr. Beanes. The Admiral received him with the utmost civility, but informed him that he could not comply at present with his request, and was obliged even to detain Key himself and his vessel until the operation upon Fort McHenry was concluded.

The Admiral's vessel being overcrowded, he sent the American gentlemen on board of the frigate Surprise, commanded by his son, Sir Thomas Cochrane, where they spent the night, and thus moved on to the attack.

During the bombardment of the fort, Mr. Key and his friends, including Dr. Beanes, were sent on board their own little vessel under a guard of marines, and thus they were afforded an opportunity to witness the action.

Of all the thousands of human beings within hearing of that bombardment, there was probably not one so fitted by nature and education to be moved by it. Francis S. Key, then thirty-five years of age, a lawyer in good standing at the distinguished bar of his native State, was a son of John Ross Key, an officer in the army of the Revolution. He had been noted from his youth up for the ardor of his patriotism, and he had attempted more than once to celebrate in verse the gallant deeds of his countrymen. He had a habit of dashing down lines and stanzas that occurred to him on any old scrap of paper that came first to his hand, and several of his poems were gathered up by his friends from the litter of his office.

All day the bombardment continued without ceasing. During the whole night they remained on deck, following with their eyes the continuous arcs of fire from the enemy's ships to the fort. The anxiety of the poet, and the little company of Americans about him, grew only more intense when darkness covered the scene, and they could form no conception of the progress or the probable issue of the strife.

Suddenly, about three in the morning, the firing ceased. As they were anchored at some distance from the British vessels, they were utterly at a loss to interpret this mysterious silence.

Had the fort surrendered?

As they walked up and down the deck of their vessel in the darkness and silence of the night, they kept going to the binnacle to look at their watches to see how many minutes more must elapse before they could discern whether the flag over Fort McHeery was the star-spangled banner, or the union jack of England.

The daylight dawned at length. With a thrill of triumph and gratitude, they saw that "our flag was still there." They soon perceived from many other signs that the attack, both by land and sea, had failed, and that Baltimore was safe. They could see with their glasses the wounded troops carried on board the ships, and at last the whole British army re embarking.

A few minutes after the dawn of that glorious day, when the poet first felt sure of the issue of the battle, the impulse to express his feelings in verse rushed upon him. He found in his pocket a letter, and he wrote upon the back of it the first lines of the song. In the excitement of the hour he could not go on with his task, but he wrote some further brief notes and lines upon the letter. Some lines he retained in his memory without making any record of them. When his guard of marines left him free to hoist anchor, and sail for the city, he wrote out the song on the way, very nearly as it now reads, and on reaching his hotel in Baltimore he made a clean copy of it. The next morning he showed it to his brother-in-law, Judge Nicholson, Chief Justice of Maryland, who, Judge as he was, had commanded a company of volunteers in Fort McHenry during the bombardment.

We may be sure that *such* a Judge read the song with no critical eye. So delighted was he with it, that he sent it round to a printer, Benjamin Edes, who had also commanded a company of troops in the late operations. An apprentice, Samuel Sands, who was living in Baltimore in 1878, instantly set it in type, and in less than an hour it was distributed all over the city of Baltimore, received by every one with enthusiasm.

But what is a song without music? An old Baltimore soldier told in after years how the words came to be so happily wedded to the music to which it has ever since been sung. A group of volunteers lay scattered over one of the green hills near Baltimore a day or two after the bombardment.

"Have you heard Francis Key's poem?" said a member of the company, who had just come in from the town.

He took a copy of it from his pocket and read it aloud to them as they lay upon the grass. It was called for again. He read it a second time, and a third, more soldiers gathering about to hear it, until the whole regiment seemed to be present.

An actor, named Ferdinand Durang, who was also a soldier, sprang up, rushed into a tent, seized his brother's music book, used by both of them for their flutes, examined piece after piece, and at length cried out:

"Boys, I have hit it!"

He had selected the air of a favorite old English song, called "To Anacreon in Heaven," written by John Stafford Smith, about the year 1772. It was composed for a musical club which met at the Crown and Anchor Tavern in London, frequented by Dr. Johnson and Sir Joshua Reynolds. As soon as Ferdinand Durang had selected the music, he mounted a stool and sung it to his assembled comrades with all the fire and spirit of which he was capable. An eye witness says:

"How the men shouted and clapped! for never was there a wedding of poetry to music made under such inspiring influences. Getting a brief furlough, the Brothers Durang sang it in public soon after. It was caught up in the camps, and sung around the bivouac fires, and whistled in the streets; and when peace was declared, and we scattered to our homes, it was carried to thousands of firesides as the most precious relic of the War of 1812."

The flag of Fort McHenry, which inspired the song of Francis Key, still exists in a tolerable state of preservation. Colonel Armistead caused it to be taken down from the staff after the battle, and its honorable wounds bound about by the very ladies who had made it. It was ever after carefully preserved. He left to his widow, who in turn bequeathed it to their youngest daughter, born under it in Fort McHenry after the bombardment; and she in turn left it to her son, Mr. Eben Appleton, of Yonkers, New York, who now possesses it. It was raised over Fort McHenry for the last time September 14, 1824, at the reception of General Lafayette.

The author of the song died at Baltimore in 1843, aged sixty-four years, and in 1857 a small volume of his poems was published in the city of New York. He has living descendants.