

and, we must admit, is attested by fact and experience. The great mass of mankind, Samson-like, grind in the prison house of labour, with shorn locks and blinded eyes, and it is but at rare intervals that the spirit of the Lord comes mightily upon them, or they obtain a glimpse of the open secret of the universe. Nor are the lords of the Philistines, who look on, more to be envied. 'Examine their spiritual mechanism, the same great need, and little faculty are there; say, ten to one but the toiling Samson, who has actually put forth his hand and operated on nature, is the more cunningly gifted of the two.' Examine the programme of amusements for the London 'season,' and if you are skilled in the higher laws of interpretation, you will find it summoned up in this sentence—There are no perennial springs of poetry in the lives of idle lords. Their 'great need, great greed, and little faculty' are exhibited in the fact, that they have been known to give a stranger girl five hundred pounds to sing a song to them, one word of which they did not understand. To sum up all: the popular faith, the works of genius, and the frivolities of the London season, point to this issue—that if the elements and appliances for building up the loftiest and purest life of humanity are lying around every man in the richest profusion, but small use is made of them; there is but little harmony between the inner and the outer world, and but few have found out the key which unlocks the invisible gates of the open secret.

We would be understood as having struck the lowest note of our gamut, and will now endeavour to ascend; as having exhibited the dark side of the picture, and will now proceed to unfold its brighter aspects. We have spoken of the actualities, we will now speak of the possibilities of humanity. We have spoken of facts, we will now speak of truths. We would illustrate the difference between a fact and a truth by an incident with which every child is acquainted, and from which every man might learn wisdom. Once upon a time two pilgrims were imprisoned in the dungeons of Doubting Castle. We will suppose that this incident in Bunyan's beautiful allegory is a reality. It is a fact that the pilgrims were imprisoned, but not a truth. In reality they were not imprisoned at all. They had the means of escape in their own hands only they were not conscious for a time of the treasure they possessed in 'the key called knowledge.' Thick stone walls and strong bolts and bars were around them, and Giant Despair kept watch and ward over them. Beyond them at a little distance lay the fair world and freedom, and the king's highway, leading direct to the celestial city. It was but a few steps from the dungeon to the highway, but that little distance was equal to immeasurable leagues or an impassable gulf so long as the prisoners were unconscious of the possession of their key. But how bolts and bars give way, how dungeon gates fly open, when the key is applied to them! How speedily the pilgrims pass from darkness to light, from bondage to liberty! How near the darkness and the light, the bondage and the liberty, are to each other! Hence we say that this allegorical incident illustrates the difference between a fact and a truth. The pilgrims were prisoners, but they needed not to be so. Unbounded liberty was in their power while they lay in their dungeon; but, unconscious of this truth, they began to give way to despair, and in that mood they would have told you, no doubt, that there was more sorrow and bondage than joy and liberty in the life of a pilgrim.

We can never meditate sufficiently on the deep import of the truth which is here shadowed forth by the genius of John Bunyan. It typifies the condition and capabilities of the life of every man. It presents to us with its actualities and possibilities, and teaches us that if the one is dull and prosaic, the other is radiant with the light and beauty of the highest spirituality. Two worlds are sketched before us. One of them is a region of darkness and bondage, the other of light and liberty. They lie along side each other, they overlap or run into each other, or rather the two worlds are one. Cast a thick covering over a man. Bind up his eyes and stop his ears. Lead him in that condition into the fairest landscape when nature is in his vernal or summer prime, place him in the loveliest earthly paradise; lead him into the vocal woods, or take him into a gallery of paintings, where the genius of the artist shines forth in high interpretations of nature, or into music halls, where melodies intermix, and the soul of harmony stirs the atmosphere as with the very spirit of life, or into lecture-rooms, where is to be heard the greatest and wisest discourse of life, death, and immortality, of the mysteries of being, and the solemnities of duty. What would all avail? The poor man saw no beauty, heard no melody, listened to no words of wisdom, not that he lacked capacity but it was not unfolded: He had eyes but saw not, for they were blinded, ears, but heard not for they were closed. But beauty, and melody, and words of wisdom, spread and floated around him. Others saw and heard, because their eyes and ears were open. That made all the difference.

Our theme is boundless in illustrations, both in the physical and spiritual worlds. How different 'all the world' of these days from 'all the world' of the ancients! Ages and empires rose and passed away, dynasties, systems of mortals, government, philosophy, and religion flourished and faded in the old world, while the new world in the west, and the great Australian continent at the Antipodes, were unknown to the inhabitants of these countries. The properties of matter were inherent in it from the beginning, but were unfolded slowly and after the lapse of ages to

the human mind. The polarity of the magnet, the genius of the modern navigation and discovery, the expansive property of water, the elemental spirit of the modern mechanism, were truths from the beginning, but they became truths in the mind only as it were yesterday. The light of heaven was seen by Adam, but Franklin was the first man who handled this thunderbolt of the Eternal, and only in our own days has it been made the medium of human thought between minds at the extremities of our island. This knowledge was hidden from the ancients. They lived in the midst of powers of which they knew nothing. They were subjected to physical laws whose nature they could not comprehend, but of whose presence they were made painfully aware by the recoil which always follows the breach of them. The stroke came from an unseen and unknown hand. In physics, as in morals, they felt themselves passive and helpless in the hands of an inexorable destiny or of capricious gods, and as regards the laws of matter, as well as of mind, they might have exclaimed, 'Wherewithal shall we come before the Lord?' It is so also in the spiritual world. The divinest truths are found in contact with the blackest night of ignorance. The land of promise lies alongside the great and terrible wilderness. One other illustration will suffice, and we shall take it from sacred writ.

Once upon a time the hosts of the King of Syria surrounded the city of Dothan, with a view to capture a prophet of the Lord. The servant of the prophet was greatly afraid when he saw the horses and chariots of the enemy, but his master possessed his soul in patience. Why the difference? Because of the difference of their vision. The seer said unto his servant, 'Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.' And Elisha prayed and said, 'Lord, I pray thee open his eyes that he may see.' And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

We shall do well to mark the process by which this young man was transformed from a state of fear and danger, to one of confidence and security. It was merely by opening his eyes. It is not, however, as a miracle, that we press this incident into our service, but rather as a companion picture to the pilgrims in Doubting Castle, and both of them for the sound philosophy of life, and the more of its development, which we find in them. In now proceeding to speak briefly upon this higher department of our subject, it may be proper to state, that we designedly pass over, with a reverential acknowledgement, that standing miracle of our own times, which constitutes the turning-point of the true spiritual life of every good man. The question to the threshold of which all that we have written in this series of papers has now brought us, is, 'How does a mind grow?'—in strength, in goodness, in purity, in blessedness? We have spoken of a knowledge 'which does not suppose a high degree of mental culture; then what sort of knowledge do we want, and how shall we attain it? We have spoken of poetry as the secular religion of the soul, and of the poetic and religious capacity as one; also of poetry as a condition of the mind, rather than a thing of the outer world, but we have just been speaking of an 'open secret' in the outer world, which, all open though it be, most men cannot perceive. In this we might, at first sight, seem to be chargeable with a little confusion, if not contradiction. But to careful readers we shall easily blow away the mist which misleads them to see confusion where there is merely complicated order, and show them that all the parts of our little system are in perfect harmony.

#### TRIFLES.

How is it, that o'er the strongest mind,  
That trifles hold such sway?  
A word—nay e'en a look unkind  
May darken all life's day.  
Oh, in this world of daily care,  
The thousands that have erred  
Can any hardship better bear  
Than they can bear a word.

The man who with heroic heart  
Can stern misfortune meet,  
Unflinchingly perform his part  
And struggle 'gainst defeat,  
With faith unaltered—yet can loose  
His temper, e'en for ought  
Which falls not as his will would choose,  
Or proves not what he sought!

Alas, the human mould's at fault;  
And still by turns it claims  
A nobleness that can exalt,  
A littleness that shames!  
Of strength and weakness still combined,  
Compounded of the mean and grand;  
And trifles thus will shake the mind  
That would a tempest stand.

Give me the soul-superior power,  
That conquest over fate,  
Which sways the weakness of the hour,  
Rules little things as great;  
That lulls the human waves of strife  
With words and feelings kind,  
And makes the trials of our life  
The triumphs of our mind!

From Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.

#### 'THE DARK HOUR.'

BY BERTHAULD AUERBACH.—TRANSLATED BY META TAYLOR.

Most men, who live in the home circle of their families, enjoy spending the dark hour in quiet. Children grow restless about this

time, but the elder folks draw over the fire and sit musing silently, or now and then exchanging a gentle word of affection. These are moments when the mind receives and imparts the most refreshing and purest thoughts. There seems to be a general reluctance to break the approaching darkness by lighting a candle; for all, unconsciously, have a certain feeling of the holy power of nature, which spreads out before us, so oft unheeded the wonderful phenomena of light and darkness. Oh the cozy, comfortable chat, in that dark hour! One sits looking at another by the flickering light of the fire, and the few words spoken are caught attentively; the eye, too, has repose, for the mind is undisturbed by the object on which it rests. A single word will often fall upon the ear like an impressive note of music, and conveys a feeling which long after finds an echo in the soul.

Farmer Hugenmair was one evening sitting thus in the parlour with his wife, his son and his son's wife. The wedding of the young couple had taken place the day before, and the joy occasioned by the event was fresh in the minds. For some no one spoke a word, and yet one feeling perhaps one thought—filled their minds.

Young Hagenmair had hold of the hand of his wife, who sat beside him; perhaps the old man guessed they joy there was in his child's heart; he was ensconced in a dark corner unseen, and thus at length broke the silence.—'Ah children, 'tis an easy matter to talk of loving one another with your whole heart, and to promise to hold fast your love through life; but when it comes to the point and you have to yield to each other, to control the will for mutual improvement, 'tis often a difficult task, and words are not then enough. There are times when a man is ready to go through the fire to serve his wife; but without a murmur, to drink a cup of coffee which she may have heedlessly let grow cold—believe me, that's a less easy matter. The words of Scripture are full of meaning, which tells us of the foolish virgins whose lamps were extinguished when the bridegroom came: for many a heart is hardened by self will, whereas every one ought to be prompt to catch and enjoy the highest happiness. You see, children, in what love and harmony your mother and I live; but do not imagine that this came without a struggle; I was especially obstinate and self-willed, for in my young days I led a careless independent life. Hark ye, I'll tell you two stories of the time soon after our marriage, and you may learn a lesson from them.—I warrant me you will.

'Well do I recollect my delight the Sunday when I was to go to church with my wife for the first time. We had been chatting away the time unwares that morning, till starting up, I exclaimed, 'Come, quick, we shall be too late for church.' My wife ran to her chamber to dress. I was ready long before she was, and waiting for her: she had constantly some little matter still to arrange. At first I begged her in a gentle tone and jokingly, to be quick; but presently I called louder, intreating and urging her to make haste. Three times did I fill and light my pipe, each time it went out, as I stood kicking my heels impatiently, calling to her at the chamber door. At such moments one feels as if standing upon hot coals, or, in other words, in the fidgets. My face was as red as scarlet when she at length made her appearance. I could not speak, and we left the house.

'We had not gone many steps, when my wife recollected something she had left behind. All the keys had now to be got out—all the closets to be opened. I staid waiting in the street, and it seemed to me an age till she returned. I thought of going to church alone, but I was ashamed; and when at last she appeared with a smiling face, and began to pull my shirt collar playfully, I turned angrily on my heel, and said in a gruff voice, 'Go and dress yourself—you are long enough about it forsooth!' and we walked to church in this manner, without exchanging a word more.

'My cheeks glowed with vexation and anger, both with my wife and myself, as I entered the church. My wife went to her seat. Had she once turned round to look for me? I know not. I leaned against a pillar, and was as stiff as the stone itself. From time to time I caught a word the clergyman said, but instantly forgot him, and stood staring at the roof and walls, and thinking what a lofty and cold building it was. This had never come into my head before; and I was angry with myself that my thoughts were so distracted, and that I could pay no attention to the sermon. It now occurred to me that this was owing to the misunderstanding with my wife; how indeed could I take to my heart what I heard at such a moment? I longed to make it all up, and looked round at her: she did not however raise her eyes, and this vexed me again. Was not she in the wrong? thought I; and ought not she therefore beg my pardon for dawdling and wasting my time in a way to drive one mad? Look ye, children, thus it is with a man when he gets out of temper, and deceives himself about his own heart and conduct. I was angry with my wife, even for being able to say her prayers so calmly, since she had offended me; and in this manner I behaved like a good for nothing fellow, both before and during church time, and imbittered that hour which might have been one of the brightest and happiest in my life. Our misunderstanding might very likely soon have been at an end, if I could have taken my wife's hand, and spoken a kind word with her; but we were separated in the Church, and it seemed to be as if our quarrel had estranged our hearts for ever.

The good woman was here going to inter-

rupt her husband, but he said, 'say my love, let me tell my story out; I have another to follow, and then you may have all the afterpiece to yourself. So you may imagine, children, that we soon made matters up again; for your mother, in her young days, was a merry soul; and whenever I put on a sour look, and was out of temper, she would laugh at me so good-humouredly, that I was forced to laugh too. And then I could not understand how it was that I had been so pettish—and all for the merest trifle, not worth speaking of; but the fact is, when a man's anger is up, he does not understand this.

'Well, now for the other story: it is about just such another half-hour's trial of temper. The wedding of our cousin at Lichtenau was fixed to take place; we were invited to it, and were to be there punctually at a certain hour. The day came, and it was high time to start—there was not a moment to lose. I had put to the old grey mare (which we had at that time), and stood cracking my whip at the door. Your mother seemed as if she would never come. I sent up every woman that passed to help her to get ready. I knew she would not like this, and I did it on purpose to tease her. What business had she to keep me waiting there? When at length she did come, I rated her soundly. Your mother bit her lips as she got into the chaise, and she held her handkerchief up to her eyes the whole while we drove through the village, whilst I kept on whipping the old mare, till he kicked fore and aft. But when we got outside the village, your mother began to weep and said, 'For Heaven's sake, husband, how can you act thus, and put yourself and me both to shame before all the folks?'

'These words cut me to the heart: I recollected our first walk to church—my wife was now by my side. I threw the reins on the old mare's neck, and stuck the whip behind me: it was time to put the reins upon myself, and I may say with truth that I have thoroughly repented my hastiness of temper. But you see how one can tell, from such trifles as these, whether the true light still burns in the heart. The few minutes that I had thus twice to wait proved to me hours of trial, and thenceforth I learned to study the temper and enter into the wishes of others. Think of this children, if ever you meet with a similar trial.

'Now comes the afterpiece!' cried the good woman. 'And you have forgotten to say, husband, that from that time I never again made you wait, but was always ready before you. Come, now let us light the candles: we have had enough of the dark hour.'

They did so: bright faces lighted up with good resolutions, gazed joyously one at another.

#### TALKERS.

The Duchess of Gordon said of Burns that he could talk her off her legs. This was a graphic, but rather coarse expression for a lady, but it was scarcely strong enough to describe the fluent tide of the Poet's discourse.—Few of the world's great masters, celebrated for depth or originality of thought, have been great colloquialists; and one of them has said, by way of apology, that reason why men were supplied with two ears and one tongue, was to hear more than they express. This was probably one of Mr. Carlyle's 'great silent men.' Swift says, that volubility in any one is a sign of vacancy of mind, as people always came out of the church faster when it is nearly empty. Lamartine says, too, that almost all men who have performed great things, are sparing of words.—Their communion is with themselves, rather than with the world—they feed upon their own thoughts, the development of which constitutes the great character.

#### POPPING THE QUESTION.

A writer who takes the sobriquet of 'Jenny Short,' thus gives his experience on this subject. He had undoubtedly, seen the elephant!—

'It will pop itself. It's nonsense thus lending young folks a helping hand—take my word for it, all they wish is to be left alone.—If lovers have't no tongues, hav'nt they eyes? and where is the simpleton that can't tell whether a girl loves him. Without a word on her part? No one adores modesty more than I do—but the most delicate angel of them all won't disguise her little heart when you are alone with her. A blush, a sigh, a studied avoidance of you in company, and a low, thrilling, trembling of the voice at times, when no one else is by, tell more than the smiles of a thousand coquettes. Ah! you needn't, Amy, shake your head—you'll no doubt be soon enough—but, if you fall in love, as you will, my word on it—the very echo of one footstep will make your heart flutter like a frightened bird.'

#### A SERMON FOR YOUNG LADIES.

Dow, Jr. in one of his late sermons, gives the following advice to young Ladies.—

'My young Maidens—I know you all want to get married as soon as you enter your teens; but it is better to remain single and live upon the cold soup of solitude than to marry misery and wed woe. I have but a poverty-stricken opinion of the majority of my sex. They are corrupted by the miscalled refinement of the age, so inflated with pride, so fooled by fashion, whiskers and monstaches, while their morals are in the most wretched state for want of weeding, and so overgrown with hair, vanity and laziness, that scarcely one in twenty is worth being intrusted with a wife.

#### LIQUID LEATHER.

A Dr. Berland, of Laria, in Germany, is said to have discovered a method of making leather out of certain refuse and waste animal