

Poetry.

MY WIFE'S BACK AGAIN

Short eye I had na heart to sing  
My harp untuned nac thairward ring;  
Noo I've got back the master string;  
An' m' muscle I can mak again;  
The wearied night it ends wi' morn,  
The langest lane at last will turn;  
An' noo I sing nae mair forlorn—  
My winsome wife's back again.

Lang days and nights passed' over in gloom:  
I thought the summer ne'er wad come;  
But noo, at eare I snap my thumb,  
An' eanty I can crack again;  
Noo summer smiles—by the sing the birds;  
The helms of joy strike a' the chords;  
An' I—Oh! what needs wastin' words—  
My denty doo is back again!

O man! without a wif's care,  
Bo your house full, or bo it bare,  
There's something wantin' late and air,  
To fill your heart an' make you fair.  
Your selfish life's a lonesome spilt;  
But wif's smile, in pain or health,  
Steads wee from want, or blesses wealth—  
Thank Heaven! my wif's back again!

Select Tale.

GIRL HUNTING.

A HALF LENGTH FROM LIFE.

BY MRS. C. M. KIRKLAND.

"A theme of perilous risk  
Thou handlest, and hot fires beneath thy path,  
The treacherous ashes nurse."

"Can't you let our folks have some eggs?" said Daniel Webster Larkins, opening the door and sticking in a little straw colored head and a pair of very mild blue eyes, just far enough to reconnoitre; "can't you let our folks have some eggs? Our old hen don't lay nothing but chickens now and mother can't eat pork, and she ain't had no breakfast, and the baby ain't dressed, nor nothin'!"

"What is the matter, Webster? where is your girl?"

"Oh! we an't got no girl but father, and he's had to go away to the raisin'—and mother wants to know if you can't tell her where to get a girl?"

Poor Mrs. Larkins! Her husband makes but an indifferent 'girl' being a remarkably public spirited person. The good lady is in very delicate health, and having an incredible number of little blue eyes constantly making fresh demands upon her time and strength, she usually keeps a girl when she can get one. When she cannot, which is unfortunately a larger part of the time, her husband dresses the six children—mixes stir-cake for the eldest blue eyes to bake on the griddle, which is never at rest—milks the cow—feeds the pigs—and then goes to his business, which we have supposed to consist principally in helping at raisings, wood-bees, huskings, and such like important affairs; and 'girl-hunting—the most important and arduous, and profitless of all."

Yet it must be owned that Mr. Larkins is a tolerable carpenter, and that he buys as many comforts as his neighbors. The main difficulty seems to be 'that help is not often purchasable. The very small portion of other damsels who will consent to enter any body's door, for pay, makes the chase after them very interesting from its uncertainty, and the damsels themselves, subject to a well known foible of their sex, become very coy from being over-courted. Such racing and chasing, and begging and praying, to get a girl for a month! They are often got for life with less trouble. But to return.

Having an esteem for Mrs. Larkins, and a sincere experimental pity for the forlorn condition of 'no girl but father,' I set out at once to try if female tact and perseverance might not prove successful in ferretting out a 'help,' though mere industry had not succeeded. For this purpose I made a list in my mind for those neighbors in the first place, whose daughters sometimes condescended to be girls; and secondly, of the few who were enabled by good luck, good management, and good pay, to keep them. If I failed in my attempts upon one class, I hoped for some new light from the other. When the object is of such importance, it is well worthy to string one's bow quite double.

In the first category stood Mrs. Lowndes, whose forlorn log-house had never known door or window; a blanket supplying the place of one, and the other being represented by a crevice between the logs. Lifting the sooty curtains with some timidity, I found the dame with some dirty, tangled yarn; and ever and anon kicking at a basket which hung suspended from the beam overhead by means of a strip of hickory bark.—The basket contained a nest of rags and an indescribable baby; and in the ashes on the rough hearth played several dingy objects, which I suppose had once been babies.

"Is your daughter at home now, Mrs. Lowndes?"

"Well yes! M'randy's to hum, but she's out now. Did you want her?"

"I came to see if she could not go to Mrs. Larkins, who is very unwell, and sadly in want of help."

"Miss Larkins! why da tell! I want to know! Is she sick again? and is her gal gone? Why? I want to know! I thought she had Lo-isy Paddon! Is Lo-isy gone?"

"I suppose so. You will let Miranda go to Mrs. Larkins, will you?"

"Well, I don't know, but I would let her go for a spell just to 'conmulate' them. M'randy may go if she's a mind ter. She needn't live out unless she chooses. She's got a comfortable home, and no thanks to nobody. What wages do they give?"

"A dollar a week,"

"Eat at the table?"

"Oh! certainly,"

"Have Sundays?"

"Why no—I believe not the whole of Sunday—the children you know—"

"Oh, ho!" interrupted Mrs. Lowndes, with a most disdainful toss of the head, giving at the same time a vigorous impulse to the cradle, "if that's how it is, M'randy don't stir a step! She don't live no where if she can't come home on Saturday night and stay until Monday morning."

I took my leave without further parley, having often found this point *sine qua non* in such negotiations.

My next effort was at a pretty little cottage, whose overhanging roof and neater outer arrangements, spoke of English ownership. The interior by no means corresponded with the exterior aspect, being even more bare than usual, and far from neat. The presiding power was a prodigious creature, who looked like a man in woman's clothes and whose blazing face, ornamented here and there by great hair moles, spoke very intelligibly of the bear barrel, if of nothing more exciting. A daughter of this virago had once lived in my family, and the mother met me, with an air of defiance, as if she thought I had come with an accusation. When I unfolded my errand her *aborb* softened a little, but she scornfully rejected the idea of her Lucy living with any more Yankees.

"You pretend to think everybody alike," said she, but when it comes to "the pint, you're a sight more uppish, and saucy than the ra'al quality at home,—and I'll see the whole Yankee race to—"

I made my exit without waiting for the conclusion of this complimentary observation; and the less reluctantly for having-observed on the table the lower part of one of my silver teaspoons the top of which had been violently wrenched off. The spoon was a well remembered loss during Lucy's administration, and I knew that Mrs. Larkins had none to spare.

Unsuccessful thus far among the arbiters of our destiny, I thought I would stop at the house of a friend and make some inquiries which might spare me further rebuffs. On making my way by the garden gate to the library where I usually saw Mrs. Stayner, I was surprised to see it silent and uninhabited. The windows were closed; a half finished cap lay on the sofa, and a bunch of yesterday's wild flowers upon the table. All spoke of desolation. The cradle—not exactly an appropriate adjunct of a library elsewhere, but quite so at the west—was gone and the little rocking chair was no where to be seen. I went on through the parlor and hall, finding no signs of life, save the breakfast table still standing with crumbs left undisturbed. Where bells are not known, ceremony is out of the question; so I penetrated to the kitchen, where at length I caught sight of the fair face of my friend. She was bending over the bread tray, and at the same time telling nursery stories as fast as possible, by way of coaxing her little boy of four year old to rock the cradle which contained his baby sister.

"What does this mean?"

"Oh! nothing more than usual. My Polly took herself off yesterday without a moment's warning, saying she thought she had lived out long enough; and poor Tom, our factotum, has the ague. Mr. Stayner has gone to some place sixteen miles off, where he was told he might hear of a girl and I am sole representative of the family energies. But you've no idea what capital bread I can make."

This looked rather discouraging for my quest, but knowing that the main point of table companionship was the source of most of Mrs. Stayner's difficulties, I still hoped for Mrs. Larkins, who loved the closest intimacy with her 'help,' and always took them visiting with her. So I passed on for another effort at Mrs. Randall's, whose three daughters had sometimes been known to lay aside their dignity long enough to obtain some much coveted article of dress.—Here the mop was in full play, and Mrs. Randall, with her gown turned up, was splashing diluted mud on the walls and furniture in the received mode of these regions, where "stained glass windows" are made without a patent. I did not venture in, but asked from the door, with my

best diplomacy whether Mrs. Randall knew of a girl.

"A gal! no; who wants a gal?"

"Mrs. Larkins."

"See! why don't she get up and do her own work?"

"She is too feeble."

"Law sakes! too feeble! she'd be as able as any body to thrash around, if her old man didn't spile her by waitin' on—"

We think Mr. Larkins deserves small blame on this score.

"But Mrs. Randall, the poor woman is really ill and unable to do anything for her children.—Couldn't you spare Rachel for a few days to help her?"

This was said in a most guarded and deprecatory tone and with a manner carefully moulded between indifference and undue solicitude.

"My gals has enough to do. They are not willing to do their own work. Caroline hasn't been worth the fust red cent for hard work even since she went to school to A. —"

"Oh! I did not expect to get Caroline. I understand she is going to get married."

"What, to Bill Green! She wouldn't let him walk where she had walked last year?"

Here I saw I had made a mis-step. Resolving to be more cautious, I left the selection to the lady herself, only begging for one of the girls.—But my eloquence was wasted. The Miss Randalls had been a whole quarter at a select school and will not live out again until their present stock of finery is unwearable. Miss Rachel, whose company I had hoped to secure, was even then paying attention to a branch of fine arts.

"Rachel—Amanda!" cried Mrs. Randall at the foot of the ladder which gave access to the upper region—"bring that thing down here! It's the prettiest thing you ever seen in your life!" turning to me. And the educated young lady brought down a doleful looking compound of card board and many colored wafers, which had it seems, occupied her mind and fingers for some days.

"There!" said the mother, proudly, "a gal that's learnt to make sich baskets as that, ain't a going to be nobody's help, I guess!"

I thought the boast likely to be verified as a prediction, and went my way crest-fallen and weary. Girl-hunting is certainly among our most formidable "choras."—*Western Clearings.*

Miscellaneous.

THE ENGLISH CENSUS.

A paragraph has been floating around in our exchanges, stating that the increase in the British population within the last generation, has been equal to an array of twelve hundred thousand men. Curious as it may seem at first sight, the fact is really so, as is shown by a comparison of the census of 1821 with that of 1854. For example, in the former year the number of males in Great Britain, between the ages of twenty and forty, was 1,966,664, while in the latter year it was 3,194,496, being an increase of 1,226,832, or more than sixty per cent. Forty years of peace have, it appears, increased the available fighting force of England two-thirds.

This, however, is not the only useful or curious bit of intelligence which an analysis of the last British census affords. An article in Blackwood's Magazine from which this fact was originally culled, gives other items equally as note-worthy. For example, it appears that more than half a million of people in Great Britain are over seventy years of age; more than a hundred and twenty-nine thousand are over eighty; nearly ten thousand over ninety; two thousand over ninety-five, and three hundred and nineteen over a hundred. The number who have passed the "three score and ten" appears extraordinary, when it is remembered that seventy is generally considered the limit even of a long life; but after seventy the mortality increases rapidly, and beyond ninety it moves forward at an astonishing velocity. Of the millions in Great Britain, but three hundred and nineteen were alive a century ago. What a lesson on the shortness of human life as compared with time!

A frightful fact, brought out by the census, is the terrible waste of 'existence in childhood in the great manufacturing cities. In Manchester, out of every hundred thousand infants born, less than fifty thousand are alive at the end of six years, and but thirty-nine thousand at the end of twenty. In the large commercial towns the waste of life is not so appalling, but still is comparatively enormous. For example, in Liverpool, out of every hundred thousand persons born, about forty-five thousand survive to the age of twenty. The chances of life in Liverpool as compared with Manchester are, therefore, as forty-five to thirty-nine. The great mortality in the first six years of life in the latter

town, can only be explained by the close air, bad food and the insufficient comforts of the operatives. Compared with the rural districts, both Liverpool and Manchester are pest houses, so to speak. In Surrey, for instance, out of a hundred thousand children born nearly seventy-one thousand reach the age of twenty. England Wales, on the average, give sixty-one thousand able-bodied men between twenty and forty years of age to every hundred thousand infants born. Manchester, as we have seen, gives but thirty-nine thousand. The mortality in the manufacturing towns is, consequently, two-thirds greater than in the kingdom at large, and about twice as large as in the healthier rural districts. This is a telling fact against the morbid growth of cities, the neglect of sanitary measures in towns and the too common indifference to the physical condition of the working man. We might profit even here by taking it to heart.

One would think that the liberal professions in civilized countries would vary greatly in numbers; that, for example, there would be more clergymen than lawyers, and more doctors than either. But the census of Great Britain does not sustain this view. The number of lawyers is about seventeen thousand, of physicians nineteen thousand five hundred. The policemen, meantime, are eighteen thousand three hundred, so that they run neck by neck with the clergy, the law and medicine. The blind are one out of every nine hundred and seventy-five. The deaf and dumb are one to every sixteen hundred and seventy. The total number of criminals in confinement is about twenty-seven thousand. There are about four hundred thousand widows; about two to one, it will be seen; a fact which goes far to prove that the sex which has the liberty of asking fares better than the sex which has to wait to be asked.

The British census also confirms the old saying, that people who abandon their 'native air' do not live as long as those who remain by it. The towns, it likewise appears, have to be continually recruited from the country—verifying the French statement that few families survive a century in Paris. Most of these facts are doubtless true, to a greater or less degree, of the United States; and it is for this reason, and not merely to gratify idle curiosity, that we have collected them.—The census of any civilized nation, in fact, can impart truth to other nations.

THE OLDEST PERSON IN VIRGINIA.—A correspondent of the Richmond Inquirer says:—There is a negro woman in Powhatan, now living in my immediate neighborhood, whom I have recently seen and talked with, who was born the year after George II., ascended the throne of England, and four years before the birth of George Washington! She is now one hundred and twenty-six years old, and was, of course, very near half a century old at the time our Declaration of Independence was proclaimed, on the 4th of July, 1776. I state this upon information that I believe to be true; and the appearance of her person serves to confirm it. Her memory seems to furnish her an indelible record of all the events, great and small, of her long life, when aroused from the state of drowsy forgetfulness that frequently betides her. When I saw her, she was wide awake, and full of chat. She had remarkably fine eyes, and, I was told, could thread a needle, and sew nearly as well as she ever could. She said she had been the mother of sixteen children, all of whom died of old age, and that there was precisely one year and one day between their births, respectively; that she had never been sick—never had a physician to see her—and never took a single dose of physic in her life. She talked cheerfully and fluently, and quoted many passages of Scripture readily and appropriately; said she had been to Heaven twice, and wanted to go again. Whenever she touched upon religion, her mind seemed to become absorbed at once; and the (to me) unexpected fluency and beauty of her language, indicated "the gift" that we sometimes hear of. Though no Doctor, I was prompted by curiosity to feel her pulse, to see if it beat like other people's. I found it quite regular and strong. I inquired if she had never lost her eyesight. She said, no, never, nor appetite either.

Now, gentlemen, as this case may be interesting to the curious, the facts herein stated are at your disposal. Yours, truly,

A young lady thus writes, anonymously, in the columns of an Irish paper:—"For my part, I confess that the desire of my heart, and my constant prayer is, that I may be blessed with a good and affectionate husband, and that I may be a good and affectionate wife and mother. Should I be denied this, I hope for grace to resign myself, but I it will be a hard trial for me."

LONG LIVES AND HEALTHY ONES

"How few really die of old age!" observes Dr. Van Oven, in an interesting volume which he has published in London, on the causes of longevity. To prove the truth of his remark, he gives tables of 7000 persons who lived ages from 100 to 185 years. The following are some of the instances he refers to:—Parr's death at 152 was premature, induced by a foolish change from the simple diet and active habits of a peasant to the luxurious ease and exciting foods of a country gentleman. His body was examined by the great Harvey, who found all the organs in so sound a condition, that, but for intemperance and inactivity, he would in all probability, have lived many years longer." An English gentleman named Hastings, who died in 1650, at the age of 100, rode to the death of a stag, at 90. Thomas Wood, a parish clerk, lived to 106, and "could read to the last without spectacles, and only kept his bed one day." J. Witten, a weaver, "was never sick, never used spectacles, hunted a year before his death, and died suddenly," at the age of 102. Francis Atkins "was a porter at the palace gate, Salisbury. It was his duty to wind a clock which was at the top of the palace, and he performed this duty until within a year of his death (102). He was remarkably upright in his deportment, and walked well to the last." Margret McDorval, a Scottish woman, who died at 106, "married thirteen husbands, and survived them all." Cardinal de Salis, who died in 1785, at the age of 110, used to say—"By being old when I was young, I find myself young now I am old.—I led a sober, studious, but not lazy or sedentary life; my diet was ever sparing, though delicate; my liquors the best wines of Zeres and La Mancha of which I never exceeded a pint at a meal except in cold weather, when I allowed myself a pint more; I rode and walked every day, except in rainy weather, when I exercised for two hours. So far I took care of the body; and as to the mind, I endeavored to preserve it in due temper by a scrupulous obedience to the divine commands, and keeping (as the apostle directs) a conscience void of offence to God and man." J. Jaack, a native of Switzerland, "when 127 years old was sent as a deputy to the National Assembly of France." He died the following year. Others might be mentioned, but we have only room to add, that within the past two centuries and a half, ten well-certified cases of individuals in England and Wales living to ages ranging from 152 to 200 years, have occurred; and here, in modern times, we have repeated the length of days commonly believed to belong exclusively to the patriarchal ages.

AN INDIGESTIBLE MEAL.—An immense anaconda recently arrived in Boston from the neighborhood of the Congo river, in Africa. It is said that his length is between twenty and twenty-five feet, with a girth of thirty inches in the largest part of his body. Just before leaving his native land he took a hearty meal of a dog, and no other food was eaten by him for seven months after. After the first of October this king of snakes arrived in Boston, and was lodged in a large case with very strong glass walls, and a double English milled blanket, folded into four thicknesses, furnished for his bed. On the 20th of November Mr. Sears, the proprietor, thought it was full time to tempt his appetite, and therefore introduced a rabbit into his den just at evening. On viewing the interior the following morning, the blanket was missing, while the rabbit was still alive! On Wednesday, seven days after the blanket was discharged, whole and unimpaired, after a circuitous journey through an intestinal tube of nearly one hundred and fifty feet. It is supposed that when he sprang at the rabbit, by some mistake in calculation the latter escaped, and the edge of the blanket was seized by the teeth.—When these are once engaged, being for holders and not for mastication, it is quite impossible to disengage them; and hence whatever is once drawn into the mouth must necessarily go down his throat.

THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE.—There are times unquestionably, when pills are good things; but generally pillows are better.—We are of opinion that the former have often got not a little credit, when fairly belonged to the latter. When a man is ill, the doctor tells him to go to bed, and be contented; probably he gives him a little taste of physic; but quiet, a recumbent posture, and temporary abstinence are, in very many cases, the successful remedial agents after all. Giving pills is the way the doctor has of turning the key upon his patient, keeping him at home, establishing healthful bodily functions, and opening his mind, to good advice.