

23. Meng Sung reaping bamboo shoots for his mother in winter.
 24. Hwang T'ing-Kien (a celebrated poet of the Sung dynasty), performs menial services in ministering to his parents. (No. 226, p. 73.)

Some of the stories seem silly to us: a pickax would have done better service in breaking the ice than the method of thawing it up with one's own body and catching cold; a mosquito-net would have proved more useful than feeding the insects with the blood of a devoted child, etc. Moreover the stolidity of parents in accepting sacrifices of children with equanimity and as a matter of course is to our sense of propriety nothing short of criminal. Still, it will be wise for us whose habits of life suffer from the opposite extreme, viz., irreverence for authority or tradition in any form, to recognise that all of them are pervaded with a noble spirit of respect for parents, which though exaggerated is none the less touching and ought to command our admiration. P. C.

THE SUPPOSED POEM OF ROBERT BURNS.

The *Universalist Leader* of Boston republished the poem "Words o' Cheer" attributed to Robert Burns, which appeared in the September *Open Court*, and one of its readers has supplied the following information as to its origin.

SIR:

I find on page 1366 of the *Leader* information called for in regard to the poem "Words o' Cheer." I am not really one of your Scotch friends, but I can tell you where I got it years ago. It is taken from Lizzie Doten's *Poems from the Inner Life*, published by the *Banner of Light* in 1871. It is an inspiration poem given while in trance, purporting to come from Robert Burns. The poem consists of thirteen verses. Whoever sent it to *The Open Court* broke right into the middle of it; had they copied the whole of it you would have known *how* it got here, and *where* it came from at that late date. I am in possession of the book and have heard the lady deliver her poems impromptu myself. The likeness of her poems to Shakespeare is equally good. The poem, as printed in the *Leader*, differs a word or two here and there. Probably the one who is passing the poem along wishes you or someone else to acknowledge its merits before giving the source from whence it sprung. The first half of the poem is a "dead give away."

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Mr. Andrew W. Cross, of Riverside, Cal., writes us to the same effect; adding, however, that the language is not that of Burns.

"SOME FACTORS IN THE RISING OF THE NEGRO."

A NEGRO'S VIEW OF THE QUESTION.

To the Editor of The Open Court.

Speculation as to the specific possibilities of an undeveloped person or race cannot be indulged in with any degree of impunity by those who expect to remain within the pale of common sense. Nobody pays much attention nowadays to the Jew's estimate of the Gentiles, or the Greek's and Roman's estimate of the capabilities of barbarians.