FLORA'S LESSON.

Flora Fountain was feeding her cage of linnets at the window, where a flourishing vine of dark-green ivy trailed its way up the panes, and a rose-tree was in full bloom. It was a pretty little house of red brick, with brownstone facings, such as you often see in the quieter and less aspiring streets of a great city—a house which bore traces of taste, refinement, and some pretension.

Flora, at the age of twenty, had been her father's housekeeper for four years—and this morning he had given her a cheque for fifty dollars.

"To buy a new dinner-set of china, my dear," he said, pleasantly. I intend to invite Gates and Plumer and their wives to dinner in a few days, with young Hayden and the Misses Hazel, and I should like everything to be shipshape."

"Yes, papa," said Flora.

But the slight curl of her lip told that the families of Plumer and Gates, the Misses Hazel and young Hayden, were scarcely up to her ideal views of society."

"You might ask Mrs. Penrith Duke, too, if you pleased," said Mr. Fountain, incidentally.

"Mrs. Penrith Duke! To meet Mrs. Plumer and Misses Hazel! Oh, papa!"

Mr. Fountain shrugged his broad, comfortable shoulders.

"And why not?" said he. "Is Mrs. Penrith Duke made of different flesh and blood from these excellent friends of mine?"

"No, papa," hesitated Flora, a little confused that her inward thoughts had been so readily deciphered; "but—but she moves in altogether a different circle!"

"Well, then, there let her remain," said Mr. Fountain, brusquely. "And as for the china, Flo, exercise your own taste. If there is any glass needed, let me know. I want things to be in nice order."

"Papa," hesitated Flora, "is—is business flourishing just now?"

"Pretty fairly, Flo. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, papa!" burst out the girl, "I do so long for a real camel's hair shawl like Mrs. Penrith Duke's!"

"Nonsense!" decisively uttered Mr. Fountain. "Camel's-hair shawls would be just as inappropriate for people in our rank of life as diamonds for servants in livery. This is some of your friend Mrs. Penrith Duke's mad folly."

Flora colored, and hung her head.

"I have always longed for a cashmere shawl, papa," said she.

Then put it out of your head for good and all," said Mr. Fountain. "I can afford no such piece extravagance; neither would it be appropriate for you to wear one if I could."

"I can't think," sighed Flora to herself, as she watched her father's departing footsteps, "why papa hates Mrs. Penrith Duke so dreadfully. I am sure that to me her friendship is perfectly invaluable."

And then, having finished the morning care of the birds, Flora Fountain sat down to read the paper.

What pointing "finger of fate" was it that directed her gaze to the special paragraph of the special column of the morning paper which read:

GREAT BARGAINS IN CAMEL'S-HAIR SHAWLS. Direct from India. Will be disposed of at private sale, at less than half-price. Apply at No. — Margin Street.

And, within the next five minutes the postman's whistle sounded loud and clear, and a letter came from Cousin Phebe, up in Maine, to let her know that old Aunt Ruellah was dead at last.

"And she has left you her set of antique china, worth nobody knows how much, and all in perfect order," wrote Cousin Phebe. "I have ordered it boxed and sent to you at once, and you will probably receive it the last of the week."

A sudden inspiration dawned on Flora Fountain's brain.

"I shall not need the new dinner china now," she thought. "And I can take papa's cheque, and—who knows?—perhaps it will help to buy me a real camel's-hair shawl! I have forty dollars of my own, and I could borrow—just for a day or two—the money that papa gave me for Betty's wages. It is worth the trial, at all events, if bargains are to be had."

And with quickening pulse and color deepening on her cheek, Flora put on her bonnet and mantle and prepared to go out.

Never before in all the course of her life had she deliberately set at defiance the wishes and commands of her father: but the influence of Mrs. Penrith Duke, whom she had met at a fashionable watering-place that summer, was stronger than she had any idea of.

Mrs. Penrith Duke had declared that no lady was a lady without a real cashmere shawl. Mrs. Penrith Duke had praised Flora's slim, pretty figure, and declared that it was the very form to set off the scented folds of an India shawl.

She had mentioned, incidentally, that a camel's-hair was like diamonds, or rare oil-paintings—a life-long investment. She had wondered in her soft-voiced, pretty way, why every lady did not buy a Valley cashmere!

And Flora, listening, had become infected with the yearning desire to possess one of these almost unattainable luxuries.

No. —— Margin street was a dirty little house, in a dirty little row, close to the docks. Flora had never been so far West before, and the aspect of things did not strike her agreeably.

Rough-looking men, in tarry jackets and coarse boots, slouched past; knots of half-grown young ruffians stared at her as she went by, and untidy women, with children in their arms, disappeared into dark doorways, like rats into their holes.

"Is this the place where they sell India shawls?" she hesitatingly asked a young girl, with unkempt hair and sullen face, who leaned out of one of the side windows of No. —— Margin street.

"Don't know anything about it," said the girl, indifferently.

"Can't ye spake the lady decent, Meg?" snarlingly interruted a fat old woman, looking out over the girl's shoulder. "It's through the alley, miss, dear—up two pair o' stairs—the little room under the skylight. Ask for Mr. Conforto, miss—the say-capt'in. Shure the shawls is great bargains, betoken there ain't been no duty paid on 'em, miss!" with a grin which displayed a few gnarly stumps of teeth in a sunken old jaw.

"Through the alley!"—"up two pair o' stairs!"—a "little room under a skylight!" Instinctively Flora recoiled, and the old woman perceived it at once.

"Shure, miss, I'll go wid yez an' show yez the way," said she.

And not knowing how to refuse this offer, Flora unwillingly followed her waddling footsteps through a dark and dismal alley, across a paved court and up two narrow flights of stairs, to a gloomy, half-lighted room, where a short, vulgar man sat, smoking a black pipe, in the midst of boxes, bales and bundles.

"Bargains, miss?" said the short, vulgar man, jumping up. "Sheddah, Bhurlpore, Lacca, Valley Bokharah—which will I show you miss?"

Flora hesitated and colored, under his brazen stare.

"I had not made up my mind to buy," she said, "and—"

"Oh, but you must buy!" chattered Captain Conforto. "You shall buy! You can't help buying in a place like this, when I show you what we've got."

And jumping around like an overgrown kangaroo, he unfolded some coarse, high-colored, striped shawls, one or two with a rivulet of white seeming to meander over dull-red grounds, and some that seemed to have been out in a storm at sea and got thoroughly stained with salt water.

Flora, however uneducated in technicalities, was an artist at soul, and recoiled from these gaudy abominations.

"I—I don't quite like these," she hesitated. "I do not think I will purchase to-day."

"Not like them!" echoed the sea-captain—if sea-captain he was. "Not like them! Nobody ever said that before to Leotard Conforto! I ain't used to be talked to in that there way. But if the lady don't like 'em, she needn't to buy 'em. I ain't obliged to put my bargains down people's throats, that I ain't!"

And he bustled around, muttering to himself and tossing the things about, brushing past Miss Fountain very disagreeably once or twice as he did so.

Flora turned to go, but her fat guide had unaccountably disappeared, and she was obliged to retrace her steps as best she could.

"At all events," she said to herself, "I'm glad I am well out of that place."

Making the best of her way up to Third avenue, she entered a car to ride home; but when she put her hand in her pocket to pay her fare, the little purse into which she had so carefully packed her money was gone.

It flashed over her then, all in an instant. Her pocket was picked; and probably by Captain Leotard Comforto himself.

"Never mind the fare miss, said the conductor, a stout, fatherly old man, who doubtless had daughters of his own. "I'll see that it's all right, and you can pay me any time you please."

So Flora got home just in time to burst out crying on her father's shoulder, and confess it all to his kindly ear.

"Oh, papa, papa!" sobbed she. "I have disobeyed you, and I never can forgive myself!"

Mr. Fountain only patted her cheek and kissed her.

"Don't fret, Flo," said he. "We've all got life's lessons to learn, and experience is a rigorous teacher."

The police, sent to break up Captain Conforto's den in Margin Street, found nothing and nobody there but a mild old gentleman in spectacles, reading the papers, who had charge of letting the premises. He had never heard of Captain Conforto—neither was the fat woman, who had acted as volunteer guide to Flora, to be found up stairs or down.

"It's a bad block, this 'ere," said the policeman, to Mr. Fountain. "They calls it Swindle Row. But they're that slippery here as nobody can lay a finger on 'em!"

So began and ended poor Flora's dream of an India shawl. And the delusion of worshipping Mrs. Penrith Duke is wearing away also, especially since that high-toned lady gave a soiree dansante, and neglected to invite Miss Fountain, observing, languidly, that "one couldn't fill one's drawing-room with nobodies."

And Flora has come to the conclusion that perhaps the Gates', the Plumers and the Hazels of life are as desirable as the Penrith Dukes.

Chinese Salutations.

There are three different styles of salutation in China when two men meet, depending upon their relative rank. The first, used between equals, is like our hand shaking, except that instead of grasping each other's hand each doubles loosely his fists, brings them together and shakes them up and down. In the second the inferior bends one knee to his superior. In the third, —called the "Ke ton"—the inferior gets down on his hands and knees in front of this superior, and knocks his head three times upon the ground or floor.

When high officers of state in China, even though they be "princes of the imperial blood," have audience with the emperor, they are obliged to repeat this last operation three times. In the "Code of Etiquette" it is called the "three prostrations and nine knockings." When the foreign ministers in Peking applied in January, 1873, for audience with the Emperor Tung Chih, who had just ascended the throne, the Chinese government insisted that they should make this prostration before his imperial majesty.

Of course the ministers refused to do so, and the audience was delayed nearly six months because of this refusal. The Chinese yielded at last, however, and his majesty contented himself with three profound bows from the "foreign barbarians."—*Youth's Companion.*

One Step at a Time.

I once stood at the foot of a Swiss mountain which towed up from the foot of the Vispbach Valley to a height of 10,000 feet. It looked like a tremendous pull to the top. But I said to myself, "Oh, it will require but one step at a time! "Before sunset I stood on the summit, enjoying the magnificent view of the peaks around me, and right opposite to me flashed the icy crown of the Weisshorn, which Professor Tyndall was the first man to discover, by taking one step at a time.

Every boy who would master a difficult study, every youth, who hopes to get on in the world, must keep this motto in hand. When the famous Arago was a school-boy he got discouraged over mathematics. But one day he found on the waste leaf of the cover of his text book a short letter from D'Alembert to a youth discouraged like himself. The advice which D'Alembert gave was, "Go on, sir, go on." "That little sentence,' says Arago, "was my best teacher in mathematics." He did push on steadily, until he became the greatest mathematicisn of his day, by master ing one step at a time.

The wool manufacturing establishments of the United States now number 2,084, with a capital of $159,644,870. They give employment to 75,334 men and 85,664 women and children. The average paid each toiler is $293.05 a year, or $34.42 a month. These mills consume 296,192,229 pounds of wool, of which 222,991,531 are of home production, and 53,200,698 pounds come from abroad. The average cost of the wool is thirty-two cents a pound. The manufactories make a profit of thirty-six and one-half per cent. on the capital invested, clear of all expenses.

The methods of transporting cattle across the Atlantic have been so improved that the voyage is accomplished by the cattle now in safety. A system of ventilation has been adopted, whereby in all sorts of weather, even with the hatches battened down, the holds in which the cattle are can be kept free from the noxious vapors, which otherwise produce suffocation.

Boston is the largest market for boots and shoos in the world.

DEWITT TALMAGE'S LENGTH OF LIFE.

Reasons Why it May be Better to Die Young than to Live to be Old.

"If any one dies in youth," said Dr. Talmage, "we say, 'What a pity!' If one be in pleasant circumstances he never wants to go. William Cullen Bryant at eighty-two standing in my house and reading 'Thadatopsis' without spectacles, was just as anxious to live as when he wrote that immortal threnody. Cato at ninty was afraid he wouldn't live to learn Greek. Thurlow Weed at eighty-nine found life as great a pleasure as when he snuffed out his first politician. I suppose that Methusaleh at 966 was afraid to go out in a storm and get his feet wet lest he should shorten his days."

Dr. Talmage said that if he were an agnostic he would call a man blest according to the number of years he could stay on terra firma. But, since men believe in immortality, an abbreviated existence on earth is a blessing because it makes one's life more compact. Some men can do their day's work in ten hours, some in five, and some in one; and, other things being equal, the man is to be congratulated who can get through his work in one hour. If a person dies at five years he gets through his work at nine in the morning; if he dies at fourty he gets through at noon; if he dies at seventy he gets through at five in the afternoon, and if he dies at ninety he has to toil up to eleven o'clock at night.

"All we ought to be anxious about is to get our work done, and well done," said Dr. Talmage, "and the sooner the better. The number of men who fall into ruin between fifty and seventy years of age is simply appalling. If they had died at thirty it would have been better for themselves and for their families. The great temptation of a man's life sometimes comes far on in middle life. At about fourty-five years of age a man's nervous system changes. By the advice of some friend he takes stimulant to keep him up, and he goes on taking stimulant until it keeps him down. Concerning a vast multitude, it seems as if it would be better for them to embark from this earth early in life. Why do so many die before they are thirty years old? Because God sees the storm coming up from the Caribbean and runs them into the first harbor. If a soldier who has been on guard all night is glad when some one comes to relieve him, ought not that man to shout for joy who can put down his weapons and go into the King's castle?"

Illustrating how men escape perils early in life and fall with them later, Dr. Talmage said: "The first time I crossed the Atlantic ocean it was as smooth as a mill pond, and I wrote a magazine on the calm sea. If I hadn't written it then, before I crossed the ocean again, I never could have written it."

Another reason why it is a blessing to die early, Dr. Talmage said, is because those who die in youth escape so many earthly bereavements. He enumerated some of the sorrows which King David would have escaped if he had been taken from life in youth, and said that he would have also escaped the crimes of uncleanness and murder. "When God takes little children," the preacher continued. He usually takes the brightest. Why? Because they would have the greatest capacity for suffering if permitted to live."

"Again, to die early in life," Dr. Talmage said, "brings one so much the sooner to the centre of things. All astronomers agree that the universe swings around some great centre. God's favorite figure in geometry is the circle. Somewhere is the great hub around which the wheel of the universe turns, and that is Heaven. Our standpoint in this world is defective. We are at the end of the telescope. We are down in the cellar of life, and yet trying to scan the broad heavens of immortality, while our departed Christian friends have gone up stairs to study it. The child who died at five years of age a few days ago, at whose funeral I officiated, knows more to-day of God than Andover or Princeton or Edinburgh or all the theologians of the world. Yet men are rushing around among the apothecaries, wondering if this medicine is good for neuralgia, and that for rheumatism, and others for other diseases, lest they should be suddenly ushered into heaven. Men ought not to go around groaning because another year is gone. We ought to be living not according to the old maxim, which says men should live as though every day might be their last, but as though we were to live forever. But don't let us be nervous lest we should have to move out of a shanty into an Alhambra."

During the year 1882, 830,000,000 gallons of beea were consumed in Germany, making the average number of gallons drunk by each individual about twenty.

PEARLS OF THOUGHT.

Moderation in temper is always a virtue, but moderation in principle is a species of vice.

We should not injure others in character, because it enriches us not, but makes them poor indeed.

Reason like time, will make its own way, and prejudice will fail in the combat with intellect.

There is no rule more invariable than that we are paid for our suspicions by finding what we suspect.

Nature has given us two ears and but one tongue, in order that we may repeat but one-half of what we hear.

What makes many persons discontented with their own condition is the absurd idea they form of the happiness of others.

There is a power in the direct glance of a sincere and loving soul, which will do more to dissipate prejudice and kindle charity than the most elaborate arguments.

Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall. A gem is not polished without rubbing, nor is a man perfected without trials.

Bird Architects.

Doves in the construction of their nests, display a great apparent carelessness or want of skill. The coarse sticks that compose their nests are so closely thrown together that one would hardly believe they could hold the eggs. This is evidently a provision of Nature to secure the young from vermin, like the practice of woodpeckers of lying their eggs on the bare wood. A similar imperfection of structure marks the nests of some of the larger birds. But what should certain species be endowed with this conservative instinct, while in others it is entirely wanting? By careful observation we may find a reason for it. The woodpeckers lay their eggs on the bare wood that vermin may not find a harbor in the materials of a nest; but when a wren or a chickadee takes possession of one of these vacated hollows it fill it with materials that are fitted to harbor swarms of vermin, but each of these birds feeds on the minutest crawling insects, and with its microscopic vision can easily destroy all that enter its abode.—*Wilson Flagg.*

Not Allowed.

They do not in Germany allow the names of distinguished families to be assumed at will by persons not entitled to their use by birth. An actress in the Wilhelm theatre, Berlin, called herself Von Roon when she went upon the stage, and was given out to be a near relative of the great Von Roon family, of which the head was formerly minister of war. As she began to acquire reputation and get talked about, this pretended relationship to the Von Roons became unpleasant to the aristocratic house, and the manager of the theatre received a summary official notification that the aspiring actress would have to discontinue the use of their name. This is the explanation of the fact that shortly thereafter the announcement was made that "Miss Von Roon had been obliged to withdraw from the company in consequence of a death in her family." Since this announcement was made, Miss Von Roon has not returned. Her place, however, has been filled by another young lady very much resembling her in appearance, though known by another name.

Mrs. Theodore Tilton was recently visited by a friend, who found her in a boarding-house in Brooklyn, and who writes: "She is fearfully altered by cares. Her personal beauty, once very marked, is almost gone—only here and there a trace. The soft, bright, innocent eye remains, but that alone. Her delicate hands, once soft as velvet, are hard with toil; the lustrous, dark-browu hair is very gray, and the pink and white of her old beautiful complexion replaced by a dull sallow, but her life is full of peace and rest that 'the world cannot give.'"

Certain kinds of wood, of great duraoility when used alone, have, when joined together, a very destructive influence upon each other. If cypress is joined to walnut, or if cedar is joined to cypress, decay is induced in both woods, which ceases, however, as soon

A woman at Kingston, New Mexico gets praise for erecting a log cabin without help. She cut the logs, hauled them, made the shingles for the roof and put the structure together. She has a husband, who takes care of the children.

The daily earnings in the cotton factories of this country are nearly double what they were in 1840. The total number of spinning spindles is 10,653,435; of looms, 225,759. The actual consumption of cotton last year was 1,760,000 bales.

Sorrow.

When I was young, I said to sorrow,
"Come and I will play with thee!"
He is near me now all day,
And at night returns to say,
"I will come again to-morrow—
I will come and stay with thee."

Trough the world we walk together—
His soft footsteps rustle by me;
To shield an unregarded head
He hath built a winter shed;
And all night in rainy weather
I hear his gentle breathings by me.

—*Asbury De Vere*

PUNGENT PARAGRAPHS.

A Cold Spell—I-c-e.

High tied—Married up in a balloon.

The telegraph cannot sing, but it can beat time.

Fashion journals are properly classified as the clothes press.

Speculators who get squeezed in a pork deal naturally squeal.

The tight style of pantaloons is going out of fashion and the young men of the country can now draw a long breath of relief.

A man in Boston has invented a stone-cutting machine which can do the wook of sixty-four men. Better sentence it to State Prison.

An Ohio woman armed with a broomstick and a flat-iron put to flight two masked burglars the other day. When lovely woman stoops to flat-irony she makes a success of it.

The extremity of forethought: Methodical man going through the formalities of an introduction—"Let me present you, sir, to my wife and my daughter. The elder lady is my wife!"

The Pullman train hadn't run more than ten miles before the robbers headed it. "You're lucky," said one of the passengers to the leader of the gang, "the porter hasn't been through the car yet."

Liberal landlord—"What are you doing in my back yard?" Irish tramp (engaged in mending his clothes)—"I was jist a gatherin' in me rints, sorr!" The 'squire drops the subject and retires.

"Your husband is a staid man now, is he not?" asked a former schoolmate of her friend who had married a man rather noted for his fast habits. "I think so," was the reply, "he stayed out all last night."

Herbert Spencer considers the wearing of pointed-toed shoes and skin-light trousers a well defined mark of mental imbecility. This level-headed remark reassures us as to the soundness of Mr. Spencer as a philosopher.

A young lady in failing health applied to a physician for advice." "Well," he said, as he discovered the poisonous compounds which had made her once raven locks a fashionable blonde color, "I would suggest a change of hair."

"Well, she isn't my style of beauty," was the contemptuous remark of the lady with the snub nose. "So I perceive," said Mrs. Blunt. As there was no chance for an argument, the subject was dropped instanter.—*Boston Transcript.*

Miss Rowe, of Boston, has written a play for seven girls. It is understood that the heroine falls down while skating and is saved by a piece of chewing gum which she had thoughtfully placed in her pocket before leaving home.

As long as she lived: "I don't care what anybody says," remarked Mrs. Fogg warmly; "Mr. Bolus is a good doctor, and I shall employ him as long as I live." "Very likely," replied Fogg; "I believe it is the same with all his patients. They all employ him as long as they live — that is to say, until he gets through with them."

In a town not many miles from Boston, a man stepped into a neighbor's house where he saw the head of the family lying upon his back on the floor, and his wife standing over him, as he thought, with a threatening air He was about to withdraw when the prostrate man shouted "Come along in, Steve; she is only chalking me out a pair of pants."

A lady stood patiently before the receiving teller's window in a New York bank the other day, but no one took any notice of her till she attracted the attention of the money taker by tapping with her parasol on the glass. "Why don't you pay attention to me?" she said petulently. "I'm sorry, ma'am, but we don't pay anything here. Next window, please," was the polite response.

A traveler in France, whose conscience would not allow him to use strong language, found out that at the hotel where he was staying the waiters had been so accustomed to hear Englishmen do so that they set him down as a milksop and neglected him accordingly. He therefore hit upon this expedient to secure a proper amount of attention: Whenever he gave an order he rolled out in sonorous tones the words, "Northumberland, Cumberland, Durham." The effect was marvelous.