

Christian Family.

The Old Village Choir.

I have fancied sometimes the Bethel-bent beam
That trembled to earth in the Patriarch's dream,
Was a ladder of song in that wilderness rest
From the pillow of stone to the blue of the West,
And the angels descending to dwell with us here,
"Old Hundred," and "Corinth," and
"China," and "Mear."
All the hearts are not dead nor under the sod
That those breaths can blow open to Heaven and God.
Ah, "Silver Street" flows by a bright shining road—
Oh, not to the hymns that in harmony flowed,
But the sweet human psalms of the old-fashioned choir,
To the girl that sang alto, to the girl that sang air.
"Let us sing to God's praise!" the minister said:
All the psalm-books at once fluttered open at "York."
Sunned their long-dotted wings in the words that he read,
While the leader leaped into the tune just ahead,
And politely picked up the key-note with a fork,
And the vicious old viol went growling along
At the heels of the girls in the rear of the song.
Oh, I need not a wing:—bid no genii come
With a wonderful web from Arabian loom
To bear me again up the river of Time,
When the world was in rhythm and life was its rhyme.
And the stream of the years flowed so noiseless and narrow
That across it there floated the song of a sparrow;
For a sprig of green caraway carries me there,
To the old village church and the old village choir,
Where clear of the floor my feet slowly swung
And timed the sweet pulse of the praise that they sung.
Till the glory aslant from the afternoon sun
Seemed the rafters of gold in God's temple begun!
You may smile at the nasals of old Deacon Brown,
Who followed by scent till he ran the tune down,
And dear sister Green, with more goodness than grace,
Rose and fell on the tunes as she stood in her place,
And where "Coronation" exultingly flows
Tried to reach the high notes on the rip of her toes!
To the land of the leal they have gone with their song,
Where the quire and the chorus together belong
Oh! be lifted, ye gates! Let me hear them again,
Blessed song! Blessed singers! forever Amen.
—Old Time Pictures and Shavings of Rhyme.

Life's Mystery.

Life's sadly solemn mystery
Hangs o'er me like a weight;
The glorious longing to be free,
The gloomy bars of fate.
Alternately the good and ill,
The light and dark, are strung;
Fountains of love within my heart,
And hate upon my tongue.
Beneath my feet the unstable ground,
Above my head the skies;
Immortal longings in my soul,
And death before my eyes.
No purely pure, and perfect good,
No high unhindered power:
A beauteous power in the bud,
And mildew in the flower.
The glad green brightness of the spring,
The summer, soft and warm;
The faded autumn's gold,
The whirlwind and the storm.
To find some sure interpreter
My spirit vainly tries;
I only know that God is love,
And know that love is wise.

Queer Aunt Sarah.

BY ANNETTE LUCILLE NOBLE.

Billy Howland was "a great student," or so his mother said. She was also sure that his sister Nellie was "such a reader" she would sometime be very wise, would quote Shakespeare, and tell the wonderful things she had learned, in a way to delight everybody listening. Billy buzzed over his lessons like an ambitious bumble-bee, swaying his legs—going down one page and over another without one slip of his tongue. He stood well at school, and was greatly excited about examination days for fear he would not "pass."
One time his Aunt Sarah came to visit. She was glad to see Billy so eager with his lessons, and once, when he flung down his Grammar saying: "There, that is learned!" she exclaimed:

"Let me see 'if it is!"

Billy gave her the book, and sure enough he could give every answer to every question in the lesson. He was running away, in triumph, when Aunt Sarah said: "Oh wait! maybe you don't know it all! What was that remark about the noun when it was the subject of the verb?"

Billy answered stoutly:

"Why, Aunt Sarah! There was nothing like that in the lesson."

"Nothing?"

"Not a word."

"What is your lesson?"

"Why, all about the substantive in the nominative." (He said nominative.)

"Tell me the difference, will you, Billy?"

"It don't say a word about any difference. How can I learn stuff that isn't there? The teacher never asks what isn't down in the book."

"What did you learn your lesson for, Billy?"

"Why, to recite, of course."

"Oh, excuse me; I thought you was trying to understand the English language. Well, run away, you can recite your lesson perfectly."

Billy went, wondering if he had been praised. Aunt Sarah turned to Nellie.

"You are a quiet little girl, dear. Do you like Ivanhoe? You are so taken up with it you scarcely move."

"Yes, I've just finished it. It is perfectly lovely, Aunt Sarah!"

"Is the story of modern times?"

"No—o, marm."

"About what century, then? The third, or the ninth, or the seventeenth?"

"Oh, away back—I guess—I didn't notice when, exactly."

Aunt Sarah smiled; for a few questions showed that the bright pictures of tournaments, the stirring events and fascinating characters had passed before the child's mind, leaving only confused memories behind.

The next day Aunt Sarah was talking with the children, and suddenly remarked: "I had a funny dream last night. I was going along a beautiful wood when I came to a great half-formed building where dozens of men were at work. They were very busy, and each one did his part well; but it was the strangest edifice I ever saw, not church or palace or store or stable, certainly not a dwelling-house. Here was a chimney, there a tower, away off one side a wing, stairs led to places where there were no landings and windows looked on to near walls. The work might go on and on; but I could not see what good would ever come of it. I said to myself:—The architect must have been a fool; and then I asked a workman what he was making."

"I am mixing mortar."

"For what?"

"For mortar," he said.

"But what are you doing it for?"

"Why, for the sake of mixing it of course—have you any fault to find with it?"

"Dear me, how stupid!" I thought—answering: It is good mortar to work with; but what are all you working men doing anyhow?"

"Why, we are building," he urged, as if I were a goose myself.

"What is the building going to be?" I continued.

"It is going to be built—don't you see for yourself?"

"I went on, in despair of learning anything, and came to a man, who was carrying water to a horse. His pail had a hole in it; and by the time the man had gone from the pump to the barn, he had only a little water in the bottom of the pail. Seeing how hard he worked, and how thirsty the poor horse was, I said: 'Why don't you step up the hole in your pail?'"

"He looked at me, and replied:"

"'Why, I can get it full at the pump.'"

"Yes; but you let it all run through, before it does anybody any good."

"Pshaw," he answered. "What is

the use of being so fussy?"

"Can you tell me," said I, "What makes the people here so peculiarly stupid?"

"He looked sadly at me, a minute, and then he asked, 'Did you ever hear of school 'zaminations?'"

"I said: 'Oh, yes, my nephew Billy tells about them.'"

"Well, these people 'passed' once when they were young; do you know what that means too?"

"Yes they knew the exact answer that went with every question, if you used the very words of the book, none asking them anything else. If the definition of a dog did not mention his tail, they supposed it meant a sort of dog with no tail."

"The old man nodded, adding in a melancholy way: 'Just so; and you can understand that when these nice children grew up—those who studied for the sake of reciting the words—they made men like these carpenters who nailed boards for the sake of doing it—mixed plaster not knowing what use to put it to, all of them piling up brick, stone and wood without any idea of building a complete house to live in. That man back there with the horse,' he went on—'Oh, he was the greatest reader! Why, once he bought a bushel of historical novels at an auction, read them all, and said they were grand; but he never afterwards seemed to know what had happened in the world any better for doing it. The hole in his memory let everything through; but then he did not read to remember, but because it amused him. What could you expect; he is a nice man if folks like you don't get any more information out of him than the old horse did water out of his pail.'"

Aunt Sarah stopped abruptly, wiped her glasses, and took up the morning paper. Billy and Nelly looked at one another, and wondered if there had been any 'zamination' in which they had not 'passed.' Aunt Sarah was queer. They asked her next day if she made up her dreams.—Rural Home.

Going to hear Spurgeon.

Like a majority of Americans, I had a strong desire, while recently in London to hear Rev. C. H. Spurgeon preach. My visit happened to be in July, when most of the London celebrities are away in the Highlands or on the seashore enjoying their vacation, and I was warned by friends that it was very doubtful whether I would be fortunate enough to find Mr. Spurgeon in his well-known Tabernacle upon the Sabbaths which I spent in the great city. Believing the shortest solution of that question the best, I addressed a polite note direct to the preacher himself, and solicited information as to when he would next preach, and also whether any special passport were required to secure a seat. In response I received the following note:

"LONDON, July 6, 1879.

"DEAR SIR,—I have pleasure in acceding to your request. We have adopted the plan of forwarding to each friend an envelope. This you will please show to the private policeman at the gate, who will then take you into the Tabernacle; and you will please on no account to give him anything, but be so kind as to put a contribution into the envelope and drop it into the box."

Yours, truly, C. H. SPURGEON.

Time—10:55 A. M.,

6:25 P. M.,

5 minutes before commencement."

Accompanying this was a small drab envelop bearing a picture of the Tabernacle, and also the following words:

"Admit the bearer to the Tabernacle."

"The person using this pass is respectfully asked for a contribution toward the maintenance of public worship at the Tabernacle, and the spread of the Gospel by means of the Pastors' College."

"Sittings and monthly tickets may be had of the Secretary."

On the next Sabbath day I found my way to the Tabernacle without difficulty. It is on the south side of the Thames, nearest to the Waterloo bridge. An immense crowd had surrounded the unopened church doors when I arrived, a few minutes before the time, and hackney carriages and cabs were arriving with new comers at a very rapid rate. A sharp-eyed brother had evidently been on the lookout for me, for he singled us out (my wife and myself) as Americans, and proffered his services in showing us through the side doors. We retained our "tickets" while the good brother escorted us up one, two, three flights of stone stairways to the third gallery, and there gave us a seat. We appreciated his kindness, but discovered his motive in part later on, when he gave us his collection book for subscriptions on behalf of the Stockwell Orphanage (one of the Spurgeon charities), and calling attention to the group of orphans directly below the pulpit, suggested that, if we contemplated a gift to the church funds, that we apply it, through himself, to the Orphanage. This was done very courteously, and we gladly acceded.

The Spurgeon Tabernacle is exceedingly plain, both outwardly and inwardly, but its seating capacity is truly immense. It has four galleries, and large floor room, and a platform in the rear of the preacher. It is said to contain, when crowded (as it is every Sabbath,) nearly ten thousand persons!

Mr. Spurgeon has been too often described, both in person and in his methods, to require repetition here. Suffice it to say that he began the services in a familiar manner, and with little formality. He stands behind a desk upon a platform level with the first gallery. He moves slightly from side to side while preaching, has a voice easily heard in every part of the building, and speaks with earnestness, simplicity and force. A characteristic sermon was preached the next Sabbath after my visit, to which I must refer. His text was from Joshua, but he said he should not preach from it, but only use it as a motto. Then he took a manuscript in his hand which he had obtained from the English Secretary of war. It gave a list of offenses for which, according to the British Articles of War, a soldier was liable to death sentence. Mr. Spurgeon, with this simile, compared the Christian with the English soldier, and his duties and responsibilities. It was a forcible appeal.

Upon the conclusion of the service the audience slowly dispersed; and at each doorway were contribution boxes, and if a person slighted the boxes by indifference, there was a deacon standing hard by to jog the passer and remind him of the box. It is the understood thing at the Tabernacle that everybody is expected to give something. Once out doors, the coming and going of the cabs and hacks, the policemen on the sidewalks keeping the crowd in motion, the thousands on the opposite side of the streets watching, made a busy scene never to be forgotten. All accounts agree that Mr. Spurgeon is doing a noble work for Christianity and humanity in London, and that, so long as his health and strength are vouchsafed to him, it is not probable we shall ever see him on this side of the Atlantic. He has a tender side for his American friends, however, and always welcomes them warmly. But he conceives it to be his duty to remain in London; and the idea of his coming as a popular lecturer for money is extremely distasteful to him. Would that there were ten thousand Spurgeons in Brooklyn as devoted, as loyal to the Master, and as faithful as the great Tabernacle preacher.—[By S. R. Weed, (formerly of San Francisco,) in the Brooklyn "Advance."]

Very Short and Very Long.

BY H. BONAR, D. D.

There are some things very short, and some things very long. God in his Word tells us of both of these, and bids us look at them,

1. Life is very short. God speaks of it as a shadow, 1 Chron. xxix: 15; a weaver's shuttle, Job vii: 6; a flower, Psalm ciii: 15; a leaf, Isa. lxi: 6; a hand-breadth, Psalm xxxix: 5; a vapor, James iv: 14; a sleep, Psalm xc: 5; a flood, Psalm xc: 5. Is not life then short? If it be like these it must be short indeed.

2. Time is very short. It is made up of many lives, yet it is short. The time is short, says Paul, 1 Cor. vii: 29; the world passeth away, says John, 1, John ii: 17. A few years will end all.

3. The sinner's joy is short. It is but for a moment, says Job, chap. xx: 5. The fashion of this world passeth away, 1 Cor. vii: 31. He may laugh and dance and be gay, and take his ease and be merry; but his joy soon comes to an end. It fades away, and leaves nothing behind it but grief.

4. The saint's sorrow is short. It is but for a moment, 2 Cor. vi: 17. It may be heavy, and hard to bear, but it is soon over, and it leaves no shadow behind. When it is done all is joy for ever.

These are some of the things that are very short. They are spoken of by God, that you may think upon them. Will you not? Look back at the past years of your life, and look onward, and let these things that are short—so very short—be looked at in view of the past and of the coming time.

But there are other things that are long—very long—so long that men cannot count them. They are forever and ever. Let me ask you to think of them also. God bids you think of them.

1. God himself. He is from everlasting to everlasting, Psalm xc: 2. His life is throughout all eternity, for he is the King eternal and immortal, 1 Tim. i: 17. How well for us to have this God for our God—to have him for our portion in such a changing world!

2. God's love. The mercy of the Lord, says David, is from everlasting to everlasting, Psalm ciii: 17. The love of God changes not. His mercy never dies. His grace never grows old.

3. The life to come. It is everlasting life, John iii: 16; there is no death in this life, and no end. He who gets it gets it forever and ever. What must it be to have eternal life!

4. The saint's joy. At God's right hand are pleasures forevermore, Psalm xvi: 11: the joy which the ransom of the Lord obtains is everlasting joy, Isaiah xxxv: 10. How blessed to have joy like this—joy that shall never end!

5. The sinner's sorrow. It is endless—endless. The fire is everlasting, Isaiah xxxiii: 14; the torment is day and night forever and ever, Rev. xx: 10. The darkness forever, Jude 13. How sad to lie down in such sorrow—to have these everlasting burnings for our home.

God asks you to consider your ways. Will you prefer this world to the world to come? Is sin better than Christ? Are the weeds of the earth sweeter than the flowers of Paradise? Time stays not; do not you, then, stay. Let not sin keep you back from God, and shut you out of heaven. Come and wash in the open fountain. Come and get the white robe. Then, whether your days on earth are few or many, it matters not.—Ez.

Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control, These three alone lead life to sovereign power.

The Man of Sorrows mingled healing drops, With the great ocean-tides of Luman woe.

God's nightingales have ever learned to sing, Pressing their bosom on some secret thorn.

He died for sinners, this my only plan, I am chief, then, whither for me?