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POETRY.

A CHURCH OF ENGLAND BALLAD.

BY REV. T. M. NEALE.

"A song for the times when the sweet church chimes
Called rich and poor to pray,
As they opened their eyes by the bright sunrise;
And when evening died away,
The squire came out from his rich old hall,
And the peasants by two and by three,
And the woodman let his hatchet fall,
And the shepherd left his tree.
Then a song for the times, &c.

"Through the churchyard dew, by the churchyard yew,
They went both old and young,
And with one consent in prayer they bent,
And with one consent they sung.
They knelt on the floor till the prayers were o'er,
To the priest they gave good heed:
Who would not bless the good old days
When our Church was a Church indeed?
Then a song for the times, &c.

"Christmas was a merry Christmas then,
And Easter-tide the same;
And they welcomed well with merry bell
Each saint's day as it came.
They thought with love on the saints above,
In the pious days of old;
We toil and we slave till we drop in the grave,
And all for the lust of gold.
Then a song for the times, &c.

"But little we'll care what wicked men
May say, or may think of ill;
They kept their saints' days holy then,
We'll keep them holy still.
We'll cherish them now, in times of strife,
As a holy and peaceful thing.
They were bought by a faithful prelate's life,
And the blood of a martyred king.
Then a song for the times, &c.

SELECTED.

We know not when we have met with a sweeter thing of its kind, than the following, which is extracted from the National Intelligencer. Every mother will feel its truth, and many a heart respond to the picture of domestic life, so vividly and yet so naturally expressed. Read it, mothers, and tell us candidly if the selection is not to your tastes.—*EL.*

MATERNAL DUTIES.

A gentleman of our acquaintance, who has lately beguiled some tedious hours by the perusal of Balzac's new novel, entitled "*Memoires de deux Jeunes Maries*," has favored us with a translation of one of the many very beautiful letters which that work contains. The subject, though it may be old and hack-nied, is one of which a mother (and we have many constant readers who belong to that category) can never become weary; and we doubt whether we have a reader of any class who will not readily excuse us for devoting a column or two to its publication.

LETTER from the Viscountess de l'ESTORADE, [in the country,] to the Baroness de MACUMER, [at Paris.]

You complain of my silence; have you, then, forgotten the two little dark-headed urchins whom I govern, and who govern me? You know already some of my reasons for remaining at home. Besides the state of our uncle, I had no desire to drag with me to Paris a boy of four years old, and a little girl who will soon be three, while I am every day looking for a third. I did not wish to embarrass your time or fill your house with such a family, nor in truth did I choose to appear so much to my own disadvantage in the brilliant circle over which you reign; and I hold in abhorrence the living in hotels or furnished apartments. Our uncle, as soon as he heard that we had called our son after him, presented me with two hundred thousand francs to purchase a house in Paris, and my husband is now looking out for one in your quarter of the city. My mother gave me thirty thousand for the furniture; so that, when I establish myself for the season at Paris, it will be in my own house. In short, I shall endeavor to be worthy of my adopted sister.

As to writing long letters now, how can I? This, in which I mean to give you a sketch of my every day duties, will perhaps remain for a week on my table. It is not improbable that Armand may cut it up into soldiers to recruit his regiment, now drawn up in line on the carpet, or into ships for his fleet, now manœuvring in his bathing tub. A single day will give you a picture of the rest; they are all alike, and comprise but two events: the children suffer, or the children do not suffer. Here in the country literally speaking, my minutes are hours, or my hours minutes, according to the state of the children. If I have any peaceable hours, it is when they are in bed, when I am neither rocking the cradle of the one, nor telling stories to the other, to put them to sleep. When I

have them both asleep near me, I say to myself, now I have nothing more to fear. In fact, my dear, during the day a mother is continually inventing dangers. The moment the children are out of sight—why, may be Armand has stolen the razor to play with, perhaps his clothes have caught fire, an insect has stung him, he has fallen down, in running and hurt his head, or tumbled into a pond where he may be drowned. So you see, maternity is but a series of sweet or terrible fancies. Not an hour but has its joys and its fears. But of an evening, in my chamber, the waking dream comes upon me, when I arrange their destinies. Then I can see angels standing around their pillows and smiling upon their cherub lives. Sometimes Armand calls me in his sleep; I fly to him; kiss his forehead and his little sister's feet without their knowing it, and then contemplate them in their placid beauty. These are my feasts! Yesterday our guardian angel, I believe, disturbed me at midnight: I jumped up and flew first to the cradle of Athenais, whose head I found too low, and then to Armand, whose feet were uncovered and purple, with cold. "Oh, sweet mamma!" said he, waking and kissing.

This is a night scene. How necessary it is for a mother to have her children at her side! Can a nurse, no matter how good a one, take them up, quiet their fears, and put them to sleep again, when they have been awakened by some horrible nightmare? For they have their little dreams, and to explain to them one of these terrible visions is the most difficult task imaginable, even to a mother, as the child is then bewildered, half asleep, and listens at one and the same time with intelligence and simplicity. There is certainly some point between sleeping and waking at which the intellect is perfect. My sleep has become so light that I can see and hear my little ones through the fringe of my eyelids. A sigh, the slightest stir awakes me. The monster Convulsions seems to me forever squatting at the foot of their beds.

In the morning they are awake with the first chirping of the birds. In truth, their chattering is hardly distinguishable from that of a sparrow; little plaintive or joyous cries, which reach me rather through the heart than the ear. While Nais is pushing her way towards me with unsteady steps, Armand, with the agility of a monkey, skips up and clasps me round the neck. My bed then becomes the theatre of their plays, and the mother lies completely at their discretion. The little girl pulls my hair, while Armand defends it as if it were his own property. They continue their tricks without resistance, until at last their bursts of laughter, like the firing of guns in my ears, drive away the last vestige of sleep, and then we must all play at "mother wolf," and mother wolf seizes in her devouring lips that young and fair and delicate flesh, impresses a thousand kisses on those coquetish and mischievous eyes, those rosy shoulders, and little jealousies are excited which are delightful. I have sometimes been more than an hour vainly endeavoring to put on one of my stockings.

At last, however, we are up! Then begins the labors of the toilet. I put on my dressing gown, turn up the sleeves, and tie on my oil silk apron; then, with the assistance of Mary, I bathe and wash the two little flowers. I choose to be the sole judge of the proper temperature of the water, for I have no doubt that the crying of children when they are washed is half the time caused by the water's being too hot or too cold. Then for the paper ships and the little glass ducks. If we would do our work thoroughly, we must keep children amused while we are washing them. If you but knew the many pleasures we are called upon to invent for these absolute sovereigns, in order to draw off their attention while the sponge is passing over their bodies, you would be frightened at the address and skill required to fulfil the glorious duties of a mother. We must entreat and scold, and promise; in short, practice a sort of charlatantry, which of course must possess the merit of concealing itself to be successful. A child is a great politician; and, like all politicians must be governed—by his passions. Happily, they laugh at every thing; if a brush falls, or a piece of soap slips thro' the fingers, the house rings with their merry shouts. In short, if our triumphs are dearly purchased, they are at least triumphs! But God only—for the father knows nothing of all this—God, and you and the angels alone can comprehend the looks that I exchange

with Mary when our work is done, when we see the little angels standing clean in the midst of soaps, sponges, flannels, and the thousand details of a real nursery. I have become quite an English woman upon this point. The women of that country certainly have a genius for nursing. Though they look only to the material and physical well being of the child, still there is much good sense in their nursery arrangements. I adopt their custom of putting flannel on my children's feet, and leaving their legs bare—they shall never be swathed or confined with tight bandages; this is a French invention to allow more liberty to the nurse that she may leave the children to themselves. A true mother is not for a moment free. You may conceive, then, why I do not write to you as I once did, having now on my shoulders, in addition to my domestic administration, the care of two children.

The science of the mother consists of silent merits without pretension or parade; if it is a virtue in detail, a devotion at all hours. She must watch every little sauce pan before the fire. And you know I am not one to avoid a single trouble; even from the slightest we may gather something to the stock of our affections. O, it is so delightful to see the smile of a child when its little palate is gratified. A toss of Armand's head, on such occasions, is worth a whole life of happiness. How much I give up to any other woman the right, the trouble, the pleasure of blowing upon a spoonful of soup that Nais finds too hot for her! Whenever a nurse has suffered a child to burp his tongue or its lips, she is sure to tell the mother that the child cries because it is hungry. But, independent of this, how can a mother sleep in peace when she knows that her child has been swallowing something blown upon, perhaps, by an impure breath—a mother, to whom nature has given no intermedial contrivance between her own bosom and the lips of her nursing? To cut up for Nais, who is just getting her last teeth, a piece of nicely cooked cutlet, and to mix properly with well boiled potatoes, is a work of patience; and, after all, in certain cases, none but a mother can know how to coax a fretful child to eat its proper allowance. If I had a house full of domestics, and the best nurse in England, I would not be induced to relinquish my personal attention to the little chagrins and vexations of the children, which are only to be met and combated with gentleness. We should devote our very soul, my dear Louisa, to the care of these sweet innocents. We must believe nothing but our own eyes, the testimony of our hands, as to their dressing, feeding, and lodging. When a child cries, unless its suffering can be clearly traced to some natural cause, I regard it as an undeniable proof of fault in the mother or nurse. Since I have had two—almost three, indeed—to take care of, nothing else has a place in my thoughts; and even you, whom I love so dearly, are become almost a *souvenir*! My toilet is not always finished even so late as two o'clock; so you see I do not follow the example of mothers who have their apartment always arranged, their dressing rooms, their robes, and every thing always in order.

Yesterday, as the weather was very fine for the beginning of April, I determined to take a last walk before a certain event, which is not far off. Well, when a mother determines on a walk, it is a sort of era to be talked of the evening beforehand. Armand was to wear, for the first time, a coat of black velvet, a new collar which I had worked, a Scotch cap of the Stuart colors, with feathers in it; Nais was to be in white and rose, with a charming baby bonnet—for she is still the baby until my little beggar shall make his appearance; I call him so, because he will be the "cadet" of the family; and having already seen him in my dreams, I know I shall have a boy. Well! bonnet and collar, coat, little socks, tiny boots with rose-colored laces, muslin frock embroidered in silk, were all spread out on my bed. When the two gay little birds, who perfectly understood what was going on, had their dark hair, on the one curled, on the other parted over the forehead, so as to show under the bonnet; when the boots had been laced, and the tiny feet which they so beautifully adorned, had trotted about the nursery; when the two clean faces, as Mary calls it, and the sparkling eyes said, "let us go!" oh, how my heart throbbled! To look at the children whom we have dressed with our own hands; to see the fair and delicate skin, with the blue veins

showing through it, when we have just bathed, and sponged, and wiped ourselves, the effect heightened by the bright colors of the silk and velvet—ah, is there in nature anything equal to it!—With what never-satisfied passion we call them back again and again, that we may kiss, and kiss once more, those dear necks which, in their simple ornament of a collar, are far more beautiful than that of the prettiest woman on earth. Pictures like this are lithographed in stupid coloring, and exhibited in shop windows, and attract around them crowds of mothers—why, I make them for myself every day.

Behold us at length on our walk! I enjoying the fruits of my labor, admiring the little Armand, who struts with the air of a prince, leading baby along the road which you remember. Suddenly a carriage is seen meeting us; I spring to lead them out of the road; the little rogues tumble into a mudhole, and there's the end of my grand operations! It becomes necessary to return to the house with them immediately and take off their wet clothes. I catch up the little one in my arms without seeing that I am spoiling my own dress; Mary seizes upon Armand, and thus we re-enter the house. When a lady cries and a child gets wet, all is said; a mother thinks no longer of herself—she is absorbed.

The dinner-bell rings very often before a thing is done to these infants; and how am I to wait upon both—put on their napkins, pin up their sleeves, and get them ready for dinner? This is a problem which I solve twice a day. But in the midst of these perpetual troubles, frolics or disasters, there is nothing in the house forgotten by myself. It often happens when the children have been troublesome, that I am obliged to make my appearance "*en papillotes*." My toilet depends upon their humor. To get a moment to myself to write you this letter, I was obliged to let them cut the pictures out of my romances, build castles with the books, the backgammon men, or the pearl counters, or suffer Nais to wind my silk and worsted after a fashion of her own, the complicated nature of which, I assure you, shows no little skill, while it keeps her as mute as a mouse.

After all, I have no right to complain; my two children enjoy good health, and amuse themselves at less expense than one would think. They are happy with everything; a few trifling playthings and good watching are all they require. Little pebbles, of various colors, and shells picked up on the beach, constitute their happiness. The greater number of these things they possess, the richer they think themselves. Armand holds conversations with the flowers, the flies, the chickens, and insects excite his deepest admiration. Whatever is diminutive seems to interest them. Armand is beginning to ask the *wherefore* of everything. He has this moment come to ask what I was saying to his godmother. You know he looks upon you as a fairy—children, you know, are always right.

The following little incident will show you one of the traits of your godson. The other day a beggar accosted us—for beggars know very well that a mother accompanied by her children never refuses alms. Armand knows nothing yet of the possibility of anybody's wanting bread, and is quite ignorant of the uses of money; but he had in his hand a trumpet, which I had just bought for him at his particular desire, and with the air of a king he held this out to the old man, saying, "here, take it!"

What is there upon earth to be compared to the joys of such a moment? The old man asked me if he might be permitted to keep the toy; "for," he added, as he pocketed what I gave him without even looking at it, "I also have children, madam."

When I reflect that in a few years this dear child must be sent to college, I feel fits of shivering creep over me. A public school may blight all these beautiful flowers of infancy, may *denaturalize* all those graces, that adorable frankness! The beautiful hair, that I have so often combed, and curled, and kissed, will be cut off. Oh, what will become of beloved Armand?

And you, what has become of you? for you tell me nothing of yourself in your last letter. Adieu! Nais has just had a fall, and if I continue to write, this letter will be swelled to a volume.

In a bookseller's catalogue, appears the following article—"Memoirs of Charles I.; with a head capitally executed."