

ELECTRA:

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BELLES LETTRES MONTHLY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

MAY, 1883, TO MAY, 1884.

"The shades of night were falling fast,
As through an Alpine village passed
A youth who bore through snow and ice
A banner with this strange device,
EXCELSIOR!"

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ELECTRA:

A BELLES LETTRES MONTHLY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

VOL. I.

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No. 8

THE NEW EVA.

(Eva, in the Hebrew, is the mother of the living.)

Oh, this drudgery—'tis fearful!
Toil, like beasts, from early birth,
Sawing, chopping wood, and tearful
See the sweat roll down to earth!
If by no means I'm exempted,
Being fond of fruit and cake,
If in Par'dise I'd been tempted
I'd have chased that wily snake!

Lizzie spake with tears that glisten
Thus to Walter, her old man;
But a rich one chanced to listen,
And his answer quickly ran:
"Well reflect, if you're so shielded,
Deaf to whisperings in your ear.
E'en yourself, you might have yielded
Mother, this I greatly fear!"

"If in such a hazard—mind you!
You can stand a better show,
Leave your saw and axe behind you,
And you both shall with me go.
Ev'ry meal, in bounteous measure,
Shall have seven courses rare:
Six of them enjoy with pleasure—
Of the seventh, though—beware!"

"This is all that I condition:
Leave that seventh dish alone!
And mark well this premonition,
'Touch not!' or your luck has flown!"

VOL. I, No. 8—28.

“FOR THE LOVE OF GOD.”

(Reading a time-stained volume, ancient and vellum-bound,
Hid in the quaint black-letter, here is the tale I found :

Only a childish legend, you in your wisdom preach :
But is there never a lesson even a child may teach?)

Once, as a traveler journeyed over the Apennines,
Children and wife together, toiling beneath the pines ;

Hungry and hot with climbing, deep in a shady pass,
Pausing, they spread their noontide meal on the mossy grass.

Just as the bread was broken, just as the wine was broached,
Slowly a band of pilgrims, weary and gaunt, approached.

Stretching their hands, they pleaded—“ For the love of God, we pray,
Give us to eat, for nothing hath moistened our lips to-day ! ”

“ Children and wife, ye hear them !—Giving God’s poor our bread,
Say—shall we trust His bounty, traveling our way unfed ? ”

Up from the grass the children sprang with the barley-cake ;
“ Here is the flask, untasted ”—the wife said—“ freely take ! ”

Sated, the pilgrims blessed them, leaving them prayers for gold—
“ He for whose sake ye did it, pay you a hundred-fold ! ”

Ready to journey onward, gathering the wallet up,
One of the unfed children, dropping therein the cup—

Cried; with a look bewildered—“ Father, I thought you said
Nothing was left : Why, only look at these loaves of bread ! ”

Stooping beside the fountain, dipping the empty flask,
The father o’erheard quick voices, eager with wonder, ask—

“ What has so reddened the water ? Its drops like grape-juice shine ! ”
He lifted his brimming bottle—lo ! *it was filled with wine !*

—Margaret J. Preston.

SWALLOWS' NESTS.

The swallows' nests, used in China and Annam as an eating delicacy, are those made by a species of swallows called in Annam, *salangane*.

The *salanganes*, bluish in color and quite small in size, inhabit, in countless numbers, the grottoes and fissures found all along the rocky coast of China and

Annam. They hive together in each cave and cavity like bees in a beehive.

The *salanganes* fill their nests with insects for their own food and that of their young, and the residue of these insects forms a whitish coating over the nest. When soaked in water, the nest dissolves

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