

and constancy the women for whom they were deserted.

But these are instances of self-abnegation rather than friendship. Between friends there must be equality and reciprocity. A friend is for life, and almost more than love, for it is less subject to fluctuations, the sweetener of life. Wait for it, and when you have found it, cultivate it: forbear something for it, give something to it, hold fast upon it, a true, and unselfish friendship is so precious a gift, that the richest cannot afford to lose it.

Self-culture inspired by friendship, and which expresses itself in conversation and letter-writing, is expressly adapted to the nature of women, and it is one of the worst signs of the times that these gracious and consoling arts are falling into disuse. There are women as choice as Bettina, Rahel Leoni, Récamier, and Elizabeth Barrett; but they are overwhelmed with strife of the age, with, to quote once more from the work that all women ought to read, the "Friendships of Women"—"its complication of interests, its doubts, its weariness, its frittering multiplicity of indulgences, cares, and obligations. If ever the cry of the horse-leech shall cease to be the painful language of the heart, it will be when the longings of the heart, no longer baffled by the vacancies, or the irritating rivalries of a rapid and jealous society, all human beings developed enough to need, and noble enough to deserve, shall also be fortunate enough to possess, true friends with whom they may commune in unity of spirit, and mirrored doubleness of life."

CHRISTMAS IN THE NORTH.



NORWAY is the home of some very pretty and interesting Christmas customs. They will, for the most part, be also found in Sweden and Denmark, as they are of Scandinavian origin. The old Norse Christmas was known as Jul (pronounced Yule), derived from one of the epithets (Jolner) of the Scandinavian deity Odin; and so they obtained Jul from Jolner as the Romans got Saturnalia from Saturn. Yule fell late in the year, and when our hallowed festival

came to be celebrated in northern lands, the one merged into the other. On the introduction of Christianity into Norway, the Christmas festivities were regarded as heathenish. The yule feasts were not only prohibited, but those who gave them were punished with death or mutilation by order of King Olaf the Saint. How changed are the times! Long before the advent of Yule nowadays, great preparations are made for the due observance of the fête. The yule-cake (bakkelse) is made; the venison is hung, the pigs and fatted calves are killed, the small game is collected, and a good supply of fish laid in. Large quantities of wood are brought from the forests, and the logs are piled up by the fireside, all in readiness. As the day approaches, the invitations are sent out, and the final touches are given to the arrangements at the house, bright fresh leaves being spread over the floors of the principal rooms. On the morn of the appointed day, the invited are spirited away in light and elegant sledges to the happy abode, whilst the church bells ring out the sweet music of peace and good-will to mankind. Most of the Norwegians attend the early service at the parish church, and it is on this occasion that they carry offerings to their minister. Having thus recognized the festival as members of the Christian Church, they return to their homes to honor it after the manner of their forefathers. Their tables are heavily laden, and there is much eating and drinking, the repast opening with the standard dish of fish. Afterwards the Christmas songs of the country are sung, stories are told, and the fairy lore of the country, proverbially rich, is largely drawn upon for the amusement of the little folks—not always exclusively. They tell how the Trolls make their appearance on Yule night, and invite the young men to feast with them in their sylphid homes amongst the hills. Norway, too, has the Christmas-tree; the poorest peasant in the country, as well as the richest proprietor, does not fail to light up the toy-bearing fir-tree for the gratification of his children. Card-playing is another of their Yuletide amusements. The favorite dances are a kind of valse and an exciting gallopade. They dance to the fiddle, and the fiddler is invariably a cobbler.

We have yet to notice the prettiest of the Norse Yule customs—that of giving the fowls of the air

a feast on Christmas Day. For the sparrows and other small birds sheaves of wheat, oats, or barley are stuck upon long poles and put out on gables of houses, barn-doors, out-buildings, gateways, and other places where the feathered tribe love to congregate. They are said to know when Christmas is drawing nigh, for you may now observe hundreds of birds flocking round the snow-covered houses, while at other times they are scarcely visible.

The Christmas of Sweden is very similar to the Christmas of Norway. The custom of dining the smaller birds is also popular amongst the Swedes; so attached, indeed, are the people to it that the man who forgets the fowls of the air at this season is sure to lose his character for benevolence. It is, besides, the practice to give the cattle a double feed on Christmas Eve. "Eat well, my good beasts, and thrive," say the farm-laborers, "for this is Jul-afton." The church bell announces the birth of the day almost as soon as the eve has passed away; and at a very early hour people may be seen by hundreds in the streets of the towns, lighted on their way by lanterns. They are going to church. It is an extraordinary sight, and what makes it more so is the vast number of children seen in the throng. They are being taken to the Jul-Otta—the Christmas day-break (song)—there being a tradition amongst the Swedes that if the children attend this early service they will very easily learn to read. This is followed by the "race home." It forms part of the rustic creed, that the breadwinner who arrives first at his house from the Jul-Otta will be the first to get in his next harvest, or, if a bachelor, the first to obtain a wife. The rest of Christmas Day is spent by the Swedes in a quiet and pious manner. St. Stephen's (Dec. 26) is given up to family visiting; it is a more open holiday, differing from Christmas Eve, inasmuch as people go out and about; and differing from Christmas Day, inasmuch as there is a considerable amount of sledging, eating and drinking, and making merry. Between this time and New Year's Day, the young people divert themselves by "getting married"—à la Suède, of course; and those already "sacrificed," or those who don't care about going to the altar, solace themselves in a round of other pleasures.

Ask any Dane which he regards as the great national holiday of

his country, and he will unhesitatingly inform you that it is Christmas Day. Being a sober-minded individual, the Dane, like most of his Northern kindred, spends his Yule by the fireside, and binds a little more closely together his domestic relationship. The eating of grod and the singing of hymns around the Christmas-tree belong to the Eve; church-going, alms giving, card-playing, story-telling form the lighter amusements of Christmas Day; dinner, the heavier. The *pièce de résistance* is the plum-pudding, to which the fair children and blue-eyed maidens of Denmark do ample justice. At the conclusion of the dinner, emphasis is given to an interesting ceremony. The children say to the head of the table, "Thank you for my dinner," and the company, on rising, ladies and gentlemen alike, shake hands all round, saying, at the same time, "Good may it do you!" Then follow the drawing-room entertainments, the finale being a Danish Christmas song in which everybody present takes part.

The characteristics of the Russian social Christmas, which we have only space to notice briefly, are these. In the country districts a good stock of salted meats, sausages, and kirsch is laid in during the six weeks which precede Christmas (O. S.), and at an early date it is arranged amongst friends and relatives at whose house the festival shall be celebrated. In due time the hostess goes round and invites the company in an old-fashioned but complimentary set speech, followed the next day by the nurse, who invites the young ladies. Subsequently the host himself asks the guests, generally by deputy, "to witness the sports of the fair maidens, to break with them a bit of bread, taste a grain of salt, and partake of the roasted goose." At the time named the guests arrive in sledges, the young ladies and gentlemen first. All is bustle now in the house and neighborhood. One of the first proceedings is the introduction of the young people, for this is the "mating season," over which the hostess presides. So soon as the elder visitors have been received, a lady is chosen to conduct the ceremonies. We need scarcely add that this lady is sure to be the fairest of the matrons. Then are served the refreshments, which comprise many things besides sausages, salted meats, and kirsch; indeed, delicacies of the rarest kinds, and liquors of the choicest "brands"

are offered to the company. The health of the host, hostess, and their family is now ceremoniously drunk, and the entertainments of the evening commence. Mimmers are called in, the national dances are performed, and the company is further amused by the happy allusions of the improvisatore. These amusements are almost invariably supplemented by the famous dish-game. In a deep dish placed on a table in the middle of the room, and filled with water, the ladies deposit their available articles of jewelry. The mistress of the ceremonies takes charge of the dish and its contents. The dish is covered with a napkin, the company sit round the table; bread, salt, and charcoal are brought in, and then everybody present joins in the old song of "The Salt and the Bread." Meanwhile the trinkets are stirred in the dish, and short songs are sung, prognosticative of good and evil fortune. As each of these is ended, a trinket is taken from the dish, and the owner is supposed to be elated or made miserable by the import of the words. And woe to the owner of the trinket which is taken last from the dish. There are many other indoor amusements. The most popular of those which take place out of doors is masquerading. Both gentlemen and ladies visit their friends in disguises; and much merriment is caused by the attempts made to identify the wearers of the masks. T. N.

PENCIL PARAGRAPHS.

BY MATTIE M. BAKER.

FAITH.

SUBMISSION is the footprint of faith in the pathway of sorrow.
Anon.

I always find I can do my work best when I have faith enough to leave the future entirely in God's hands.—*Anon.*

There are hours when our faith can only

"Stand in the dark on the lowest stair,
While affirming of God, He is certainly there."
Virginia F. Townsend.

For those who have a living faith, there may be bitter sorrows, but there is no despair.—*Anon.*

FEATURES.

EYES like seas of melted velvet, lit up by sunset.
Mace Sloper, Esq.

Frank, clear, steady eyes, whose gaze told you that their owner would be true to himself, and

being that, would be true to all men beside.

Virginia F. Townsend.

For slow, strong patience in hating or loving, give me a slight woman, with fair hair, and innocent-looking blue eyes.—*Anon.*

It would seem as if Nature, in making up mankind, had always been a little short of materials, so that, if special attention were bestowed on the form and face, the brain suffered, and if the brain received special attention, why then there was something lacking in the body.—*J. G. Holland.*

It is so hard to believe that deep, clear eyes do not mirror deep, pure thoughts.—*Anon.*

FEELING.

EVERY one is blessed with sufficient vanity to take him comfortably through the world.

Metta Victoria Victor.

Enthusiasm—that pair of wings at the heart, which lift us over all impediments between us and our object.—*C. S. Whitmarsh.*

The strong and unanimous impulse of a great people is seldom wrong.—*Trollope.*

Those sanguine spirits, who see a future capital of the republic wherever two white men have gathered together and obliterated an Indian.—*Mrs. Calhoun.*

Gratitude is the throwing out of our hearts in the light of another's kindness.—*H. W. Beecher.*

How often is ignorance as irritating as superior knowledge.
Anon.

How suddenly, sometimes, is all our pleasure turned to pain.
Augusta Moore.

You are never happy unless you are master of the situation.
Gail Hamilton.

A very great part of all we suffer in this world, is from the apprehension of things that never come.
The Country Parson.

'Tis curious how we notice a name that we particularly love, or particularly dislike.
Augusta Moore.

Who can doubt that anything which makes a man discontented with his state, without giving him the certainty of a better, is a curse?—*G. P. R. James.*

There are, I believe, few things more formidable than the unwonted anger of a good-natured man.
Hugh Miller.

The deepest of our thoughts and emotions are always dumb.
J. G. Holland.

Castle-building—that glorious compensation for the trials of young and old.—*Anon.*

It is astonishing, when we have once conceived a prejudice, how

rapidly it grows, and how plentifully it finds nutriment. Like the sea polypus, it extends its thousand arms on every side for anything they can lay hold of, and the smallest particle afloat in the ocean of conjecture cannot escape from the tenacity of their grasp.—*Hood.*

It is a pleasant thing to be appreciated.—*Anon.*

It is a blessed thing to want something, for then you can duly appreciate the favor of having it.
Dickens.

It is a weary feeling to know you are a burden upon those you love.—*Anon.*

It is curious how readily we believe that any strongly-felt state of mind, or outward condition, strongly felt at the present moment, has been lasting for a long time.—*The Country Parson.*

Oh! if we could all always remain at our best.—*Ibid.*

It is one of the curses of life to feel that we are out of place, and to feel that we ought to be doing something better than that which engages our powers.
J. G. Holland.

Joy and sorrow, love and fear, life and death, bring so many of the same needs to all, that the wonder is we do not understand each other better, but wait till times of tribulation teach us human nature is very much the same in all.—*L. M. Alcott.*

Moments of triumph are not always moments of happiness.
Mrs. Ellis.

Half the unhappiness of this life springs from looking back to griefs that are past, and forward with fear to the future.—*Anon.*

Of all quarrels, those we sometimes hold with ourselves are the most hopeless.—*Anon.*

Oh! what a blessing it would be if we humans could turn away our mind's eye as we can our physical.—*The Country Parson.*

Of all disagreeable things in the world, the most disagreeable is not to have your own way.
Gail Hamilton.

Our finer feelings are like the evening primrose—all the sunlight but shuts them closer. And yet, when evening comes, and dews are falling, if you will watch, you shall see the twilight, with gentle influence, unroll them, one by one, with visible motion, each blossom throwing forth, as it opens, its offering of delicate odor.
H. W. Beecher.

The contented man is never poor, the discontented never rich.
Anon.

The Good Divinity opens before us so many golden gates of surprise.—*Paul Creyton.*

There is a dream in each delight,
A shadow near each ray,
That bids us then to fear their flight

When most we wish their stay.
Moore.

The noblest thing, next to God, that a man can love, is country.
H. W. Beecher.

That nameless grave composure which said, touchingly, that hope had long ago clasped hands with submission.—*Elizabeth Wetherell.*

There are moments when the heart, as if by prophecy, reaches into the future, and grasps the miseries of a lifetime.
Rachel L. B.

There is no agony like that of fear in its dire extremity.
Mrs. Ellis.

There are times when absolute solitude is the next best companion to congenial minds.—*Ibid.*

Where the heart-loyalty is strong, there is but little difficulty in making the external manifestations.
Theodore L. Cuyler.

How little the face reflects the heart.—*Anon.*

FLOWERS.

WHEN a man asks me what is the use of shrubs and flowers, my first impulse is to look under his hat, and see the length of his ears.—*Henry Colman.*

Flowers are the sweetest things God ever made and forgot to put a soul with.—*H. W. Beecher.*

Flowers look upward in every place

In this beautiful world of ours,
And dear as a smile on an old friend's face,

Is the sight of the bright, bright flowers.
Anon.

Flowers grow upon the graves of the dear departed, looking like hope, toward Heaven, though morning and evening find their sweet eyes wet with drops of dew.
G. W. Bungay.

Nature loves flowers as Jacob did Joseph, and gives them raiment of many colors.—*Ibid.*

FORGIVENESS.

GOD forgives more than men.
Mary W. Janerin.

There is an ugly kind of forgiveness, shot out like quills. Men take one who has offended, and set him down before the blow-pipe of their indignation, and burn his fault into him, and when they have kneaded him sufficiently with their fiery fist, then they forgive him.—*H. W. Beecher.*

What man was ever inexorable towards the fault committed for his sake?—*Anon.*

Pardon does not heal the wound.
Haytien Proverb.