

The Family Circle

SPRING IS COMING.

Not a gleam of golden sunshine
To light the wintry sky,
The cold wind is mingled with bits of sleet,
But the roads are hard and dry.

Come out, and let us wander
Along the hard white track,
And search for gems in the hedgerow deep,
And bear our treasures back.

See here is a beautiful piece of moss,
Spreading a carpet green,
With the little white stars of the chickweed
Pushing their way between.

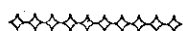
And here is a bunch of bright red haws,
Left over from last year's store,
Though the tiny green buds are bursting their bonds
To clothe the hedgerow once more.

And new life is stirring in hedgerow and field,
Awaiting the soft spring showers.
Then the buds will unfold in the warmth of the sun,
And carpet the meadows with flowers.



YOUTH.

Youth is the strong cord on which we string the jewels of life, to be worn when Age comes relentlessly down upon us, and our season of gathering is over. Memory then fingers each jewel and twists each facet into the light of other days, so that we can live in past joys and feed our souls on the manna of sweet remembrance. And woe betide us if the jewels are false ones—if Youth cheats Age and leaves it with the shams of life, instead of its realities! If the paste gems crumble at our touch, and reflect nothing but a wasted springtime, how can Age be borne? And the jewels are not rare or difficult to gather. Everywhere they lie about us, for youth's picking. Jewels of probity, of industry, of kindness, of cheerfulness, of sacrifice, of friendship, of love—love of home, of children, of Nature, of sunshine and shadows, of wood and stream, of star and sky, of all things clean and noble, true and tender, righteous and divine. What an ornament they make for the breast of Age! What an eternal joy to pass them in review one by one! For, mark you! Age cannot gather these things, the simplest of them, if Youth has neglected them. Age can see only through the eyes with which Youth has endowed it; can feel only the echo of the heart-beats of other times: it functions backwards and not forward. So Age lies at the mercy of Youth, simply waiting at the other end of Time for what Youth has to pass on to it from the fair and fruitful fields of life's morning. If Youth but knew!



THE HOLY ROSARY.

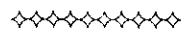
The power and efficacy of prayer have often been manifested in numberless ways. Since prayer is the lifting of the heart to God, religious devotion has devised many means of assisting in that elevation. One of the most potent methods, however, for bringing the heart close to things of heaven is that employed in the recitation of the Rosary.

In the varied liturgy of the Church a great diversity of prayers is to be found. Some are public and solemn and strictly official; others are for particular occasions, while others again are confined to certain classes of the faithful. The Rosary, however, may be called in a sense the bond of democracy among Catholics. It is so broad and yet simple, so powerful and yet so easy of rendition that it appeals universally to the Catholic heart, irrespective of learning, exalted station, or any other particular endowments of heart or of intellect.

The month of the Holy Rosary is, therefore, a period devoted to the spiritual interests of the Church universal.

It summons the Pontiff from his throne and the peasant from his cabin; it is the call of Mary to the Christian heart and the response is ready and fervent whether in the wondrous basilicas of Christendom or in the squalid hovels of the poor. Mary is the Mother of all, given to us in that spiritual capacity by Christ on the Cross. For this reason she knows no distinction of persons, for all are her children, and as a mother would she gathers them to her to help, to encourage, and to strengthen them.

During this month, therefore, surely does it behove every Catholic who prizes his religion to pour forth his soul in prayer and supplication to Almighty God through the medium of the Rosary of Our Lady.—*Catholic Bulletin*.



AN IRISH MOTHER'S HEART.

There is beauty in her mountains and a charm in Erin's hills,

A glory in her inland lakes, a music in her rills.
But inland lake and mountain rill, your charm can ne'er impart

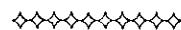
An image of the beauty in an Irish mother's heart.
I've heard your thrushes singing 'neath the whitened hawthorn tree,

And the Shannon's joyous music rolling onward to the sea,
But a sweeter singing haunts me as I sit from men apart,
'Tis the love-song of my childhood from an Irish mother's heart.

What seek ye, sons of Erin, roving sadly o'er the earth,
In the heap of gold that glitters or in stones of priceless worth?

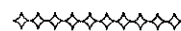
Sure you'll never find a jewel in the big world's busy mart
Like the one you left behind you in an Irish mother's heart.

—JOSEPH S. HOGAN, S.J.



PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER.

Prayer should be the Christian's most cherished privilege. The word of God and the experience of God's people assure us that God Himself hears and answers prayer. It is not our place to criticise His answers; it is only our part to ask God's will. He gives or withholds as seems best to Him. If He were otherwise we would scarcely dare to pray at all. If answer to our prayers were always exactly in the form that we desired, we would soon learn that our human limitations make it impossible for us to know what is best for us to have under all circumstances. But God in His infinite wisdom knows best. He answers according to His wisdom rather than according to our desires.



IGNORANCE OF THE BIBLE.

Protestant ignorance of the Bible is often in evidence in the debates of the House of Commons (says the *Catholic News*).

Sir Hamar Greenwood, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, thought there was Christian justification for the policy of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." A Catholic member had to put him right. That was not the first time that the House witnessed the hollowness of the claim that Protestants are, like Apollyon, "mighty in the Scriptures." It is not so long since Sir Edward (now Lord) Grey got hopelessly mixed between David and Daniel.

John Burns, the London Labor leader, observed with nonconformist solemnity: "As the Scripture says, 'Full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.'" Again it was a Catholic member who ventured to point out that the words came from "Macbeth." Gladstone, who posed as a theologian, made the Psalmist responsible for the aphorism, "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." One would imagine that, as a well-read man, he would have known a little more about Laurence Sterne.

John Bright had the name of being a Biblical scholar, and he even made allusions to what he regarded as Catholic inferiority in that domain. Mr. Bright was the person who in the British Parliament saddled St. Paul with the saying, "Cleanliness is next to godliness." Protestants more commonly ascribe it to John Wesley, who purloined the idea from Lord Bacon, who in turn pilfered it without acknowledgments from one of the fathers of the Church of Rome.

All of which reminds of the dignified Col. B.— who, having lost his pocket-book, said: "Oh, well, as the holy Bible has it, 'who steals my purse, steals trash.'" "