

Home Reading.

THE BLUEBIRD.

When ice is thawed and snow is gone,
And racy sweetness floods the trees—
When snowbirds from the hedge have flown
And on the hive-porch swarm the bees,—
Drifting down the first warm wind
That thrills the earliest days of Spring,
The bluebird seeks our maple groves
And charms them into tassellings.

THE VALUE OF HOME.

As a rule, the whole tone of a home depends
upon the woman at the head of it; the average
home, not the poverty-stricken one, nor the
wealthy one. In this average home, whether
sunshine shall enter the rooms, whether the
parlor shall be used and enjoyed, whether the
table shall be invitingly spread, whether bright
lights and bright fires shall give warmth and
cheerfulness on winter nights—whether, in
brief, the home shall be an agreeable or disagreeable
place, is usually as the woman determines.

Perhaps the most critical period in the life of
young persons is when they leave the home of a
parent to become, for several years, inmates
of some other household. There is no word
that has such sweet heart-thrilling music in its
import as the simple, yet meaning word home!

There is a magic power connected with the
name of home, that floods the mind with sad
or pleasing thoughts, and thrills the soul with
inexpressible emotions. How numerous the
objects of interest which cluster round the
mind! Every countenance—father, mother,
husband, wife, brothers, sisters, and children;
every room, picture, piece of furniture, together
with all the surroundings, the gardens, walks,
meadows, fields and pastures; the great rock,
the bubbling spring, the old well, the stately
elm and grand oak; the orchard, too, with its
choice trees of pear, cherry, apple, and plum;

The memory of a home; the echo of the
songs of childhood; the vision of the family altar,
where once an unbroken band was sheltered
under the wing of divine protection, and
father, mother, sister, brother, now dead or far
away, sang the dear old hymns and joined
in the same prayer—all these and yet more will
revivify the soul and keep alive the heavenly
spark early kindled there.

And let it never be borne in mind that
of all the schools there is none like the mother.
Her conduct is ever before the child as his example;
her words are the seed falling upon the
virgin soil, and producing a luxuriant harvest,
either of good or evil. It is not in the power
of her instructions to make him a great man;
for that is generally determined by a law of
Providence; but, if he inherits talents, she
may add to them that virtue without which
mere talent is a splendid deformity. If he be
desitute of extraordinary gifts of genius, the
greater should be her efforts to develop, in their
strongest growth, such powers as he does possess;
to teach him the value of industry, system
and perseverance; to give him a firm grasp
with love to man, so that, if he be not fitted to
command, he may learn to be a useful citizen;
a good man, honest in his dealings, charitable
to the poor, true to his friends, and forgiving to
his enemies.

Such a character is worth more, to its possessor
and to society, than the most exalted intellectual
endowments, unaccompanied by moral
excellence. It will produce happiness in the
world, the respect and confidence of men, and
be remembered in death with love and veneration.

Speaking of the value of a good home, Hans
Christian Andersen, the eminent Danish writer
said that his life was like a beautiful fairy tale,
and he was undoubtedly as happy a man as has
lived. His success was so great and so precisely
adapted to his desires and temperament, that
he tasted it all the way down, as his world-wide
diocese of young folks would have said. His
father was a kind and tender soul, who had
such strong poetic susceptibilities himself, that
he filled his boy's mind and life with gentle
fancies, and preferred to tell him fairy tales, and
take him, when he could to the theatre—a delight
to which his slender purse was seldom equal—rather
than to insist upon tasks and studies. The child is father of the man, and in
this instance the man, also, in the same sense
was father of the child. His father was a shoemaker,
and his son says that he was not happy in
his trade, as the son certainly would not have
been. The glimpse that we get of the intercourse
and relation of the parent and child is very
pleasing, and is just what the poet would have
thought the proper relation. And since Heaven
sends such children as it will, and not such as
parents might choose, it is easy to imagine the
intense delight of the elder Andersen in finding
that his own secret dreams and shy fancies
were shared by the younger, and that when he
had done stitching and stretching and hammering
in the shop, he could stroll boundlessly in
fairy land with his child. How strangely the
picture of the boy Andersen and his father contrasts
with that of John Stuart Mill and his father.
All that either had was left out of the childhood
of the other; and the impression of Anderson's
whole life is as sunny and smiling and happy
as that of Mill's is sober and almost sad.

WRONG END FIRST.

There are people who wake up in the morning,
now and then, with a strong desire for what
a certain pretentious gentleman calls a "wow."
What has happened to them in their sleep it
is impossible to imagine, but it is evident that
only the restraints of society prevent them from
at once engaging in single combat with the
first person they meet.

Being thus restrained, however, they vent
their indignation primarily on the coffee and
cublets, the eggs and toast, and the poor innocent
tea. Nothing is fit to eat; everything is too hot
or too cold. Breakfast is altogether a mockery,
and before it is over you may be sure that their
feelings have been injured by some dreadful
remark, or awful look, or that they have been
alighted or forgotten. The family circle quite
understand this: it is one of Rosabella's or
Frederick's uncomfortable mornings, and endure
the unpleasant state of things as well as they
can, but there is not a doubt that they ought to
form themselves into a special police committee,
and return said Frederick or Rosabella into his
or her own apartment forthwith, for mornings
that dawn thus always bring wretched days,
and as surely as that uncomfortable creature is
let forth upon the world, trouble follows.

The woman who longs for a quarrel can have
a decent domestic one, and make it up some
time or another, and it might be better for some
devoted aunt or cousin to offer her the opportunity
at once, having smelling salts ready for
use as soon as the moment for retributive, penitential
hysterics arrive. But a man who goes
out into the world, as the fighting gentleman
at Donnybrook Fair did, asking, "Will nobody
tread on the tail of my coat?" is in more danger.
Many a quarrel with old friends, many a
disastrous offending of business patrons, many a
scene of bloodshed has followed what old
country people call "getting up wrong end first,"
and in the days of the duello doubtless many
a man had quarrelled with his breakfast
before he quarrelled with his friend.

How one gets up makes a great difference in
the day, and my advice to any one who awakens
with the consciousness of being ready for "a
wow" upon him, is to return to his pillow
until he is in a better condition, and can safely
trust himself to go through the day without a
show of temper.

THE FEMALE IN EGYPT.

Egyptian ladies walk about the streets upon
shopping expeditions (in which I am told they
take an even more intense and rapturous delight
than my own fair countrywomen) enveloped
in a hideous black garment, not unlike the
dismal robes of the Roman Confraternita,
which effectually conceals the attractions nature
has bestowed upon them, as well as those due
to the adornments of millinery and jewelry.
But English ladies who enjoy the privilege
of free access to some of the leading Egyptian
bazaars have informed me that this shapeless,
lugubrious vestment covers toilets of the greatest
splendor in material and color, and by its
effect that might awaken envy in the breast of
many a titled Western dame. I have listened to
thrilling accounts of jewels as large as turkeys'
eggs, both faces of which are covered with
brilliant facets of the first water, the size of goodly
chick peas; of complete "costumes" from
Wozh and Madame Elise; of ropes of pearls
that would have sickled o'er with the pale
cast of thought; the lavish impulses of Lothair
himself; of rubies, emeralds, and sapphires
scattered with fine profusion over the surface
of undeniable, if somewhat exuberant charms.
As the Egyptian Ladies, so the Egyptian
houses. What they are compelled to exhibit
to public gaze is of a simplicity frequently
amounting to ugliness, while that which they
reserve for private inspection is gorgeous and
ornate in the extreme.

J. Smith says, "Immersion is frog pond
virtue."
Virtue deserves respect, even in beggar's
clothes.

THE MANAGEMENT OF LAMPS AND OIL.

The lady of a house in which we are sometimes
a guest, says the *Agriculturist*, in great
trouble with her lamps, of which she had
three or four different styles for burning kerosene.
One lamp after another, a short time
ago, began to burn poorly; new wicks were
put in all around, but in a few hours they were
as bad as before. Being taken into consultation,
we suggested that she had a poor oil, but
the oil was Pratt's, and bought in the original
packages, besides there was the German student's
lamp, in which the same oil burned
splendidly. We became interested in the case,
and made a careful diagnosis, as the physicians
say. The oil was of a good kind, the wicks
were new, the lamps of different styles, each
apparently perfect, and as good as ever; while
all the lamps but one had been gradually bad,
and were now nearly useless, this burned as well
as ever, and as well as any lamp need to burn.
A minute's thought given to the difference
between the student's lamp and the others, gave
us the clue to the trouble. Asking for a glass
jar, an empty fruit jar was brought, and all the
oil from one of the delinquent lamps, with a
previous shaking, was turned into it. The appearance
of the oil in the jar was such as to
call forth an exclamation of surprise, and well
it might, for it looked like muddy water. Here
was the cause of all the trouble, an accumulation
of dust and other impurities. The lamps
had been filled month after month without
emptying; the wicks took up the clear oil, leaving
the particles of dust behind; the lamps being
daily filled, this dirt gradually accumulated
until at last it was present in such quantities as
to clog up the wick and so destroy their porosity
that they could not take up enough oil to
give a proper light. Clean oil and new wicks
being supplied, the lamps gave as good a light
as ever. "But how did the student's lamp help
you to guess what was the matter?" we were
asked. "Because we saw that the wick was not
in the main body of the oil, but was fed by a
tube which we noticed started from the oil reservoir
at some distance from the bottom, so
that the impurities could settle, and not reach
the wick. The quantity of dirt in the oil induced
us to go a step farther, and enquire where
the main supply of oil was kept; we found that
the can was in an open shed, and not far
from where the coal ashes were sifted; the funnel
used to fill the feeding can was kept close by.
Here we had the whole story, the funnel
daily wet with oil, was where it could catch
whatever dust might be floating in the air, with
an extra supply when the coal was sifted. When
the feeder was filled, the dust from the funnel
was washed into it, and from thence it went
into the lamps, where it accumulated with the
results we have stated. Of course this, the
main source of the trouble, was easily remedied
by providing a proper place for the oil can and
funnel.

THE ORIGIN OF COAL OIL.

For a long while the origin of coal oil was
one of nature's secrets. Theories of various
degrees of probability were advanced. One
sagacious person declared that a vast school of
whales had been caught in shallow water in
pre-historic times; that earth had gradually
formed above them, and that the diggers had
found the oil that had lain within these carcasses.
A more reasonable theory was that the
oil was contained in coal, and that the pressure
of superincumbent earth and rock had squeezed
it out of the coal shales into the sandy beds
below. The discovery of impervious belts of
solid rock between the coal and oil put an end
to this idea. Petroleum is the product of seaweeds,
—the fat weed that rots itself at ease
on Lethe's wharf," as Shakespeare his it. The
great oil field is triangular, with the Alleghenies
at its base and Pittsburgh at its apex. This
was once an arm of the sea, swarming with
marine vegetable life.

The plants with which it was filled were rich
in unctuous juices, which have since lain in the
oil beds beneath the earth that has replaced the
water. "Through these changes," says Professor
Owen, "the weeds have come at last to cure
a rheumatism and help heal a gash, to light the
feet of the night wanderer, and guide the hand
of the pale student penning his thoughts in the
long dark hours; to clothe the fair maiden in
buys rivaling those of lily and rose; to stimulate
the inventive faculty and add wealth to the
communities of men of foremost race; and among
them to supply, also, tools, to a cozening
tempter and to put a power into the hands
of maddened, denizens of breadless joys, to
spread the flames of destruction through the
palaces of kings." The last allusion is more
intelligible when we remember that the petroleum
of Pennsylvania burned the palaces of
Paris.

ABOUT YOUR PULSE.

Every person should know how to ascertain
the state of the pulse in health; then, by comparing
it with what it is when he is ailing, he
may have some idea of the urgency of his case.
Parents should know the healthy pulse of each
child, and then their person is born with a
peculiarly slow or fast pulse, and the very
case in hand may be such peculiarity. An infant's
pulse is 140; a child of seven about 80;
and from twenty to sixty years it is 70 beats a
minute, declining to sixty at four score. A
healthy grown person beats 70 times a minute,
declining to sixty at four score. At sixty, if
the pulse always exceeds 70, there is a disease;
the machine working itself out, there is a fever
or inflammation somewhere, and the body is feeding
on itself, as in consumption, when the pulse
is quick.

The individual who seeks and imagines himself
to have attained righteousness and salvation
through any but God's method—that is, by
faith—is in a more hopeless condition than he
who does not seek salvation at all.

Miscellaneous
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MONTROSE, APRIL 12, 1876.—11.

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April 1, 1876.

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