

Christian Family.

MISS MARY STUMP, EDITOR.

The Old Canoe.

Where the rocks are gray and the shore is steep,
And the waters below look dark and deep,
Where the rugged pine, in its lonely pride
Leans gloomily over the murky tide;
Where the reeds and rushes are long and rank,
And the weeds grow thick on the winding bank:
Where the shadows are heavy the whole day through,
There lies at its moorings the old canoe.
The useless paddles are idly dropped,
Like a sea-bird's wings that the storm has lopped,
And crossed on the railing, one o'er one,
Like the folded hands when the work is done;
While musily back and forth between
The spider stretches his silvery screen,
And the solemn owl with his dull "too-whoo,"
Settles down on the side of the old canoe.
The stern, half sunk, in the slimy wave,
Rots slowly away in its living grave,
And the green moss creeps over its dull decay,
Hiding its mouldering dust away,
Like the hand that plants o'er the tomb a flower,
Or the ivy that mantles the falling tower;
While many a blossom of loveliest hue
Springs up o'er the stern of the old canoe.
The currentless waters are dead and still;
But the light wind plays with the boat at will,
And lazily in and out again
It floats the length of the rusty chain,
Like the weedy march of the hands of time,
That meet and part at the noontide chime.
And the shore is kissed at each turning anew
By the dripping bow of the old canoe.
Oh, many a time, with a careless hand,
I have pushed it away from the pebbly strand,
And paddled it down where the stream runs quick,
Where the whirls are wild and the eddies are thick,
And laughed as I leaned o'er the rocking side,
And looked below in the broken tide,
To see that the faces and boats were two
That were mirrored back from the old canoe.
But now, as I lean o'er the crumbling side,
And look below in the sluggish tide,
The face that I see there is grayer, grown,
And the laugh that I hear has a soberer tone,
And the hands that lent to the light skiff wings
Have grown familiar with sterner things.
But I love to think of the hours that sped
As I rocked where the whirls their white spray shed,
Ere the blossom waned, or the grass grew
O'er the mouldering stern of the old canoe.

Josie's Birthday.

You will wonder how it was kept, and will be no less astonished than pleased when I tell you of the old fashioned quilting bee, and delicious cake that honored Miss Josie's twentieth birthday.
Miss Josie, the pride of her father's house, just graduated from one of our best schools and happy in the possession of a beautiful country home, decided to give her friends, upon her first birthday out of school, the quaint old-timed experience of a quilting party, and this is what she did, being a young lady of happy contrivance.
She saddled Dapple, with the independence young women possess now-a-days, and rode some eight miles to the town where her school days had been spent, and there invited all her young friends to the party she proposed giving, this done she returned home and began to set things in order for the accomplishment of her plans which she was not long about, helped, as she was, by a painstaking mother, whose every thought was for her daughter's happiness.
The expected and longed for seventeenth of August came at last, and before eight o'clock the girls had collected in front of the village store, waiting for the band wagon, that being the only conveyance large enough to hold them all, one gentleman crucifying his feelings for a whole day in order to see the wild band of

fun loving girls safe to their destination, the other gentlemen giving their word to join them in the evening that no item should be omitted from a regular quilting party of our grandmother's halcyon days sixty years ago. Equipped with thimbles for shields and needles for swords, some long, some short, according to individual choice, they climbed into the spacious wagon, and were soon on their way to Josie's, where a quilt was hung in the parlor, a nine patch of worsted scraps, lined with calico and stuffed with cotton, stretched in wooden frames, and swung from the ceiling by cords, an odor of savory viands pervaded the kitchen and invaded the dining room, while Josie herself, mistress of the day, was giving a last touch to flowers and trailing vines upon the mantelpiece.

It was half-past ten when the company arrived, and a merrier company of light-hearted girls had never been welcomed in those shady country parlors. There were faces beautiful, faces gleeful, and faces of statuesque repose, framed in golden hair, bright eyes, black and blue and gray, darling winsome Katie, charming all with her ladylike grace, Mary's, one, two, three, full of life, and laughter loving, pensive Maggie with a glimpse of the orient in the sparkle that now and then merrily flashed from beneath her drooping lids, Allie and Dilla, Retta and Ama lovely in fresh dresses, attractive in their queenly presence, Rosa and Ellen, whose cultured voices blended in "Juanita" follow me about with a haunting sweetness, dark-eyed beautiful Allie, sprightly Emma, Ollie moving with an easy grace, Cassie, Mattie, Florence and Barbara whose spell is in her sober laughter, provoking speech and elegant repose of manners.

All who could edge in had soon formed a circle around the quilt, the thimble fingers deftly guiding the shining needles in and out, in and out keeping time to the merry voices which made the heart glad with their blitheness. The beautiful work put to flight, all notions of the incapacity of our girls for doing the fancy work of their grandmother's time in as satisfactory a manner as they themselves did.

I am constrained to believe, however, that some of the party, though working swiftly and well on that one quilt, are imbued with progressive ideas, and had darning patchwork on such general principles as would shock their prim grand aunts beyond recovery could they but hear them.

What bright merry chatter there was about the dinner table, and the good things under which that generous table groaned, how they were enjoyed.

The birthday cake, made by the fair hands of the hostess went round, and attested the fact that she could please the palate with toothsome dainties as well as bring tears to the eyes of her audience with a touching and gracefully delivered valedictory.

In the afternoon the party scattered, and in groups under the shady trees or upon the croquet lawn amused themselves, and let us hope did not gossip about those who were absent. Sure I am, there was no gossip over the quilt, which, if tradition be true, was better far than their grand aunts could have done.

The quilt was rolled for the last time, the last blocks were finished, the last stitch taken, and the frames put away before the sun had sunk beyond the western hills.

Upon the arrival of the gentlemen a surprise was in store for Josie who had done so much for the enjoyment of her friends, for with their silver horns and violins accompanied by the organ, they gave her an amateur concert, which was followed by her regaling them with an oyster supper, then more music, singing, finally a serenade and start for home at nine o'clock. (Right here, in behalf of myself and friends, permit me to thank

the company, who, on their way home, gave us sweet music from their silver throated horns, and sang us songs we love to hear, whose cadences were brought us by the evening breeze, sounding as distant chimes of heavenly bells).

Josie's quilting was a success, as all her friends will testify, who had a hand in breaking needles on that never to be forgotten quilt, and who ever has the audacity to say our girls with all their familiarity with Virgil and the love songs of the Greeks, cannot use that little implement of woman's art after the manner of their oft quoted ancestors, let them examine the trial work on Josie's birthday quilt.

Shadows.

To and fro flit life's shadows, some caused by "trifles light as air." The fit of a bonnet, the tie of a bow, a ribbon out of place or a torn glove will mar anticipated pleasure, and will gloomily shadow the countenance of beauty for a whole day. Other shadows there are that obscure entirely the light of the noontide sun. Like the dark storm-cloud of winter, bearing the forebodings of tornado and tempest, fall black shadows of deepest woe over human lives.

Forgotten is everything save the one great sorrow that has brought desolation and wrung in anguish the mourner's breaking heart; but from out the shadow's hope beckons the bereaved and points upward after the hurricane has spent its fury, to the sun shining in the blue vault of heaven, and reminds the sorrowing one of the Sun of righteousness and of the beautiful promise of heaven, of peace and rest on the other side.

Shadows come to all. None are exempt. The merchant sees approaching in the distance his commercial ruin, and long ere the shadows of bankruptcy falls, he feels the threatened blow, the dishonor and the tarnished name.

A maiden sits blissfully dreaming, while quiet and still, creep the cool shadows around the corners of the vine-covered porch at the dear old homestead in the long sultry evenings of midsummer, but the beautiful dreamer awakes to learn the "sad lesson of life," and finds her worshipped idol naught but clay. Falsehood has blighted her dearest hopes and shadowed her heart with despair.

Stealthily and steadily creep the shadows over the drunkard's home. At every oath the father utters, at every glass of wine he drinks, sadder and more pitiful grow the faces of wife and children until at last he dies unhonored and unsung, leaving to his son not a remembrance sweet of home and friends, but a heritage of shame which makes him shunned and scoffed at as a drunkard's child. The shadow of his father's evil follows him through life, or if perchance the world forgets it, away down in his heart are pictures covered they may be by the cobwebs of time, yet there are hours when memory will raise the curtain and reveal to his mental vision pictures of a boyhood devoid of all things lovely.

Do we ask why these shadows? Do we complain of disappointments? Do we grieve over losses and mourn at a friend's departure from our midst? 'Tis only that we may not forget in the brightness and gaiety of life, our mortality; that we may turn more to the golden promise, to a Savior's love and thoughts of an inheritance everlasting in the city where no shadows dim the pathway and the weary are at rest.

CASSIE.

Out of every hundred young men who enter Boston or New York, inspired with the dream of amassing a fortune by brain work, ninety-five make total failures. This, at least, is the estimate of Dr. John Hall.

A Pensive Pleasure.

There are many men who do not object to a touch of melancholy, but rather enjoy its flavor than otherwise, if it be not too strong and personal—who rather court than discourage it; but as a general thing we shall find, on close scrutiny, that they are people without any positive sorrows of their own, whom the world has used tenderly, who have experienced no aspirations for the unattainable, and to whom Death has never approached near enough to disclose his ghastly reality. They love the under-tone of sadness in their dance music as the Egyptians enjoyed the death's-head at their feasts, not merely for its suggestion of mortality, but because it emphasizes the present pleasure; just as the whistling of the "candle blast," heard by one's warm fireside, adds a finer zest to its comfort, when the only connection existing in one's mind between the inclement weather and misery is quite impersonal and founded upon heresay. Such people resemble children, who like to listen to stories of hobgoblins that lived a thousand years ago, and carried off naughty boys and girls, feeling confident of their own goodness, and that the species is as extinct as the trilobites. The indulgence in this idle but agreeable pastime arises more or less, perhaps from the poetical temperament, which looks at every thing through a refracting medium of its own. And who knows if this is not the reason why we are so ready to confess to "the blues," as if they were feathers in our cap, the sign of a sensitive and thoughtful nature, rather than of a disordered liver? In the mean time, we meet others who do not so much heighten their pleasures as increase their discomforts by the aid of melancholy; who resent any attempt to enlighten their gloomy views of life as if it were an interference in their religious creed.

"You shall not chase my gloom away," their attitude seems to assure us;
"There's such a charm in melancholy,
I would not, if I could, be gay."

They entertain a feeling of superiority, as if they had found out the vanity of vanities, and could not be bribed to make the best of it, while they regard cheerful folks as frivolous and shallow minded. But if "the poet builds own temple, no less does the apostle of melancholy dig his own grave. Yet there are moments when the most robust among us become a prey to its influence, when it is no make-believe, and no pastime, but the result of a dissatisfaction with ourselves and our accomplishments, or, more often, of a holiday and cessation from work. It is the unemployed who have time for megrims, by no means he who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow.—Bazar.

Curious Gardens of Antiquity.

BY JULIA THAYER.

The world's first great achievement in landscape gardening was during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, and was on so vast and magnificent a scale that the Hanging Gardens of Babylon have passed into history as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. They were devised and constructed for the gratification of Amytis, wife of Nebuchadnezzar, who, home-sick and weary with the contemplation of the flat, uninteresting Babylonian plain, continually pined for the wild mountainous beauty of her Median home.

These gardens—more properly termed elevated than "hanging"—were constructed in this wise:

A huge artificial mountain of earth was raised to the height of 400 feet, every side of which was terraced, at regular distances, and connected by stairways. These terraces were supported by arches, which rose one above another until they overlooked the famous walls of Babylon. Within these arches were grand and spacious apartments, where extensive views were

commanded of the surrounding country. In order to give a firm foundation to the soil, and to confine its moisture, the upper arches were first covered with a pavement of stone, then followed a layer of reeds mixed with bitumen, another of cemented bricks, and over the whole a sheeting of lead, upon which a considerable depth of rich soil was laid.

The upper terrace contained an immense reservoir, the water of which was obtained from the Euphrates, by means of hydraulic engines, and could be distributed wherever needed.

In time slightly hills arose, dim forests of stately trees invited seclusion, rivers rushed foaming over rocky beds; silvery cascades rippled, and fountains gleamed; velvet masses of verdure, teeming with the rarest floral gems of the East, captivated the eye with their beauty, and bewitched the senses with their intoxicating incense; while, crowning this magical creation, the royal residence of the King stood in the midst like a palace of enchantment.

Whether or not Amytis was sufficiently appreciative of this mammoth achievement for her sake, is left to conjecture, but we shall try to think she was thoroughly satisfied, and sighed for nothing more.

But there have been other curious gardens, which many of my young readers may never have heard quite so much about.

In every zone are found floating islands. They are formed by turf-masses which, being detached from the land, are held together by grasses, weeds and tangled roots, and drift hither and thither, the sport of every passing breeze, continually adding to their accumulations.

These islands form into groups, and are in time covered with plants, shrubs, trees, and, not unfrequently, even animal life. To this novel means of transportation is often attributed the otherwise unaccountable introduction of certain species of large animals found upon many of the South Pacific islands.

During the fourteenth century, the Aztecs, a tribe of native Mexicans, for the want of sufficient land, invented floating gardens, or chinampas, upon which were cultivated nearly all the flowers and vegetables that supplied the ancient city of Mexico, formerly called Tenochtitlan.

The original idea of this invention is supposed to have been suggested to the Aztecs by observing the floating islands of Lake Chalco. Certain it is, their own artificial islands were constructed as nearly after the same manner as art can imitate nature. Large pieces of turf were joined by reeds, rushes, knotty and intertwining roots, and then covered with a sediment taken from the bottom of the lake. These raft-like islands, often firm enough to hold a hut, were soon converted into rich gardens, several of which were generally under the charge and cultivation of one Indian, who towed or propelled them about at pleasure, by means of a long pole adapted to that purpose.

These gardens were often two or three hundred feet in length, about twenty in breadth, and had a depth of sufficient to nourish trees. They were separated from each other by narrow dikes, and usually ornamented with a beautiful border of flowers, or a hedge of rose-trees. We can imagine that, as they lay on the gleaming bosom of the lake, the effect was not unlike that of emeralds set about with jewels of pearl, ruby, sapphire and topaz.

Few traces, if any, now remain of these once remarkable chinampas of Mexico.

The awful prophecy of Isaiah has been fulfilled concerning the overthrow and utter annihilation of Babylon, in whose oblivion the famous Hanging Gardens lie buried. Not a vestige marks the place where they once stood.

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