

Poet's Corner.

THE PRINTER'S PRAYER.

BY A PRINTER.

Oh thou Great Head of earth and heaven
Who dost the bowling tempest ride,
Thy will the holy Rule has given—
Be thou the printer's friendly Guide.

When eve thy azure bow expands,
He sees in *Starry Letters* bright,
The work of thy eternal hands,
Great sovereign of ethereal light.

With heaven's effulgent Type serene,
The beauteous rainbow's cheering ray,
Imprint upon his soul the scene
That opens in celestial day.

And when this earthly mouldering Form
Is Locked in death's cold icy Chase,
Oh, save his spirit from the storm
That hurls the vicious from Thy face.

And oh, when the last trump shall sound,
And bid the slumbering dust arise,
May he be in the Columns found
That form the Pages of the skies.

ÆTNA.

A THRILLING TALE.

(Concluded.)

He leaped up from the ground. There was a fearful fire in his eye, his nostrils were dilated, his pale face became as white as marble, and as bloodless, save, that on either cheek there glowed a deep, red spot.

'See! he shrieked, wildly and loudly; spirits of the deep, arise! Ha!—yonder—see them!—they are coming—in the clouds—enrobed in thunder-garments—see!'

I leaped up from the ground: I gazed at him.—

He threw of his hat wildly, and it fell down in the abyss. He flung of his coat and threw it away.

'Signor,' said I, in hopes that a mild tone might make him calm. 'Signor, the winds obey you. Let us go.'

'Go? Where? Is not this my home? Is not this my palace? Saw you not my servants? You are my guest!'

'Will you not sit down and tell me about your home?' said I, shuddering.

'No! there are secrets that never can be spoken. Can you understand them? Who are you, a mortal, that you dare to ask?'

I walked slowly toward the narrow passage of land—the bridge. But he saw me, and stood upon it. I could not go.

'Can this be all pleasantry?' thought I. An awful thought passed through me, which froze my heart's blood.

Pleasantry! There he stood, my wild companion, his eye blazing, fixed piercingly on me, his hands clenched, his mouth foaming, every sinew in his body worked up. He stood screaming, laughing. O God! I was alone with a maniac!

'You are to go with me,' he cried.

'Where?'

'There. I have come to carry you to my home.' He pointed with a cold, snaky smile down the unfathomable abyss whence ascended the terrible column of inky and suffocating smoke.

I gazed at him; for there was some element of fascination in his glassy stare, which forced me, compelled me, to gaze. There was a cold smile upon his lips, which were all bloodless, and disclosed, as they parted, his mouth and tightly-shut teeth.

'There is my home—there; and I have come to take you with me. Ha! ha! how happy you will be! Come!'

Still I gazed; while my heart throbbed with slow but terrible pulsations.

He advanced one step toward me.

I looked all around. The spell was broken which enchained my gaze. I looked all around: at the blue sky above, the scorched earth around, at the horrible chasm beneath. There was no hope.—Oh! could I but leap the space which separated me from the main cliff! Could I but do it—but I could not! There was no hope!

'What! do you not answer?' he cried suddenly, lashed into fury by my silence, and stamping his foot in frenzy upon the rock. 'Do you not answer? Then I must carry you with me!'

The maniac sprang towards me!

With all my energies aroused into frantic action, with every sinew braced, and every muscle contracted, I planted my foot backward, against a small angular rock which projected above the loose, sandy soil, and tried to meet the shock.—With a wild scream, which arose thrillingly into the air, his eyes all bloodshot, his mouth foaming on he came. He struck me—his arms surrounded me in fearful embrace, his hot breath came burning upon my cheek. I stood firm: for despair, and all the bitterness of death, had given no place to fear and timidity, but had bestowed on me the coolness of one in an ordinary situation, I

threw my left arm beneath his, my right I passed over his neck and around upon his back, thus seeking to press him to the earth.

It was a moment of horror such as no mortal tongue could ever tell. A struggle with a maniac! To be on the small surface of a rock, while, three thousand feet beneath, lay the abyss of untold horrors! At this hour, my heart beats more forcibly even as I think upon the fearful time.

Thus we stood breast to breast, face to face—the madman and I—he with his arms encircling me; I seeking to save myself. He pressed me toward the cliff. He plunged his feet deep into the ground; he laughed mockingly, and screamed, as he tried to destroy me. But against that rock my feet were firmly braced; and I held him tightly, and I pushed him, and I sought to hurl him from me!—as well might the hungry tiger be hurled from his prey.

Oh! the agony of that struggle! I know not how long it was; but to me it seemed like many hours. The wild eyes of the madman glared at mine all the time, and I found it impossible to look away. His fearful face, all white, all ghastly was upturned toward me, as he shouted in his fiendish mocking laughter.

'O heaven! Oh! horror! Can all this endure for ever?' cried I in the agony of my fear. The maniac howled with derisive shouts. I felt that I was growing weaker. But he was a madman: and would he grow weaker also? A thousand thoughts fled through me.

Suddenly the maniac gave one fearful plunge. It was with the strength of a giant that he seized me. He raised me from my feet. The rock, the saving rock—I had lost it, I was gone. I threw my arms high into the air, and my scream of terror ascended in unison with the maniac's mocking yell.

'Down! down! to the bottomless pit! To the home of fire and brimstone! To the endless horrors of burning lakes!' he screamed, as he gave a bound toward the edge of the cliff. Inspired by a sudden gift of superhuman strength, by a partial possession of even a madman's power, I caught him by the throat, and even on the very edge, even when in sight of the abyss, I sprang back, I bore him back; I brought him to the ground. Falling heavily upon him, I held his throat still in a fierce grasp, while his own arms were wound tightly around my neck, and his legs around mine. I felt his hot breath from his open mouth as my cheek lay pressed against his face; heard them grate harshly, and drew my head violently away, as he sought to seize me with his sharp teeth.

In our frantic struggles on the ground, we rolled wildly about, and the dust from sulphur and from pumice-stone ascended round us in suffocating clouds. I was half-insane. I was struggling for life. I caught up a handful of the fine choking dust, and rubbed it violently over his open mouth. It went into his nostrils and lungs. He gave a jerk forward in agony. Amid the clouds of dust around, I could not see where we were. He held me by the hair as he sprang; a moment after, and a fearful force was straining there, holding my head down with irresistible force. Another moment, and I arose; while wild and high arose the shriek of the maniac, as he fell down—down—into the abyss!

THE YOUNG MERCHANT'S ORDEAL!

OR,

CONTENT versus PLENTY.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

'Arthur,' said Mrs. Leeman, addressing her young husband, 'it seems to me that Mr. Sharping is getting ahead of you in business.'

'Ah,' uttered the young man looking up from his paper.

'Yes,' continued his wife. 'He has just moved into his large new house, and I expect we shall be invited to the opening party. Really, I wish you could do the same.'

'And are you not contented here, Sarah?' asked Mr. Leeman, with a slight tinge of disappointment in his tone.

'O, yes, I am contented; but then, I should like to have you look as well,—that is, appear as well as William Sharping does. You are as well acquainted in the town, and you are as generally respected. Your store is as well situated, and you seem to possess all the advantages you could wish I wish you could keep up with Sharping.'

Arthur Leeman was a young merchant, located in a large and flourishing village, where he had been in business nearly two years. He had been brought up by virtuous parents, and his ideas of justice and honesty were founded on deep moral principles.—Shortly before he entered business

for himself, he married a beautiful girl whom he had long and ardently loved, and who had, in return, reciprocated that love. He had received from her two thousand dollars, which sum had gone a great way towards purchasing his stock in trade. He had rented a small cottage—a neat, retired abode—and here he settled down in a house of his own, with every prospect of continued happiness; and this he had a right to expect, for his young wife was mild and gentle, loving and true, and ever regardful of his welfare. His expenses he carefully kept behind his income, and as might be expected, his comforts were all solid, based upon the single idea of CONTENT.

Wm. Sharping also kept a store in the village. He had commenced about the same time that Arthur did, but he seemed to have made more money, for he spent much in his living: and, as has already been intimated, he was upon the point of making a still greater show of accumulating wealth. Sharping's wife was an intimate friend of Sarah Leeman, and hence the latter felt more sensibly the contrast between her own and her neighbor's outward circumstances.

In a few evenings Wm. Sharping opened his new house for the reception of visitors, and of course Arthur and Sarah were invited. Arthur Leeman was wonder-struck by the appearance of his friends' domestic equipment. The furniture was rich and costly, and the carpets were of the finest material. Large mirrors hung upon the walls, golden lamps adorned the marble mantle, and sumptuous ottomans and sofas offered their temptations to the weary.

'What a splendid house they have got, haven't they?' remarked one of the guests of Sarah Leeman.

'Yes,' returned Sarah; and as she spoke she thought her interlocutor was drawing a comparison between her own and Mrs. Sharping's domestic establishment.

Sarah heard on all hands, praise of the things about her, and she wondered why her own husband could not do all this as well as Mr. Sharping. She let the evil spirit of envy into her bosom before she was aware of it, and from that moment she became unhappy.

She took no more pleasure in viewing the costly articles about her, and at an early hour she drew her husband away from the company and begged him to go home. When she reached her own snug, neat little sitting-room, she forgot all the happiness she had enjoyed there. She only thought of the contrast between that and Mrs. Sharping's superb parlors.

'I'm sure I don't see why we may not make as good an appearance as Sharping,' she murmured, after she and her husband had become seated.

'I can hardly afford it now, Sarah,' returned Arthur.

'But why not, as well as William Sharping?'

'Because Sharping has more money. He makes more than I do.'

'I don't see how he can do that. He must have some secret in trade that you do not possess. O, I wish we could keep up with them. People will see that Sharping is the most prosperous, and they think him more of a business man than you are, and if he once takes the lead in trade, he will be sure, not only to keep it, but also to gain on his competitors. You know how people like to trade at flourishing places.'

Arthur Leeman began to think there was some force in his wife's argument. He, too, began to lose sight of the sweet CONTENT he had been for two years enjoying, and in the stead thereof, he was looking upon what the world calls PLenty.—He might first have argued more with his wife, but he remembered that it was her money that had helped materially to set him up in business, and he feared to touch a cord that might vibrate upon that point. He did not fully know the real character of his wife,—he did not know how holy and pure was the soil in her soul that had thus given life to a few noxious weeds. Had he fully known that her envy was but an exotic, just sprung into existence by thoughtless transplanting, he might have sought more earnestly to pluck it out; but he gave heed to her words, and his own soul became the abode of discontent.

Before Arthur Leeman retired that night, he told his wife that he would exert himself to outstrip his neighbor.

A few evenings after that, as Arthur was returning from his business he had occasion to pass his neighbor's store, and as he saw a chink in the shutters he thought he would enter. Sharping was there alone, and he had closed his ledger.

'Ha, Leeman, how are you? How's business?' cried Sharping, with the air of a man who is well pleased with himself.

'O, so-so,' returned Arthur, reaching over the desk to shake hands.

'I've done capitally to-day,' resumed Sharping. 'A profit of fifty dollars and thirty three cents.' 'Not clear profit!' said Arthur, opening his eyes.

'Yes,—clear profit. Ha, ha, ha.' And as the young merchant thus laughed to himself he leaped over the counter and rubbed his hands exultingly.

'But I don't see how you do it,' uttered Arthur, in a tone of nervous wistfulness.

'Ha, ha, ha. What fools there are in this world, Leeman. Just look here,' rattled the successful merchant, as he leaped back over the counter, and pulled a piece of goods from one of the shelves.—There—what do you call that?'

'It's made to look like the finest silk,' he said, 'but the great body of the cloth is cotton. I never saw any like it before,' he continued, as he drew out a thread and ran it between the nails of his thumb and forefinger, thereby stripping off the flossy, silken covering from a stout thread of cotton.

'No—it's a new thing. I got it in New York.—Sold a piece this afternoon—fifteen yards—nine shillings a yard. Ha, ha, ha.'

'Nine shillings?' replied Arthur, in renewed surprise. 'Why, the stuff is not worth seventy-five cents.'

'Bless your body, I only paid forty-two cents for it. Got it at auction. It's a new thing—Only think—off from fifteen yards I made a profit of sixteen dollars and twenty-cents.'

'But the one to whom you sold it must have thought it all silk.'

'Of course she did. You don't think she'd paid that price if she hadn't. But mind, I tell you this in confidence. You are one of the trade, you know, and of course are up to such things.'

Arthur Leeman was not 'up to such things,' but then he had not at that moment the mainly independence to say so. A new idea was working its way darkly through his mind.

'You didn't of course tell her it was really silk—pure silk,' he said, half earnestly.

'O, no,' returned Sharping, with a knowing nod.

'Let me alone for that. She wanted something rich for a dress. I took down that—' There,' said I, look at that—just what you want—splendid article—just examine it for yourself.' 'What do you ask?' said she?—'Two dollars,' said I. 'Too high,' she said. 'But my dear madam, look at it—I must make myself whole.' She begged, and I droaned about the ruinous plan of selling below cost. At last she hit upon nine shillings.—'Ruinous,' said I; 'but if you won't mention it—if you'll promise not to tell of it—seeing it's you—you may take it.' She promised, and—took it—Ha, ha, ha.

'Sixteen dollars and twenty cents!' muttered Arthur, aloud.

'Ay, a round profit,' added Sharping. 'But then we must do it. Must live you know; and we might as well have it as anybody. They've got it to spare, else they wouldn't spend it.'

(Conclusion in our next.)

Miscellany.

A Life of Crime.

The Court of Assizes of the Meurthe has just been occupied three days in trying a man named Marchal, and his wife Marguerite, for having poisoned Marie Anne, a previous wife of Marchal, and Elie Geoffery, first husband of the woman.—The facts set forth in the indictment were as follows. Marchal was born at Angoment in 1802, of a family of, for his station in life, considerable wealth. In 1822 he entered the army, but after three years service was discharged owing to his having fractured his wrist. He then took up his residence in his native village, and has resided in it ever since. He was at one time game keeper to the Princess de Poix. He subsequently entered the service of M. Chevandier, in the same capacity, and remained in it until arrested. He for some time filled the office of Mayor. Before entering the army he had an illegitimate child by a woman named Aubart. On his return he found that this woman had married a man named Vincent. He, on his part, married a young woman named Bournier, and had two sons by her—one of whom is now studying for the Church. He lived quietly with her for some years, though it was known that he was of exceedingly licentious conduct. Towards 1837 he resumed his connection with the woman Vincent. In June, 1838, her husband suddenly died, and at the beginning of September following his wife died also. No suspicion of foul play was then entertained, but it is now strongly suspected that he poisoned both. After the death of these two persons, he took Mme. Vincent to live with him, and, in spite of the scandal which