"YOU BID ME TRY."

You bid me try, Blue Eyes, to write
A rondeau. What!—forthwith—to-night,
Reflect. Some skill I have, 'tis true;
But thirteen lines—and rhymed on two—
"Refrain," as well. Ah, helpless plight!

Still there are five lines—ranged aright,
These Gallic bonds, I feared would fright
My easy Muse. They did tell you—
You bid me try!
That makes them nine. The port's in sight;—
'Tis all because your eyes are bright;
Now just a pair to end with 'oo,'—
When maids command, what can't we do!
Behold!—the rondeau, tasteful, light,
You bid me try!

—*Modern Age.*

A LITTLE RUSSIAN SERVANT.

"Who's that?" asked the countess, stopping in front of a young girl fifteen or sixteen years of age, bent over an embroidery frame. The young girl rose, prostrated herself thrice before her mistress, then getting up, remained standing, her hands hanging by her side, her head slightly bent forward under the investigating gaze of the countess, who, through her eye-glass, closely scrutinized her.

"It is the new girl, your highness," answered the head lady's maid, coming forward with the air of importance that thirty years employment gives to no matter what functionary. "She is the daughter of Foma, of the village of Ikenine. She is come in her turn to pay her father's obrok—he is in Moscow."

"These peasant girls can do nothing," said the countess, with a wearied air; "what do you expect to get out of this one?"

"She doesn't embroider badly, your highness; pray look yourself. She can be put to the embroideries—not to the ground, but to the trimmings. This is for the toilet table of Madame la Comtesse."

The noble lady, who could hardly see, being short-sighted from her birth, examined the embroidery frame so closely that the tip of her nose grazed the cloth.

"That's not bad, she said. "Come here, little girl."

The little girl advanced, and the countess inspected her as minutely as she had done the embroidery.

"How pretty she is! What's your name?"

"Mavra."

The word came like a breath from the rosy lips.

"You must speak louder if you want us to hear you," said the head lady's maid, angrily.

Mavra turned her large, blue, startled eyes toward her, let them drop, and said nothing.

"Sit down to your work," said the countess, amused at her new toy. With a quick, graceful movement the young girl resumed her seat on the wooden chair, and, the needle firmly held between her agile fingers, went in and out of the stuff with that short, sharp noise that stimulates the action of the hand.

"That's right; you may go on," said the countess, her nerves irritated by the regularity of the movement.

Then, turning her back upon the young girl and trailing the heavy, sumptuous folds of her dressing gown along the carefully-washed pine wood floor, she disappeared through the door, which was respectfully closed after her by the head lady's maid. The countess, an accomplished mistress of a house, made a practice of paying a daily visit to this room, which was reserved for the women of her service. Mavra was left alone in the workshop, a large, well-lighted chamber, furnished simply with tables and chairs for the use of the innumerable women and girls invariably attached to the service of those noble ladies who know so well how to maintain their rank in that blessed time of serfdom. At this hour the workroom was empty. Some of the women were washing, others ironing, some cleaning and turning upside down everything in the private apartment the countess had just left. The young peasant girl, with her needle uplifted, rested her ruddy hand upon the edge of the frame and looked around her.

What multitudes of embroidered gowns, with their rich lace trimmings, hung there on the wall, waiting some slight repairs. What endless petticoats, with their ornamented flounces, all freshly ironed, on cords along the huge room. What countless lace caps, worn hardly an hour, pinned to a pincushion as large as a pillow, used only for this purpose; and there, in a basket on the corner of the table, what piles of cambric chemises, delicately piped and plaited, trimmed with Valenciennes lace and ornamented with bright ribbons. And all this for one person, without counting the silk stockings in that other basket, and the rings by dozens worn by the countess on her thin fingers. In this world of living beings under God's heaven, what importance given to one person, that needed so many other persons to serve her, and how the nothingness of these was made more emphatic by the dominance of that. Mavra sat wonder-stricken. The head lady's maid coming into the room found her still in a state of stupefaction, stupefied above all at having made these reflections.

"Well, you are lucky," she said to her, with a boastful look. "Our countess took a fancy to you at the first glance; you are now on the list of embroiderers. You may thank God for it. It is not often the countess takes a fancy like that at first sight."

"Is she, then, unkind?" innocently inquired the girl.

Unkind! Oh, no; capricious, like all mistresses, but the kindest lady in the world, and generous. Besides, this is a rich house: nothing is counted—nothing at all. This is better than your village," continued Dacka, proud of belonging to such noble masters, and desirous of impressing on the mind of the simple peasant girl the importance and dignity of the functions she was promoted to.

"It is more beautiful," replied Mavra, bending intently over her work.

"It was lucky they taught you to embroider, else you would have been sent to the poultry yard to feed the cocks and hens and look after the calves. How did you learn?"

"My mother taught me; she was formerly in service; she was a dvorovala in the time of the late countess. She married a peasant."

"Ah!" said Dacka, "I thought your manners were not quite those of a peasant girl; if your mother was in service, that's another thing. Come, take a cup of coffee with me. Prepare the coffee pot and make haste before the others come; I can't ask everyone, you understand."

To Mavra there was but little difference between the isba of her father and the workroom of the seignorial mansion. Here, as there, her life was spent in assiduous work from sunrise to sunset. There, her mother, an austere, somber woman, like most village matrons, to whom life had proved no light matter; here, the lady's maid, often grumbling, but at times kind and even condescending. The chief difference between the two modes of life consisted of the daily visits of the countess, who generally said nothing, but passed with a solemn air through this roomful of silent, awestricken women. But one thing was lacking to Mavra, and this nothing could replace—the evening hour of rest which she used to spend by the fountain when sent to draw water for her mother, on the threshold of their cabin watching the spring rain falling soft and warm, melting the snow so quickly that its thickness might be seen visibly diminishing; or, again, in the month of May, standing at the edge of the forest, listening to the nightingales singing on the delicate, golden branches of the perfumed birch tree.

Winter passed fairly well, but when the first breath of warm air set the melting snow streaming down the roofs, which again the night's frost transformed into long stalactites of ice, Mavra felt a strange, vague aching in her heart. The house was overheated, and the close, nauseous air made her sick. What would she not give to run as of old over the moors, to see if the moss were beginning to appear under the crystallized transparent carpet of snow!

"What's the matter with this little girl?" asked the countess one day, as she stopped before the frame at which the young peasant girl was diligently working. "She was as fresh as a rose, and now she has grown yellow. Do you feel pain anywhere, Mavra?"

Mavra raised her blue eyes to the noble lady who, for the second time in her life, deigned to address her, and replied in her low voice:

"Nowhere, your highness."

"Then why are you so yellow?"

"I don't know, your highness."

The countess dropped her eye glass, and looked kindly at the young girl.

"I know," said she, after a moment's pause; "the child wants air. She came here from her village, and has passed the whole winter stooping over her frame. Henceforth, little girl, you must get out into the fresh air twice a day, and must learn the service of my bedroom; this will give you exercise."

Thereon the countess quitted the room, followed by Mavra's grateful eyes, now filled with tears. From that day Mavra worshipped the countess; to approach her, to touch what she had worn, to serve her, to receive her orders and execute them with the utmost speed and dexterity was the great joy of this humble girl. Her mistress, wrapped in all this gorgeous luxury, the element of which had been so long under her eyes in the workroom, appeared to her as some august being nearer her creator than any other of her fellow creatures. Not only did Mavra pray to God for her, but at times she inwardly prayed to her as a saint, thinking the pleadings of a being so superior must have equal weight with the powers of heaven as with those of earth.

Summer was already on the wane when the noble mansion, habitually so tranquil, was suddenly filled with noise and gayety. The young Count Serge had sent his carriages on before him; saddle horses and hounds were stamping and neighing in their stalls and barking in their kennels as though the one aim of life were to make the most noise possible in a given time.

"How handsome he is, our young count," Dacka kept on saying the livelong day to while away the tedious hours in the silent workroom. "It was I received him in my arms when he was born."

And she repeated again and again, with inexhaustive complacency, the history of Serge's birth, and the legend of his boyhood up to the moment when this dear treasure of her heart had gone to join the corps of pages, his trunks laden with cakes, jams and all that could possibly be eaten under heaven.

The workgirls have listless heed to these hundred-times-repeated narrations, but Mavra was never tired hearing them; it was like receiving a sort of gospel into her heart. Her good and revered protectress made all things dear and venerated that touched her nearly, and this only son, loved, adored, longed for, became a supernatural being, a kind of Messiah, to her.

One morning at the end of August as Mavra, who had risen early, was crossing the courtyard to go waken up the laundress, who had overslept herself, she saw, galloping along the inclosure, a troika of black horses with their heads covered with bells. "It's the young master," thought the little servant, and without giving herself time for reflection she ran to the ponderous gate and threw it wide open. At the same moment the brilliant equipage arrived; the coachman pulled together his noble beasts, and, without slackening their gallop, they shot like an arrow past Mavra, and ten steps further on stood stock still at the foot of the steps. Dazed, her heart thrilled by she knew not what impressions of fear and joy, she received full in the face the gaze of two large black amazed and amused eyes.

"How like his mother!" thought Mavra, as she closed the huge gate that shut with a heavy bang.

She turned slowly toward the steps as Serge, jumped down from the carriage, looked round at her again. He smiled when he met her blue eyes full of simple admiration, and giving her a friendly nod, entered the house of his fathers. A minute after he was by the countess' bedside, pressed lovingly in her arms.

When they had chatted two whole hours, as they finished their tea, Serge, recollecting himself, suddenly said to his mother.

"What is this new acquisition you have made, mother? A little fair-haired Raphael opened the gate for me this morning."

The countess thought for a moment.

"Ah! I know," said she; "it's Mavra—a virtue—my dear child. A strange little creature who adores me."

"She is quite right," replied the son, respectfully. "What do you do with her?"

"She embroiders in the afternoon, and in the morning she attends on me; but, Serge, you must be prudent. My house is strictly kept; don't you go and amuse yourself making gallant speeches to my girls."

"Oh, mother! what do you take me for?" carelessly replied the young man. "I think of a woman only when she is in a casket suited to her style of beauty. Now here you may have pearls, but the casket is totally wanting."

They burst out laughing together. Only those who thoroughly understood these two beings could have guessed beneath this light talk the strict propriety of the mother and the son's respect for the maternal home. But Russians of the grand monde are so constituted that when they have no vice they take all imaginable trouble to affect it.

On leaving the dining room the countess and her son directed their steps toward the garden. In front of the house, in the courtyard, they met Mavra stooping under the weight of an enormous pile of linen, which she was carrying from the laundry. The sheets, held in under her crossed hands, reached so high that she had to raise her chin and turn her head sideways in order to see before her.

"See, there she is," said the countess in French, stopping to look at her.

"It is hard to say whether she is a Raphael or a Greuze," said Serge. "This morning she had more the look of a Raphael with a Russian nose; it is a hybrid style of beauty, but it has a certain charm."

They continued their walk, while Mavra entered the workroom with her pile of linen. When her hands were free she stood trembling and silent, as though she had been guilty of a crime.

"Well, what are you waiting for, said one of the girls, pulling her by the apron.

"I don't know," replied Mavra. "I feel as if I had received a blow, and my hands keep on trembling."

"You carried too heavy a load for your strength. Sit down, and you will see it will pass off."

And in fact it did pass away in a few minutes; but from that moment Mavra was haunted by a pair of black eyes that little suspected it.

Her veneration for the countess was in nowise diminished by this. On the contrary, she loved her more, if possible. But in place of one idol she had two. By little innocent tactics, that surprised herself, she succeeded in having the service of the young count's room assigned to her, and thenceforth her happiness was complete. The care of the wardrobe was in the hands of the valet-de-chambre, who scrupulously avoided doing anything else; and while Serge, on his magnificent black horse, was galloping along under the vaulted arches of the pine forests that interwove their long branches above his head, Mavra, penetrated by a sweet emotion, with profound gratitude to God for making her life so easy and happy, was smoothing with her delicate hands the fine linen sheets of the camp bed on which her dear young master slept, and passing her hesitating fingers over the pillow. "He will place his head there when night comes, and close his eyes in sleep." This thought made the young girl raise her hand and blush as though there had been a profanation.

Serge was the most breakneck rider in the world; not from bravado, since for the most part he was alone when he performed his wild exploits, but from instinctive contempt for danger. One fine morning, clearing a hedge six feet high—there were none lower—the count's horse stumbled and fell on its side. A touch of the spur made it spring up, but when Serge tried to spur the other side, that on which it had fallen, he suffered excruciating pain. Fortunately it was the last hedge, else he would have had some difficulty in getting home. He pushed on, however, and reached the entrance; but when he endeavored to rest his foot on the stirrup to alight, he found it absolutely impossible, and amid the lamentations of the servants who had gathered around, he had to let himself be taken down from his horse and be dragged, as he said, like a bundle to his bed.

When he was duly unbooted and examined the supreme indifference with which he allowed himself to be handled and moved about, spite of the paleness of his face, did not lessen the fact that he had seriously fractured his tibia.

The bone-setter was sent for, in conformity with a precept of the countess, who preferred a bone-setter at hand to the best surgeon in the world 300 miles off. A horridly complicated dressing, bristling with splints and bandages, was applied to the leg with very respectful but formal injunctions not to move, and to remain in bed for six weeks.

Six weeks! and the sporting season good, and flights of partridges started every minute by the count's dogs, hunting now for their own pleasure, the kennel being seldom closed; the horses neighing from sheer weariness, and the grooms giving themselves lumbago brightening up trappings that were now to lie unused.

The countess was a good reader, spite of her eyeglass. She read untiringly, the result of which was to send the patient to sleep—infallible result; simply an affair of time, often in ten minutes, sometimes an hour. Serge's breathing would become regular, the fever that colored his cheek bones would gradually disappear, and then the good mother, closing the book, would go about her duties as mistress of the house, leaving Mavra in charge of her son.

Gradually the needle of Mavra's embroidery work would slacken its motion, and for long hours her eyes remain fixed on the face of the sleeping young count. Daylight would decline, and no candles be brought, lest the healing rest should be disturbed.

Seated near the window in the deepening shadow, the outlines of her figure relieved against the pale blue autumn sky in which her dear stars were fast gathering, Mavra would lose herself in a vague, infinite ecstasy as she sat gazing at her sleeping young master, whom her heart only could now see. At the first sign of his awaking she was on her feet with her hand upon the bell. On the arrival of the lamp Mavra would withdraw to the workroom. At night in her dreams she would continue her spiritual, almost mystical, contemplation of the beautiful fair head asleep on its pillow.

When Serge got well she was the prey of an implacable, unconscious, immortal love. Henceforth she belonged to her idol. Present or absent, he was her adored master; for him alone she breathed. She would have almost hated the convalescence that day by day was taking him from her had not the young man's weakness obliged him frequently to seek her aid. Supporting himself with a stick in one hand and resting the other on Mavra's shoulder he would walk around his room. She was happy and proud the day when, to give the countess a surprise, she led him thus into the little salon where the countess, thinking he was asleep, was reading a devotional book. The agitated joy of the mother and the nervous gayety of the son brought the tears to the eyes of the young peasant girl; but stoical, like all the race, she drove her tears back to her heart.

Serge walked alone with a stick, then without a stick, limping a little. By-and-by his firm, elastic tread was heard again on the waxed oak floor. The Northern early winter was come, snow already blocking up from time to time the seignorial mansion, then melting under the breath of a warmer wind, till the great winter blockade finally set in. One day a sledge lined with fur, drawn by spirited horses, clinking the bells that studded the harness, drew up before the door. Serge and his mother stepped into it, waving a friendly farewell to the household that crowded around with noisy benedictions. The countess was to pass the winter at St. Petersburg, where her son was to resume his service in the hussars of Grodno. When they were gone, when the heavy gate which Mavra had opened one beautiful August day was shut, and the snow fell slowly in large flakes, reflecting the colors of the prism, it shut out all the outer world from the inmates of the seignorial mansion.

Mavra returned to her embroidery frame, no longer under the orders of the good Dacka, but under the capricious, fitful superintendence of a housekeeper charged in the interval with the workroom department. Life was not so easy, but what mattered it to Mavra that there should be more harshness or less kindness. She did not live in the present. Her waking hours were passed in an innocent ecstasy that wore her away without suffering. She did not know this was love. Had she known it no amount of prayers or tears would have been enough to expiate her unpardonable sin. She loved just as flowers blossom; her ideal was exalted, her dream pure, and she lived upon them. One less chaste would have died. And as regards the young count he had no idea of all this.

The countess came back in spring, and the house resumed its grand, hospitable ways. Mavra was profoundly touched to find that her mistress, far from having forgotten, inquired kindly after her. She returned to her personal attendance upon the countess with more devoted fervor than ever. Later on the young master was to come back. Dacka conveyed in a mysterious manner that he had something better to do than to bury himself in the country. In the evening she confided to the laundress, in interminable whispers, secrets that were no doubt interesting, but which Mavra made no attempt to overhear, being by nature and taste discreet and reserved.

On the eve of St. John, when young girls plait crowns of flowers, which they throw into the river to see if they are to be married within the year, Mavra went, like the others, to consult after this graceful fashion. She never dreamed of marriage; it was a closed world to her, into which she had no desire to penetrate; but she would plait a crown and watch it through the eddies of the capricious stream. The girls had thrown in their garlands. Mavra's got entangled in flowers that a young lad of twenty had just flung in. He was a carpenter. The two crowns whirled around in company and vanished together from view at the bend of the river.

"Here we are engaged, Mavra," said the carpenter. "Let it be once for all."

"No," she replied calmly, without blushing.

"Why? Do you dislike me?"

"No, not more than other people. I don't wish to marry."

This was enough to make the carpenter persist in his wish. He tried every means—went the length of begging the countess to intercede for him. Mavra, sent for by her mistress, gave the same explanation.

"Well, if the child does not wish to marry, leave her alone," said philosophically the excellent lady, who would have scrupled to force a fly to drink a drop of milk.

And Mavra by her own desire was devoted to celibacy.

In the month of September Serge returned, but only for eight days. He brought no dogs nor equipages with him this time. When he saw Mavra he gave her a friendly smile, and then thought no more about her. When he went away his mother accompanied him, and the house was again plunged into solitude long before the usual time. Six weeks later the news arrived that the young count was married.

This announcement was the signal for great rejoicing. According to ancient usage barrels of sweet beer and hydromel were brewed; white bread and meat were distributed to the whole village. The poor had abundant alms, and the whole retinue of servants had new dresses. Mavra had a handsome blue woolen dress and a silk handkerchief. No one was forgotten; debts in arrear were remitted, and the young girl was suddenly told she might return for the winter to her family till her father could make new arrangements for the payment in kind of what he owed.

This was no joyful news for the young peasant girl, but resignation is an inherent Russian virtue; she packed up her clothes in a basket, and one fine morning courageously set out on foot for her native village. She was received coolly by her mother. One mouth more to feed! besides which, peasants are sparing of their demonstrations of affection. After a few days Mavra relapsed into her old habits, bent all day over her embroidery frame by the narrow window, in the evening standing leaning against the door, gazing, as was her wont, at the stars. More than ever she loved them; behind these marvelous lights, that she likened to tears—for she was often sad now—she saw the black eyes and handsome indifferent face that had taken possession of her soul. As long as she was staying in the grand seignorial mansion; where the image of her idol met her at every step in familiar attitude, where she had only to close her eyes to see Serge before her, Mavra was happy; she was of those for whom the innocent and daily presence of the beloved makes the whole happiness of life. Here, where nothing spoke of him, she felt for the first time the pain of separation. Uneasy, she asked herself what it was that was torturing her to this degree, and the truth nearly dawned upon her. But she stopped the thought, not daring to sound it further, saying to herself that there must be at the root of all this suffering some great sin she herself was ignorant of. Morning and evening she knelt long before the sacred image, imploring God to deliver her from her pain, and feeling herself soothed by this effusion of mystic tenderness, she kept her sadness to herself, still refusing to fathom it. But she was visibly wasting away; the smoky atmosphere of her home had now the same painful influence upon her that the want of fresh air had formerly when she first left her village. She passed the winter suffering, uncomplaining, unrelaxing in her work. Gradually she gave up looking at the stars. Not only did they more than ever look like tears, but no sooner did she turn her eyes toward the bright sky than they filled with tears, so that she hardly knew whether it was the fires of heaven or her own tears that sparkled beneath her eyelids.

Spring came, though more tardy than usual; then summer, with its field labors. The countess seemed to have forgotten Mavra, who thought with even more and more resigned sadness of this much-loved mistress.

Her indulgence concerning the service due of her family appeared to the young girl not a favor, but a punishment. At haymaking as at harvest, young lads seek out the girls. Had Mavra wished it she might have had ten husbands. She was no longer quite young, according to the notion of peasants, who marry their daughters at sixteen and their boys at twenty. She was getting on to twenty, and her mother at times reproached her, treating her as a useless mouth, although Mavra's embroidery was readily bought by the traders from the large towns, who came to the village twice a year.

In the beginning of September, Serge said to his young wife, who was about to make him a father:

"If you follow my advice, you will yourself nurse our child."

"I should like to do so, but then I must have a trained, devoted servant—one endowed with all the virtues," answered the young wife, "and mamma says this is more difficult to find than a suitable nurse."

"It is quite true," said the countess, present at this family council, which had taken place on an average thrice a week for the last four or five months; "but Serge, now that I think of it, we have Mavra! the sweetest, quietest, most devoted of nurse-tenders!"

"Mavra! the very thing. How is it we never thought of her before? Not trained—seeing she is unmarried—but so active and intelligent."

The manager was written to, ordering him to send on Mavra by the convoy which every year about this period brought to St. Petersburg fruits, preserves, salt provisions, linen, and, in short, all the produce of the earth. The young girl once more packed her clothes up in her little basket and took her seat on one of the long file of heavy wagons that slowly rolled along the roads for eight or nine days, she sleeping at night under the linen awning drawn over the chests of preserves, while the horses were in the stables and the wagoners by their sides. Sometimes on awaking she saw the stars, but they no longer brought tears to her eyes.

When the convoy of provisions arrived, and Mavra, still dizzy, had made the necessary change in her dress, she was led into the room of the young countess, where the whole family was assembled, augmented within the last two days by a superb new-born baby, which none of the servants knew how to manage.

"Here you are, Mavra? Good morning!" said the triumphant father, taking up his son in his awkward arms, at the risk of making him roar still louder. "You have a light hand and a gentle voice. I give you my son to take care of."

"I humbly thank you," said the young girl, pale with joy. "I shall do my best."

She carried the infant to an adjoining room, where she soon learned the special care to be given to a child of noble race, which was as different from its cradle from that of little peasants, his brothers in God's sight, as he would be the rest of his life. Toward evening the young mother, surprised at no longer hearing the music her first-born had already had time to accustom her to, sent Serge to find out the reason of this unusual silence. The young master entered the large dark room where Mavra was slowly pacing up and down, the child's cheek pressed against hers, warming it with her warm breath and the love of a heart henceforth happy. She was singing a peasant lullaby in a low voice, inventing words to the tune. "Dear child of my master, sleep on your servant's heart, that loves you, a treasure more precious than all things, my joy, my share of happiness in this world—my little star——"

Serge returned on tiptoe to his wife.

"I think our minds may be quite at ease," said he.

Mavra is now old. She declares that she has always been perfectly happy.—*Henri Greville. Translated in Belgravia.*

OLD LETTERS.

It seems but yesterday she died, but years
Have passed since then; the wondrous change of time
Makes great things little, little things sublime,
And sanctifies the dew of daily tears.
She died, as all must die; no trace appears
In History's page, nor save in my poor rhyme,
Of her, whose life was love, whose lovely prime
Passed sadly where no sorrows are, nor fears.
It seems but yesterday; to-day I read
A few short letters in her own dear hand,
And doubted if 'twere true. Their tender grace
Seems radiant with her life! Oh! can the dead
Thus in their letters live? I tied the band
And kissed her name as though I kissed her face.

—*The Earl of Roslyn.*

WHAT WOMEN WANT TO KNOW.

Kiss the Children Good-Night.

Send the little ones to bed in a happy frame of mind. It requires some discipline and self-denial on the part of a weary parent to answer all the foolish questions and attend to the many wants that multiply so fast as the hour of bed time draws near, but it is a labor of love that will bring a large recompense. Children never forget. They will carry with them through life's long and weary pilgrimage the remembrance of the face that bent over them at night, and that was ever associated in their immature minds with heaven and God. And the little tiresome last questions mean so much to them. What if we should not answer them and they never awakened here? Unanswered questions and unanswered problems have followed men and women through life with harrowing persistence. And never give a thoughtless answer to a child's question. Never tell the little ones that the thunder is the voice of God! Think what an idea they must form of such a God. Do not tell them petty vague stories that will mislead them into tangled paths. Hood says pathetically of his own childhood:

I remember, I remember
The fir trees dark and high.
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky.

It was a childish ignorance,
But now 'tis little joy
To know I'm further off from heav
Than when I was a boy.

No one can so gently and kindly prepare the little ones for the perplexities and disappointments of life, which are inevitable, as the fathers and mothers to whom their education should be a first consideration. The moral lessons taught at the mother's knee or by the bedside can never be forgotten, nor can the father shirk all responsibility in the matter of home tutelage. That is a child to be pitied who is afraid to ask its father any question which arises in its young mind; who dare not climb to the parental knee and challenge the world to dislodge it. Dr. Holland, in his fine poem of Daniel Gray, which is said to typify his own father, says:

He had some notions that did not improve him,
He never kissed his children, so they say.

We feel sorry for the children of a father so austere, but we can afford to pity one who lost so much beauty and value out of his own life. Then kiss the children good night and good morning and answer all their questions, and you will find that in such work two are blessed—one in giving, the other in receiving.

Bric-a-Brac.

Cabinets in larger houses are found only in reception rooms or libraries, where the back parlor forms the library. Very often they are of combination style, and the most popular form of libraries to-day is that which presents the convenience of a book case and cabinet in one. In a framework of carved or ornamental woodwork, shelves form the center, and small alcoves at either side serve for the reception of ornaments. Some of the most beautiful specimens to be seen in the city are copies of old sixteenth century cabinets, which, however, are only suitable for rooms where everything can be made harmonious with them. It is quite strange to note the different effects an antique piece of furniture has in a store and when it is transferred to a modern apartment. All at once its rich, dark carving seems to have lost its effect, the article which, in the upholsterer's domain, surrounded by others of its kind, was unique and seemed priceless, appears to decided disadvantage in a room full of the latest specimens of nineteenth century manufacturing skill. It is like an old-fashioned child, and so well is this understood to-day that perfect copies of old world furniture are rarely made; they are at best adaptations of old ideas to the modern standard. So we find to-day that while the Moorish is the style most in demand it is so adapted and conventionalized by the introduction of beveled mirrors and other modern innovations that it can insinuate itself into the most elaborate nineteenth century reception room without appearing incongruous. These Moorish cabinets are very handsome. In many the effect is greatly heightened by the use of drapery. The archway which usually surmounts the structure is often decorated with hangings of embossed velvet or plush, which serve to relieve the severity of the outlines.

Much-Lectured Mothers.

There is a suggestive story told by Helen Campbell of Lydia Newman, whose old Quaker uncle seeing that she fastened her pretty little Newport ties with poppy red ribbons, frowned and told her it was not seemly. "I don't care for them myself," she said, "but I want my little boy to remember that his mother wore red bows on her shoes." The old friend retorted that the reason was much worse than the offense; and so Lydia received a lecture, but kept her ribbons. The moral of this story is directed against that lectured-by-every-body class, the mothers of families. When we think of the ceaseless labors of a good mother, of her efforts to guide wisely her household, to be her husband's best friend, her children's most interesting companion, it seems a shameful thing to find any fault in her.

A really wise mother will take time to dress herself tastefully, to be fair and lovely in the eyes of her children, to read and even to study for their sakes, to learn and to talk on higher subjects than the plague and curse of American servants, to live in the present, to keep step in the march of civilization. Very difficult, almost impossible at times, it is to be a child's confidant and companion, to make home the dearest place in the world to him, to dress becomingly for the small lover who dotes on a "pretty mamma;" but mothers who have done all this are the mothers who have best cause to be proud of their grown-up boys.

Good Sense About Children's Clothes.

There is very likely no conservatism more difficult to deal with than that displayed by the young boy in regard to any change in his apparel. "If I must wear these cuffs," said an eight-year-old boy, on Sunday morning, "I am not going to church." The cuffs in question were entirely unobjectionable to the eye of man or woman. They were probably unnoticeable, also; but the boy discovered a morbid dread of appearing in them, as they were not a usual addition to his toilet. He confessed, in confidence, to his mother, as they walked along, that he dreaded the remarks his Sunday school class would make upon them. How little consideration is shown for the feelings of children. How few parents realize that the child's world, only, as John Brown of Edinburg said, "about three feet high," has its tragedies and comedies, its fear of blighting, adverse criticism. So many times, when garments are chosen, when the question is not of expenditure, but of taste, the children themselves might be allowed to choose, within certain limits, what they will have. Who has not seen this sight; when all the happy boys in the neighborhood are wearing knee-pants, one small and weary soul appearing in pantaloons the exact counterpart of his father's and reaching to the heels of his shoes! This life is made a burden to him, and then and there is begotten an uneasy consciousness of self that will require years of thought and experience and of resolute care to overcome. The consciousness of being well and suitably dressed, so dear to the heart of woman and so conducive to her ease, is just as consoling to a child, and is no more likely to lead to a morbid fondness for dress than is the discomfort occasioned by the consciousness that there is something wrong about his clothes.

Lady Wilde on the Carlyles.

Mrs. Carlyle failed to reach happiness because she had ambition without fame, and intellect without a career, and was too self-conscious and proud to be content with a subordinate part in life. She ought to have considered that her existence was really of no importance to the universe; but her husband's worth and works had power to send the world on its path of progress with mighty tangential force, and to drive a current of new life into the heart of the century. He was necessary to humanity; but she was only necessary to smooth the path his soul traveled. In this line of duty lay the beautiful mission of a loving wife, and in this she ought to have found happiness, but she only thought of the small annoyances that lay in her own path, and pronounced herself "miserable"—though holding the proud position of wife to the greatest man of the age. Yet she loved him as well as her nature would permit; but egotism can never nobly worship nor see the glory through the mist. All the trials that made her "miserable" resulted more from faults in her own disposition than from her husband's temper. Had she married the village schoolmaster, she might have been happier. A keen, clever, homely Scotchwoman, with her sharp tongue and her broad Scotch accent, would have ruled the parish admirably. This should have been her destiny: but Carlyle raised her to eminence as his wife, gave her station and dignity in the great capital of the world; and in return she darkened his fame, gave his name to the scoffers, and chilled the enthusiasm that would have raised memorials to his honor.

Something to Her Credit.

Mrs. Langtry, as she is everywhere called, has left a bitter feeling behind her in the minds and hearts of the men whose business it is to make styles and sell them. A sort of unpleasant odor lingers about her name in New York, and she would not feel flattered to hear all they say of her. And it has nothing to do with her penchant for Freddy, strange to say. It is all on account of that jersey and that turban which she wore over here and thereby started an inexpensive craze. "She came here in her infernally scant unembellished clothes," said one man in a rage, "and we lost thousands of dollars, as every woman straightway put on a jersey and a plain hat. Why couldn't she do something for us while she was about it, and set fashions that would bring money into the country instead of taking it out?" "Do you honestly mean to say that our independent American women followed Langtry to the extent of affecting the revenues of the United States?" "That's exactly what I say. It got to be the fashion when she first came to wear plain hats and plain dresses. She was made to give her opinions, which were as silly as any spoiled woman's, and she thought the great fault of our women was that they dressed too conspicuously in the streets, were too fond of bows and streamers of ribbon. Things took a drop after that, and we felt it. Why couldn't she be an enterprising woman, with an eye to business, like Bernhardt. Now that lively little meteor brought out long gowns, rare laces in cataracts and jabots, and a long, wrinkled kid glove, peculiar to herself, and this glove immediately became all the rage, and in consequence all the manufactories in the world were set to work making."

Children at Table.

Robert Collyer once, when lecturing to a country audience, contrasted the strictness of the old days and the laxity of the present time, and, while commending the latter, made this remark: "Let the children begin at which end of dinner they please." A young mother, who hung on his words of wisdom, treasured this particular saying, and a few days after proceeded to put it in practice, but somehow it did not seem so sensible at midday, and she was herself reminded of Mr. Browning's line that "colors seem by candle-light are not the same by day"; but with the maid persistence of her sex, she would not abandon the stand she had taken without a good deal of argument. "Where is the harm in giving the child his piece of pie or dish of pudding first, if he prefers it in that way?" she asked herself, and she did not get a very definite reply; but when she turned, as every wife should, to the acknowledged head of the house, she was at once enlightened. Of course the child would prefer the sweets first, and his appetite for the more nourishing and substantial part of the meal would be diminished. This is the reason why even a cookie a little while before dinner is not conducive to health. After more thought the mother arrived at the conclusion that the pretty theory must be given up, and she instituted a rule that never between meals should one of the children have anything, unless he or she were hungry enough to demand bread and butter without sugar.

Greek Dress for Modern Women.

"Oh, for a return to the Greek style of dressing," sighed a young man at a charity ball. The speaker looked like anything but an æsthete, and I forthwith endeavored to ascertain his views. "The usual Greek costume," he said, "would be a practical impossibility in this climate. But a modification of it, or a dress constructed upon its fundamental principles, would be far more becoming than the majority of dresses worn to-day. Look around here on the floor, for instance; the dresses that strike me as being prettiest, most graceful and best adapted to make a woman appear attractive are those that approach the nearest to the Greek. Notice the contrast between those two; equally, costly no doubt, equally pretty material, and, in my judgment, equally pretty women. But the dress of the one, a round-skirted, stiff, barrel-like affair, moves in as inflexible manner as a bell at every motion to the upper part of the body. See the bell swing as the dancer goes through the waltz. But the others wears a dress that falls loosely in the most graceful lines, following the form just closely enough to give definite shape and proportion, and at every new movement of the wearer the dress assumes new lines of beauty. In other words, she has a flexible grown—one that will look well in repose, in action, sitting, reclining or standing. The other will serve only for a statue."

"But would you advocate the adoption of the Greek style of male attire?" I asked.

"No," he answered doubtfully; "though it might serve admirably for state or dress occasions. But the ordinary man's life is such as to require a dress in which convenience is the chief element of design. And to attain this, as well as æsthetic ends, I am a sincere advocate of the knee-breeches style."

Brocades.

The new brocades are very handsome, and, in spite of the adverse predictions made last summer with regard to them, will undoubtedly be worn. Worth is using brocades with immense designs, huge magnolias, lilies in full size, large cactus blossoms, and tulips, flower, stem and leaves in natural size. The front of the skirt is of this brocade, while the train and bodies are of plain ottoman silk or faille, or vest of the brocade being let into the bodice, or else a long reverse collar of brocade, so cut as to leave the design intact, trims it in front. Velvet brocades come chiefly on ottoman grounds, in large detached figures, oak leaves and acorns, bouquets of flowers, fern leaves, etc. A new departure transfers these designs to plain silk or wool, thus making a very handsome dress garniture at comparatively small expense. The figures are applique on the front of the basque, extending around the neck like a collarette; one is set on each sleeve, and the skirt is trimmed according to fancy, either with border or ornamented panels, as may be preferred. Sometimes the skirt is cut in tabs, and a figure is set on each tab, the crenolated edge falling over a side or box pleating. Or the basque may be made of the brocade, the skirt being trimmed with applique figures. This last style is especially effective when the skirt is of ottoman silk, matching the ground of the brocade, the effect being that of an embroidered jacket with silk embroidered to match.

A Happy-Go-Lucky Family.

The best chance, perhaps, of domestic felicity is when all the family are Bohemians and all clever, and all enjoy thoroughly the erratic, impulsive, reckless life of work and glory, indifferent to everything save the intense moments of popular applause. Such a family may be met in the art circles of Paris. The mother had been a model and a beauty, and still posed as Hebe when she handed a cup of tea to a visitor. The daughters, handsome, brilliant and clever, as the children of artists always are, sing, act, recite, dance, dress better than any one else. Everything looks picturesque on them. Fashionable ladies vainly desire the pattern of that flowing train, that lifted robe, that classic sleeve; but no pattern is to be had. All was arranged by the aid of a few pins in the caprice of the moment, as the handsome girls chatted and laughed before the mirrors in their little room. Youth, beauty and artistic taste can work wonders with the most chaotic materials. People asked how they managed to pay for everything; but they never paid. That was their magic secret. Bills, of course, were endless; but when some particularly severe creditor appeared, one of the splendid daughters pleaded with such a bewitching smile that he would "call next Monday" (it was the family formula), that he retired humbled and abashed from the glorious presence, as if his claim had been an impertinence.

A Novel Piece of Headgear.

While at church last Sunday I, says a St. Louis reporter, stole a few moments away from my devotions to give attention to a hat or bonnet worn by a young girl sitting in a pew in front of me. It was such a novel creation of the female mind that I once felt assured the new idea would soon be all the rage. And it, no doubt, will. Looking like a cross between a shell hat and a poke bonnet, the head covering was nothing more or less than an ordinary palm-leaf fan of the cheapest kind. The handle was cut off and the fan pressed into shape for the head; at the top, near the stalk, was a bow of ribbons, and a few bright ribbons hung down behind. This was all, but the effect, with a bright face beneath the shade of the metamorphosed wind-agitator, was very pretty. The hat—or bonnet—whichever you have a mind to call it, could not have cost more than thirty cents, but it looked just as good on the little blonde head in front of me as a $30 bonnet could have looked.

Here's a Smart Child.

A notable young traveler left Brooklyn for Boston alone. This was Ida Volborth, ten years old, who left her grandmother's house, 182 Jay street, Brooklyn, to join her mother. About four years ago she went from Boston to Liepsic, Germany. At that time she spoke only English. In Leipsic she was continually in the company of friends who used only the German tongue. She had forgotten every word of English she ever knew. She cannot even ask for food in English. She was taken by an uncle from Liepsic to Bremen and placed in charge of the captain and the stewardess of the steamship Fulda of the North German Lloyd line. She had the address of her great uncle in Brooklyn, Mr. August Volborth, and had his portrait; the arrangement being that she should not be taken from the ship unless demanded by a man who could be recognized by the picture. The mother, who cannot speak German, preceded the child to this country one year ago.

Brides' Dresses.

Brides are prominent characters, and their robings, the styles that govern their dress etc., are a matter of interest to every feminine mind, and—sub rosa—occasionally to the masculine one also. To them be it known, cream and dead or pearl white no longer belong. The beautiful bride's costume must now have a shimmer of sheen enveloping it; and this fall the handsomest ottoman and brocaded white silks intended for brides' costumes have a silver sheen over them, and are called "silver white." Is there anything new under the sun? In the time of our great grandmothers "silver gray" was the most prominently regular color for brides' costumes, and can we do better than go back to the days when they tell us women decked for the bridal in silver gray, and entirely enveloped in a voluminous veil of tulle looked like the denizens of fairy-land who rise from the glens to dance in the morning mist.

Book Covers.

Adjustible book covers are exceedingly convenient; they protect an expensive binding, and they are also ornamental. The materials required are velvet or satin; sometimes fine all-wool cloth is preferred to either of these rich textures. The goods should be cut exactly the size of the cover, allowing two inches of the side and one inch at the top and bottom of the book. The edges are feather-stitched. An eyelet hole is worked on the end pieces, through which a ribbon or fancy silk cord is passed, in order to secure the adjustable cover on the book in a close position. Imitation hinges in fancy cloth stitch are wrought with embroidery silk. An artistic monogram needleworked on one side, and a pretty spray, or small design appropriate to the subject of the publication, should give finish to the cover, making the whole extremely ornamental and also useful.

Pschutt.

It is said that the contemptuous answer of the old chancellor of Germany, in the recent diplomatic tiff between that country and France, has given name to the fashionable bluish shade of slate color, richer than any shade of gray now worn, which is called "Pschutt" gray. This is the smart color par excellence, though every shade of gray, from Quaker slate color to silvery mist, will be worn. A single sea swallow's wings contains an infinite numbers of these shadow tints, ranging from the black gray, called by the French (heaven alone knows why) elephant's breath, to a pale, silvery gray on the side which clasps the breast. These wings are massed in groups on some French bonnets in a very unique manner.

Plumage.

Lady's cloth comes out under two new names—drap des dames when plain woven, and Wales cloth in compliment to the princess of Wales when woven en travers. A glove finish and softness of texture that is given it this year is admirable. In all the colors of the season, including the elephant and pschutt gray, the new Judic shades of red, Russian green and czar brown, the Wales cloth and drap des dames are recommended for suits that may be utilized for shopping, business, driving, and traveling costumes, when something more elegant and costly than the cheviot is demanded.

Watteau wrappers are much worn, and are specially becoming to tall, slight figures. They are certainly extremely comfortable, and, when made up in handsome materials and daintily trimmed with ribbons and bows, can be worn for a considerable part of the day at home. Watteau folds of handsome lace are now worn with black silk dresses upon small occasions.

Loose fronts are added to princesse morning dresses in a way that is very becoming to slight figures. They may be cut off at the waist like a sailor's blouse or be carried back on the hips in puffs or paniers. A velvet ribbon bow ties the collar just below the throat, and there is another bow with long ends at the waist.

Tasteful black and white dresses for dinner and evening at the seaside are made of diaphanous black gauze trimmed with jabots and frills of white Oriental lace. The pointed bodice has the neck deeply pointed also and filled in with folds of tulle. Pearls or rubies are the jewels for this toilet.

Simple and neat morning dresses of white nun's veiling have the skirt arranged in three graduated puffs, a tucked bodice, with belt and a wide sash for drapery. A bunch of golden-rod is stuck in the belt and a yellow velvet ribbon is tied around the neck with long hanging ends at the back.

Children's dresses are to be gayer than ever the coming season. The brightest colors will be worn; but, as combination dresses are to be in fashion, they will be toned down by darker ones mixed with them. Hats to match the bright tints of the dresses will be de rigueur.

Golden brown is a seasonable and very pretty tone. A handsome brocaded black velvet walking suit was lined with silk of this color, the depanelled basque being slightly turned up at the edges to show it, and the collar being turned down and lined in revers.

In England wigs are worn a great deal to save dressing one's own hair. There is a wig known as the "yachting wig," with ripples and curls on the forehead and a small flat knot at the back. Then there is a wig to be worn for lawn tennis work.

A string of pearls is the fashionable full-dress necklace for young ladies. With day dresses cut low at the throat a band of velvet ribbon is worn tied in a small bow just under the left ear; this may be black, garnet or lapislazuli blue velvet.

Fashion prophets predict a season of velvets, brocatelles and rich and heavy silks. The leading brocades will not be satin, but velvet, satin and plush upon ottoman grounds, or the figure is a raised rep.

One of the prettiest of the yellow dresses so fashionable this summer is Chinese silk of bright imperial yellow shade, trimmed with flounces of Valenciennes lace, and rosettes of red velvet ribbon.

Fluffy silk pompons trim summer dresses of thin silk or gauze. The whole tablier and vest front are dotted with them at intervals, and two or three are on the sleeves like a cuff.

Stylish and becoming costumes for out-of-town wear are made of sheer wool of dark color, with large round chenille wafers embossed upon it.

A novelty for quilted underskirts to be worn next winter appears in the shape of foulard silk, with a dark ground, and the pattern in bright colors.

Elegant evening toilets are now made up in large-patterned satin brocades, the figures, which are in raised velvet, being exquisitely tinted.

Black stockings may be worn with any summer dress and at any hour of the day or evening, with breakfast or with ball toilets.

"Pigeon's throat," "water-cress green," "duck" and "duckling green" are counted with new shades wearing rural names.

A CHINESE ROMANCE.

How an Outlawed Grandee Rescued His Almond-Eyed Love.

Chicago Herald.

"I am a noble, grandee-titled person, or what you may be pleased to call it, in my own land, but it would be nearly impossible for me to explain the rank, so we will let that go. It is sufficient to say that my father, like Gladstone or Blaine, was a party leader, and in the state service. I was early taught state intrigues and secrets. Then I had private English and French tutors, and received a thorough education. Now in Corea, which is the Switzerland of China, in one sense, the people are all born free men, and bold and daring. It was there I first learned to love a beautiful girl with every grace and charm that could be desired, but she was the daughter of a rebel. You must know that we have rebels like you have had. Sometimes they are descended from father to son. They hold forth in the mountains; then on the arid plains east of China, scouring the country much worse than the Bedouins of the Arabic region. I had been up in the Corea district on state business, when I met and loved Tsung-li. She was, indeed, 'soul's light' to me. I could not persuade her to fly. I would, in my mad passion, have left the kingdom, going to Hong Kong and endeavoring to get passage on an English ship. but she would not go. She thought of my honor and future, and I could not move her to compassion. Then the hope of my life seemed slipping from me, as the little stars elude the moon's admiring advance, I turned from her, and as she sank down on the rock beside which we had met, I looked not back, though her sobs rent my heart-strings.

"I went to my father's palace and told him that he must get me away from China. I was sent to our embassy at England, remained there several months in London, went through Scotland, crossed the channel to Paris, and sought in the contemplation of the gay sights in that pleasure-loving city, to drown thoughts of Tsung-li; but her beautiful face, with its tea-rose blushes and soft languishing eyes, came up at each turn, and I fled from the embassy without leave of absence, thus forfeiting my life to my country. I went to the West Indies, thence to South America. There I passed months in Chili, Peru, at Santiago, and Lima. I went around seeing the sights in the Liamo, and on the plaza, where were the tinkle of guitar and castanet of dark-eyed senoritas.

I had wandered all this time without hearing from my people, but the consulate here sent word to China that the new notorious Wing Sam Pah, whose head was worth $2,000 to his country, was in Chili. My father in a secretive way wrote me, I received his letter, and there I saw a mention of the capture in the Corean Mountains of Captain Hoy May, the great rebel chief, and his beautiful daughter. Good heavens! my Tsung-li in the folds of the enemy! I knew enough of state of affairs to see that she was liable to be selected by some mandarin. I could not stand it. I started for San Francisco, thence went via steamer to China. I went to a famous man of our kind at San Francisco, and he disguised me and got me a passport into the flowery kingdom as an agent of the Six Companies. I got to Hong Kong. I found out where the rebel and his daughter were confined, and went to them when I got there. I put up a job—there, that's American. I got Tsung-li out of her rocky prison, and then we started on our perilous task of escaping from the land. She had to dress in men's clothes. Together, hand in hand, we floated out to an American tea-ship on a piece of light bamboo wood. Then we were brought to San Francisco, and now we are here."

He ceased talking, and looking toward a small door at the right, softly called: 'Tsung-li, my own love!" The door was pushed aside, and a Chinese woman stood there. She was fair enough for any romance.

UNHAPPY SPAIN.

The Revolutions She Has Witnessed Since 1814.

A French paper publishes a list of the risings which have taken place in Spain since the year 1814. In that year there was a rising in Catalonia; in 1815 a guerrilla insurrection at Corunna; in 1819 a military conspiracy at Cadiz, which was followed in 1820 by a revolution extending over the whole of Spain, In 1822 there were riots, accompanied by much bloodshed, at Cadiz; an absolutist rising in Navarre and Catalonia; and street-fights at Madrid. In 1823 the French, under the Duc d'Angouleme, marched into the country to suppress the insurrection, notwithstanding which there were another military revolt in 1825 at Blhuega and further absolutist risings in Catalonia and Aragon in 1827. The constitutionalists rose against the government in 1830; and in 1833, after the death of King Ferdinand, began the first Carlist war. In 1834 and 1835 there were risings at Madrid, Saragossa, Seville and Barcelona against the clergy; several hundreds of monks were murdered and twenty monasteries burned. In 1837 military insurrections broke out at Madrid, Barcelona, Malaga, Cadiz, Valencia, Carthagena, Seville, Xeres, and San Ildefonso, and in 1838 at Bilbao, Pampeluna, and Irun. In 1840 Espartero made a pronunciamiento of that town and a military revolt at Madrid. Risings took place against Espartero at Barcelona in the following year; and in 1843 Alicante and Murcia broke out into insurrection. The conscript laws caused risings in Catalonia in 1845, in the provinces of Galicia and Leon in 1846, and at Madrid in 1848, when the Basque provinces proclaimed Don Carlos king of Spain. The second Carlist war, under Cabrora lasted from 1849 to 1853. In 1854 a rebellion broke out in Saragossa under Concha; the troops at Madrid revolted under O'Donnell, and disturbances took place at Cuenca, Valladolia, and Barcelona. Further riots occurred at Madria, Valencia, and Saragossa in 1855; and in 1859 there was a revolution under Gen. Ortega. In 1866 a great military rising took place at Madrid, in consequence of which Zorilla, Castelar, and Sagasta (the present minister) were sentenced to death. Prim began his revolution in Catalonia in 1876, and it was followed by the flight of the queen in 1868. The third Carlist war lasted from 1873 to 1877, since which there has not been any rising until the other day.

Satons has rejoined his wife, nee Nellie Grant, at his father's country seat near Guthampton.