

From the London Workingman's Friend.

BENEFICIAL EFFECTS OF THE ATMOSPHERE.

Its influence is essential to the germination and growth of plants, to the preservation of water in a state of fluidity, to the existence of fire and flame, to the respiration of all kinds of animals, to the process of evaporation and the production of rain and dew; to support the clouds, and to give buoyancy to the feathered tribes. It is the region of the winds—the vehicle of smells—the medium of sounds—and the source of all the pleasures we derive from the harmonies of music; it is the cause of that universal light and splendour which are diffused around us, and of the advantages we derive from the morning and evening twilight; and all these advantages are more fully secured by the transparency of its particles and by its being rendered incapable of being coagulated into a solid body.—What, then would be the consequences were the earth to be divested of its atmosphere?—Were the hand of Omnipotence to detach this body of air from our globe, and could we suppose living beings at the same time to exist, the landscape of the earth would be disrobed of all its vegetable beauties, and not a plant or flower would be seen over the whole face of nature; the springs and rivers would cease to flow, even the waters of the mighty deep would be dried up and its lowest caverns exposed to view, like frightful and hideous deserts. No fire nor heat would cheer the abode of man, either by day or by night, no rain nor dews would refresh the fields, no gentle zephyrs would blow, nor aromatic perfumes be wafted from blooming flowers. The birds would no longer wing their flight on high, nor would their warblings be heard among the groves. No sound whatever would be heard throughout the whole expanse of Nature. Universal silence would reign undisturbed over the world, and the delights of music be for ever unknown. The morning would be no longer ushered in by the dawn, nor the day protracted by the evening twilight. All would be gloom and obscurity by day, except in that quarter of the heavens where the sun appeared, and no artificial light nor flame could be procured to cheer the darkness of the night. The whole surface of the globe would present one wide prospect of barrenness and desolation without a single object of beauty to relieve the horrors of the scene; and this earth, which now presents to the beholder so many objects of sublimity and loveliness, would appear as if it had sunk into the primitive chaos whence it arose.

But as we are certain that, according to the present economy of the animal system, no living creature could exist in such a state of things, it would be an inevitable consequence of the annihilation of the atmosphere, that all the myriads of living beings which now people the waters and the earth, would sink into irremediable destruction, and the great globe we inhabit be transformed into one immense sepulchre, without enjoyment, motion, or life.

From the same.

A HINT TO THE SULLEN.

An individual, not abundantly gifted with that amenity which is as necessary for self-comfort as it is pleasing to others in the perpetual intercourse of social life, fancied that he had justifiable cause for long continued unbroken taciturnity. His wife, after sitting for some time in the same room with him, in annoying and gloomy silence, suddenly started up, and, taking a lighted candle, commenced a busy and anxious search after some missing object of deep and overpowering interest—looked over the mantle piece and removed all its ornaments, opened every drawer and closet in the room, searched under all the chairs, lifted up the rug turned up the edge of the carpet, raked in the ashes, ransacked the tackle, rummaged the cellaret, and repeatedly scrutinised the same places over and over again. Her husband watched her for some time in silence; at length, however, fidgeted beyond endurance, his nerves wound up to such a pitch of curiosity as to be on the point of cracking, his impatience absolutely boiled over;—and at last, after many severe struggles to maintain his dignified taciturnity, unable to hold out any longer, in the very spasm of bursting, he relieved himself by giving vent to the exclamation—“My dear, what are you searching after?—what have you lost?” “Oh!” replied his wife, “I was seeking for your tongue, my dear, which has been missing this fortnight; and if you had not found it for me now, I should have supposed it to be irretrievably mislaid.” Her husband heartily applauded her device, and never again obliged her to have recourse to this ingenious remedy.

From Sharp's Essays.

A WORD TO THE OVER SENSITIVE

A. strikes me with a sword and inflicts a wound. Suppose, instead of binding up the wound, I am showing it to every body: and after it has been bound up, I am taking off the bandage continually, and examining the depth of the wound, and making it fester till my limb becomes greatly inflamed, and my general system is greatly affected—is there a person who would not call me a fool? Now such a fool is he who, by dwelling upon little injuries and insults, or provocations, causes them to agitate and inflame the mind. How much better were it to put a bandage over the wound, and never look at it again.

From the London People's Magazine.

BE PREPARED TO MEET AFFLICTION.

Be prepared to meet affliction,
Come the trial when it may;
That thy soul may not be shipwreck'd
In misfortune's stormy day:
Though thy life as yet hath glided
Smoothly as a valley stream—
Undisturb'd by rock or eddy,
Glancing in the summer's beam:
Rocks and rapids in their journey
Oft await the calmest tide,
And life's current still in danger,
Offers small excuse for pride.

As the calm before the tempest,
As the breathless autumn hours
Linger long, as if in pity,
For the season's latest flowers—
So if long thine ears have echoed
But with pleasure's stilly hum,
Think! that stillness may be pregnant
With dark wintry times to come.
Then embrace each peaceful moment,
Sink thy life's sheet-anchor fast,
In the only rock whose bosom
Can withstand the fiercest blast.

Lay thine offerings on heaven's altar,
While the goodly days remain,
Lest, when bitter ones come o'er thee,
Thou may'st ask his aid in vain;
And be not in self enshrouded,
Send thy sympathies abroad;
Mingle with thy suffering fellows,
Thou may'st lighter make their load:
Then will grief appear less grievous
When it lies at thine own door,
And some grateful hand may help thee,
Ev'n as thou hadst done before.

Bind thy thoughts to earth's enjoyments
With a slightly-welded chain—
Lest, when fate the fond link severs,
It may break the heart in twain.
Trust not to the doubtful future
Say not that in after years
Thou wilt list Religion's preaching—
“Youth is not a time for tears.”
Shun such thoughts, they oft deceive us:
Youth and health are fickle things;
Not the breeze that breathes of summer
Weareth lighter, fleetier wings.

Be prepared to meet affliction,
It will rob it of its pain:
And thou'lt say, when skies grow brighter,
Thou hast not been tried in vain.
Bend thy head in meek submission
To thy lot, where'er 'tis cast;
Trust in Heaven, and he will guide thee,
Through life's darkest scenes at last.

Communications.

[For the Gleaner.]

AN INCIDENT IN NEW BRUNSWICK.

The following incident, though devoid of the thrilling and startling conceptions of the novelist, who can clothe his hero in any of the thousand and one garbs that are woven in the loom of imagination, will nevertheless present a forcible moral to every reflecting mind, and furnish another proof, that even in New Brunswick “Truth is stranger than fiction.”

One beautiful evening in the month of August, 184—, I stopped at the pretty little village of C—, situate at the head of one of our most noble rivers. A party were fitting out for a fishing excursion, and possessing a little of the spirit of old Izaak Walton, I readily became one of the number. Having left home for the purpose of spending a few days as pleasantly as possible, I was glad of the opportunity thus afforded to visit the tributaries of the main river—to ramble among the wild scenery for which the place is proverbial—and there, amidst the roaring waters, and waving forests, to hold converse with nature, and see her stores unrolled.”

During the evening a gentleman arrived from Boston, who was travelling through the Province on a pleasure-tour. Learning that we were preparing for a fishing excursion, he soon added himself to our party, and entered into the arrangement of our apparatus, &c., with a great deal of interest. The next morning we started on our expedition, certainly not so hazardous as the Arctic, having merely to seat ourselves comfortably in the canoes, whilst four of the most expert hands in the village poled us through rapids and around rocks with astonishing dexterity. Some two miles from the settlement, I noticed a blue smoke curling up through the trees, and enquired of one of the men if it were the locality of an Indian encampment.

“No,” replied my loquacious informant; “that is where old E— lives, the solitary of the wood, as he is generally called; one of the strangest creatures I ever saw. He came from the States, I believe, a long time ago, and for the last thirty years has worked in this part of the Province. Some secret grief has been preying upon him ever since I knew him, and he is now almost worn to a skeleton. About four years since he built that sort of thing he now stays in, and being past labor, lives upon the liberality of the village.”

I began to feel a growing interest in the old man, as I listened to this brief synopsis of his history, and was glad when our new friend proposed paying him a visit. “I must call to see my countryman,” said he, jocularly; “he will certainly want to hear something of Yankeeedom, after so long an absence.”

The strange tenement that contained this

stranger tenant, was built in defiance of all the orders of architecture; a kind of nondescript fabric, uniting the properties of a bad camp, and a worse hovel. In one corner lay the proprietor, wrapped in his scantily furnished bed. On hearing us enter, he slowly and cautiously crawled into view, approaching more like some creation of the fancy, than anything resembling intellectual man. Lying for a short time on the round poles that formed the floor, he carefully placed one foot and then the other, and then by a slow process elongated his body to its proper stature. Whilst standing erect before us, he furnished a suitable subject for the painter's pencil. Attenuated to almost the last degree of emaciation—thrown upon the measured bounty of a promiscuous charity—his sunken eye and fearfully contracted features, spoke to us in the language of terrible significance.

“A noble wreck in ruinous perfection.”

This is certainly, thought I, the ‘Spectre of the Forest,’ to a demonstration, and for the moment could scarcely divest my mind of the startling idea. Self-secluded from the world, and all its thrilling sensibilities—entombed amidst the silence of the forest, he certainly furnished an argument for the idea, that if a tangible being, he was some supernumerary atom, unnecessary for the social organisation of our world; a mere blank in creation, the mysterious centre of his own existence.

Our American friend stepped towards him, and taking him by the hand, kindly said, ‘how do you do?’

The old man fixed his gaze on the questioner, and in a quivering voice, said, ‘Who are you?’

‘Just from the City of Notions,’ was the reply, ‘and learning you were a Yankee, have called to see you.’

The eye of this strange being glowed with an unearthly light, his wan and pallid cheek flushed with the excitement of youth, his whole manner became changed, an expression of the most heartfelt agony passed over his features, and scanning the countenance of the other with the most rigid scrutiny, exclaimed, ‘tis he! ‘tis he!’ and fell to the floor. It was some time before he sufficiently revived to converse; and concluding it was some aberration of mind which gave rise to the exclamation, we got up to go away.

‘Stay!’ said he, in an imploring voice; ‘the lineaments of that countenance have brought back with avalanche power the recollections of half a century. I feel impelled to tell the secret so long locked in the repository of my own breast—a secret that has made me a riddle to the world—a secret that has fed on my very soul, and dried up the springs of a miserable existence.’

We listened with astonishment, whilst the old man narrated the following story, in language that bore the impress of a liberal education:—

‘Some forty years ago (being then twenty five years of age), I, at the earnest solicitation of my father, commenced the study of the law in the town of L—, State of Massachusetts. Young, aspiring, and ambitious, I entered upon my new duties with hopes as buoyant as the thistle's down, marking out for myself, in prospective, a bright career of honorable independence. Among the many acquaintances of my boyish days, there was one who in the proper sense of the word was my friend. Attached to each other by a Damon and Pythias tie, we realised in our every day existence the beautiful sentiment of the Poet,

‘Friendship, mysterious cement of the soul,
Sweetener of life, and solder of society,
I owe thee much’—

To him I could entrust every secret of my heart, and on his advice depend in every emergency. About my own age, and also studying for one of the learned professions, our wants and wishes were concentrated in one channel, and smoothly did the stream of our existence flow along its surface, unbroken by the rocks of dissipation, or the whirlpools of juvenile folly.

Thus passed away the morning of my existence, with all the calmness of an infant's dream. But, alas! that calmness was only the fearful precursor to the unmix'd misery of my cup of sorrow. In the West end of the town (the locality is written upon the page of memory with the brightness of a sunbeam), there lived a merchant, rich, it is true, in this world's goods, but richer still in the possession of a lovely and only daughter, one of the best and most beautiful of earth's creations. Never in my wildest dreams did I think to find so much perfection in human costume. Pure and unsullied as the dew-drop that trembles from the petals of the rose, a manner mild and gentle as the evening's zephyr, her dark blue eye eloquently fitted to

‘Speak the answering look of love in woman's eye.’

Is it to be wondered that it upset all my philosophy, and that I loved with all the ardor and devotion of a first passion? I need not add that my evenings were spent in her society where all my hopes centered, but I did not dare to make a declaration of my feelings, my dependent position forbidding the indulgence of such a thought for a moment. In this unenviable state of mind, I unbosomed my sorrow to my friend, who sincerely sympathised with me, and seriously urged me to follow his advice. Suffice it to say I did so, and the next evening was the accepted lover of Emma Arlington. Months passed away, and found me the happiest of the happy; but alas! the turning point in my career was near at hand. I became one of a club of young men that was formed for professedly benevolent purposes, and in their society took the initial step on the road to ruin. The friendly glass in-

creased to the midnight revel—the hour of social intercourse rapidly grew to the lengthened night of debauch, and I soon found myself beyond the bounds of self-control, and, must I tell it, of self-respect.

‘At this point of my career, my father sent me to Boston on business, which required a stay of some weeks. On my return, I immediately called at Mr Arlington's, but judge of my feelings when the servant told me that ‘Miss A. was too busily employed to see me.’ I sought my lodgings with an aching heart, self-condemned, but at the same time endeavoring to hide from myself the cause of the cold repulse. In the evening a letter was handed to me, which confirmed my fears.’

Here the old man drew an old pocket book from under his pillow, and handed me the following letter. ‘Read it, read it,’ he exclaimed. ‘I have not unfolded it for the last ten years.’ The principal part was altogether illegible, and with some difficulty I deciphered the following:

‘My affection for you would not allow me to credit the strange reports concerning your conduct. I know that envy is ever ready to blacken the character of the best, but when our mutual friend voluntarily called upon me, and told me all, could I doubt any longer? You have my pity and my forgiveness. Delicacy forbids me to add more. E. A.’

‘Every sentence sounded in my ear the knell of departed happiness; and though conscious of my fallen condition, my spirit rose against the man who ‘voluntarily called’ to condemn me. ‘Mutual friend!’ Of course I could only think of Atherton, who was in my every secret, and although up to that moment I could almost have died for him, now I felt the current of revenge rising rapidly in my very soul. Suspicion hatched her brood of calow surmises—the fiend whispered in my ear that he was the cause of my downfall, and, goaded by the reflections of a tortured spirit, I resolved to meet him in deadly recontre. Rushing from my room, I hastened to his lodgings, where I found him poring over his books, quietly seated at his desk. He arose to meet me with his accustomed frankness, when, in the most outrageous manner, I poured upon him a torrent of the vilest invective, backed with every accusation a heated accusation could devise. He stood chained to the floor with astonishment, and when my malevolence had exhausted its redundant venom, calmly enquired what he had done? ‘Done!’ I exclaimed, throwing down the letter, ‘miscreant, traitor to the natural promptings of the lowest form of friendship, meet me to-morrow evening on Freeman's green,’ and snatching the letter from his hand, I left the room. Slowly passed the night that ushered in the morning of that fatal day. A friend called upon Atherton, and arranged the hour, without a word of explanation, and doggedly did I await the portentous moment. The evening came, and calm, and soft, and sunlit was the hour. The queen of the spring had left her robe on every tree, and her breath on every gale. The birds sang sweetly as I passed their haunts of melody. Thousands of bright-winged insects were playing in the departing sunbeam; herds of cattle were quietly grazing on the verdant slopes of the placid river; all around me was calm, holy and serene; within me was a war of passions, which death alone could still. Atherton was on the ground before me. Would that I could blot from my recollection the expression of his calm but sorrowful countenance. Pale, but firm in his manner, he fixed upon me his speaking eye, which might have told me he was the victim of my phrenzied passion. Enough that we met; the fatal signal was given, I fired, and Atherton, discharging his pistol in the air, staggered and fell to the ground. Scarcely had the report died away, when a man breathlessly rushed up to me, whom I recognized as the servant of Mr Arlington. Handing me a letter which I know from the superscription to be from Emma, I tore it open. Good heavens! the bitter recollection is too much for me! Our quarrel had been made known to her, with its cause and consequent meeting, but alas! too late to prevent the fatal consequences. The letter exculpated Atherton from my unfounded suspicions—He has always spoken of you in language which nothing but the purest friendship could dictate, and endeavored to palliate your conduct when he could not deny it. He was not the friend to whom I referred. Oh, then, for the love you bear each other—I could read no more, a dimness came over my sight, an indescribable feeling of poignant sorrow wrapped around my very soul; the agony of those moments can I ever forget? Involuntarily I walked towards my fallen friend, who was then placed in a recumbent position. He reached his hand towards me; the act unmanned me; I turned and fled from the field with feelings akin to a demon. I ran until the terrible excitement could no longer spur me onward, and reaching the trunk of a large tree, fell prostrate beside it. ‘Night, sable power, from her ebon throne, in rayless majesty had stretched her leaden sceptre o'er a silent world; not a solitary star was visible in the far-off sky. A pitchy darkness pervaded the face of nature, which presented an aspect in fearful keeping with my own dark and gloomy spirit. Self-destruction hissed in my ear as the only alternative, to free myself from the torturing goadings of a returning conscience, and I began to think of the readiest manner to snap the thread that bound me to existence. But it was destined otherwise. I concluded to leave for ever the place where my all was wrecked, and wander I cared not whither. For forty years I have lived in this Province, under an assumed name. To every person I have been a mystery, in fact a mystery to myself. The blood of my friend has