

A chilling flood on Summer's drooping flowers;  
Unwelcome vapors quench autumnal beams,  
Un genial blast attending curl the streams:  
The peasants urge their harvests, ply the fork  
With double toil, and shiver at their work:  
Thus, with a vigor for his good designed,  
She rears her favorite man of all mankind.

Though this is poetry, yet poetry utters a great many truths; and it is a very curious and suggestive fact that English climate and character so entirely coincide. John Bull is a blustering fellow, just like his winds, and, if his climate is fickle and sudden in its changes, so is he moody and his tempers uncertain. Are his winters frosty, and his summers genial? So are his likes and his dislikes, his loves and his hates: he has much winter and not a little sunshine mingled in his character.

Now, if we turn to France, we shall find a people of very different character, and an equally diverse climate. The atmosphere is soft and transparent, and the temperature uniform and genial. Every breeze is freighted with the odor of flowers, and every grove is vocal with the song of birds. Now, though we would not ascribe everything to climate, yet how strikingly do French manners coincide with the aspects of nature around him!

The Frenchman, easy, *debonair*, and brisk,  
Give him his lass, his fiddle, and his frisk,  
Is always happy, reign whoever may,  
And laughs the sense of misery away.

In Italy, the same correspondences exist between the face of the country and the character of the people; for, though it be true that idleness and sensuality have debased the Italian character, and brought down its high aspirations, yet such is the magic of their sunny climate, that, despite the most adverse moral influences, it still chameleon-like, reflects the hues of the scenes amid which it is nursed.

We shall find a further confirmation of our idea by a reference to barbarous nations. The life of the poor Esquimaux is peculiarly dreary, rendered so as much by their modes of life as by their climate. Captain Perry says they are dull and gloomy, living together like swine, in snow houses and dark caves, and that they are scarcely ever seen to laugh or heard to joke. All the circumstances of their lives conduce to these results. A poet has embodied these ideas in the following beautiful lines:

Half enlivened by the distant sun,  
That rears and ripens man, as well as plants,  
Here, human nature wears its rudest form.  
Deep from the piercing season sunk in caves,  
Here, by dull fires, and with unjoyous cheer,  
They waste the tedious gloom. Immersed in furs,  
Doze the gross race. Nor sprightly jest nor song,  
Nor tenderness they know; nor aught of life  
Beyond the kindred bears that stalk without.

It may be said that the vices of these people have blunted their sensibilities, and rendered them brutal and dull. If we but turn our eyes to the islands of the Southern Pacific, we shall see a people more degraded, equally destitute of education, and, so far as we know, equally low in natural endowments. But do we find the same dullness, grossness, stupidity, and gloominess that characterize the Esquimaux? Here, the sun shines in all his glory, gilding the mountains and trees and waters with his radiance, and making the earth beautiful to look upon; here flowers bloom, birds sing, and warm and soft breezes blow. Can man be gloomy here? Can he resist the spirit of gladness that breathes around? These islands are expert and elegant dancers. Unlike their northern brethren they rejoice in a rude music, and take pleasure in social assemblages and personal display. Dancing is generally regarded as an indication of hilarity, and of some degree of exhilaration of animal spirits, though, in promiscuous assemblies, certainly attended with a deterioration of manners; yet, so far as it is the expression of gaiety in these islands it shows a correspondence between their climate and character. No such amusement obtains a footing in rude climates and on inhospitable shores.

These observations might be extended to all the countries of the earth. Wherever extremes in climate and striking characteristics of natural scenery obtain, we are certain to find corresponding developments of character in the people. Certainly the instances are not all equally striking or manifest, yet are we never without some signal proof of the facts in question. As before observed, we do not refer all the peculiarities of character that distinguish one nation from another to the influences of external nature; on the contrary, we believe that Nature lays the foundation of many of them, and some may be traced to the influences of other nations, to traditional and religious observances, and other causes.

If our facts and observations have established the proposition that the aspect of external nature exerts a very important influence in moulding the character of man, we think the fact itself cannot be devoid of interest as a matter of curious information, or barren of instruction in matters of higher moment. If it is the law of man's nature that he becomes assimilated to the things around him, it becomes important to him to bestow some attention upon the architecture of his dwellings and places of constant resort, and upon the aspect of their position and adornments. We know that this law of our nature has been taken advantage of in bygone ages to nurse the worst superstitions, and even now resort is had to the same measures for impressions to bolster up decaying systems of error.

The law of assimilation is peculiarly active in associations between moral and intelligent

beings. We are told in the Scriptures, that 'we all with open face beholding, as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' What a glorious assimilation is this! With what gratitude should we reflect on the fact that God has given us natures susceptible of such glorious transformations, and capable of such high attainments in the scale of being!

Scripture exhortations to cheerfulness have a reference to the same law. 'A sad countenance' seems to be the peculiar characteristic of the hypocrite, and is always a premonition of moral blight.

#### From the London Working Man's Friend THE COUNTRYMAN'S REPLY TO THE EXECUTIVE OF THE MILITIA BILL.

So, ye want to catch me, do ye?  
Nae! I dont much think ye wool,  
Though your scarlet coat and feathers  
Look so bright and butiful;  
Though ye tell sich famous stories  
Of the fortunes to be won.  
Fightin' in the distant Ingies,  
Underneath the burnin' sun.

'Spouse I am a tight young feller,  
Sound o' limb and all that 'ere,  
I can't see that that's a reason  
Why the scarlet I should wear;  
Fustian coat and corded trousers  
Seem to suit me quite as well;  
'Think I dont look badly in 'em,  
Ax my Meary, she can tell!

Sartinly I'd rather keep 'em—  
These same limbs you talk about,  
Cover'd up in cord and fustian,  
Than I'd try to do without:  
There's Bill Muggins left our village  
Jest as sound a man as I;  
Now he goes about on crutches,  
With a single arm and eye.

To be sure he's got a medal,  
And some twenty pounds a year;  
For his health, and strength, and sarvice,  
Goverment can't call that dear;  
Not to reckon one leg shatter'd,  
Two ribs broken, one eye lost;  
'Fore I went on such a venture,  
I should stop and count the cost.

'Lots o' glory! lots o' gammon;  
Ax Bill Muggins about that;  
He'll tell ye 'tain't by no means  
Sort o' stuff to make ye fat.  
If it was, the private so'ger  
Gets of it but precious little,  
Why, it's jest like bees a kitchen'  
With the sound of a brass kettle.

'Lots o' gold and quick promotion?  
Phew! jest look at William Green;  
He's been fourteen years a fightin',  
As they call it for the Queen;  
Now he comes home invalided,  
With a sergeant's rank and pay;  
Bot that he is made a captin,  
Or is rich I aint heard say.

'Lots o' fun, and pleasant quarters,  
And a so'gers merry life;  
All the tradesmen's, farmers' daughters  
Wantin' to become my wife?  
Well, I think I'll take the shillin';  
Put the ribbons in my hat!—  
Stop I'm but a country bumpkin.  
Yet not quite so green as that.

'Fun?' a nockin' fellow-creatur'  
Down like nine pins, and that ere;  
Stickin' bag'nets through and through 'em,  
Burnin', slayin', every where,  
'Pleasant quarters?'—werry pleasant!  
Sleepin' on the field o' battle,  
Or in hospital or barracks,  
Cramm'd together jest like cattle.

Strut away, then, master sergeant;  
Tell your lies as on ye go;  
Make your drummers rattle louder,  
And your fifters harder blow.  
I shant be a 'son o' glory',  
But an honest working man,  
With the strength that God has giv me  
Doin' all the good I can.

#### From Godey's Lady's Book TABLE TALK.

Did any of our lady friends take a note of the vast variety of topics that is introduced—and naturally, too—in the course of an evening's talk, when some three or four friends have met? If they have not, it will be a novel amusement, which we recommend them to try. We give a list that really was pencilled from an ordinary evening's chat—six persons being clustered around the pleasantest centric-table we know of in this city: 'Weather—Boston—Spain—French—Dr. Jenkins—John Smith—Modesty—Caps—Gas Light—Weather—Savages—Lawyers—Flowers—Apple Orchards—Albums—Bouquets—Manners of Gentlemen—Caps—Queechy—Railroads—New York—Industry—Caps—Sea-Sickness—Washing—Needle Books—Economy—Mercantile Library—Jane Eyre—The Cat—Major Jones—Cold Weather—Christmas—Snow—Quarreling—Sewing Materials—Peaches and Cream—Elephants—Knitting—Gloves—Jealousy—Craig's Riding School—Polkas—Coal—California Settlers—Twelve Acquaintances discussed—Relations,' etc. etc.

This is about one-third of our list, and the precise order in which the subjects were introduced. And this reminds us to suggest the importance of cultivating conversational ta-

lent, and as much to be improved by cultivation, as a taste for music or drawing, and often gives us great pleasure. A disposition to talk, and a command of language, are the foundation in all cases; but this may degenerate to mere garrulity or gossip, that wearies and disgusts the listener. Our sex are fatally prone to this, and, on the contrary, they have ever been distinguished as brilliant conversationalists.

In cultivating this excellent gift, a refined taste in the choice of both delicate and forcible words and expressions; a well-stored and observing mind; and politeness that can bear defeat in argument, or contradiction in statement, amiably, are all brought to bear. The topic is to be suited to the company, never suffering scandal or egotism to intrude, either in fact or in narrative. Exaggerated forms of expression, or vehement gesture, should be discarded, though animated and varied expression adds much either to the force or grace of what is spoken. And, again, variety of topics should be at command, as well as facts and illustrations, and adroitly brought forward when the interest begins to flag—not pushed into notice, but quietly and naturally introduced. As an entertainer, it seems to be the duty of every lady to study the subject as much as possible, that many a weary hour or dull guest may be saved from lagging by the swift wings of agreeable and sparkling conversation.

They say there is a man in Wall-street, a rich man, moreover, whose business, while in the 'street hours' is counting money, who has such a taste for handling coin, that in riding home in an omnibus, he always takes the seat nearest the driver, so that he may finger the sixpences of the passengers, and pass them up to the driver, through the usual aperture.

'They do say,' also, that having heard the eminent Doctor Durbin preach, on a certain occasion, a most eloquent charity-sermon, he remarked to a friend, in returning from church:

'That sermon was a very sarching one. He proved so strongly the duty of almsgiving, that I have almost a mind to beg myself!'

Not exactly the 'application' perhaps that was intended by the minister!

#### New Works.

#### THE HOMES AND COMFORTS OF OUR FOREFATHERS.

The list may be soon made—for it was scanty enough—of the household furniture of our forefathers in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. That large class called cabinet goods were wholly unknown, and the carpenter supplied the tables—then merely long boards placed on tressels, and the benches and joint-stools. The windows at this period were always made with seats in them, and it is curious to observe how this partiality continued through the era of stone houses, of lath and plaster houses, of the clumsy red-brick houses, even to the days of our grandfathers, who, though well provided with huge settees and mahogany chairs and cross-stitch-worked stools, still considered the window-seat indispensable to the parlour and dining-room. But our earlier forefathers, if unsupplied with mahogany and rose-wood furniture, did not sit on bare benches, nor eat their meals, back-wood fashion, on an upland board. The benches were always covered, mostly coloured, and the table, even in 'upland' villages, displayed its ample folds of snowy napery. Indeed, the indispensability of a tablecloth seems to have been universally recognised among our forefathers. In the curious and suggestive 'Rolls of the King's Court,' we find napery in the possession of quite the interior classes, in the Subsily roll to of the twenty nine of Edward I., for the city of Colchester, we find tablecloths of the tradesmen there valued at from ten to fifteen shillings each of the present money, while in inventories and wills of a later period we meet with household linen, evidently of a superior kind, in great abundance. Now, arguing from analogy, can we believe that our forefathers were so deficient in domestic comfort, or so negligent of personal cleanliness, as some writers seem to imagine, when tablecloths, and even napkins were in ordinary use?—Thus, too, however rude might be the general style of furniture, the bed was as comfortable, and as well supplied with appendages—counterpanes and linen sheets being found, ever among the poorest householders, as the modern Arabian or four-posts. Few notions have been more ridiculous than the common one, that a feather bed was a luxury almost unknown to our forefathers—a notion which not only the most cursory glance at the homeliest Saxon illumination would disprove, but the mere exercise of common sense. While abundant flocks of wild geese haunted every fen, and scores of tame geese fed on every common—when the goose was the appropriate dish for both Michaelmas and Martinmas days, and the feather of the grey goose winged the shaft of the bowman, is it possible that our forefathers contented themselves with straw beds and a log for their pillow? That feather-beds are not distinctly mentioned in records, we think may be accounted for by their not being purchasable articles. They were doubtless of home manufacture, like the common cloth, both woollen and linen, of this period; and we are greatly inclined to believe that all such articles were exempt from taxation. We have therefore, no notice of them in the rolls,

any more than of the benches and tables, or the cups and trenchers.—*British Quarterly*

#### MEXICAN BOA SNAKES.

I stepped aside for a moment to admire a rich tuft of large purple flowers, my mule having plodded on eight or ten yards ahead, when, as I turned from the flowers towards the path, a sensation as of a flash of lightning struck my sight, and I saw a brilliant and powerful snake winding its coils round the head and body of the poor mule. It was a large and magnificent boa, of a black and yellow colour, and it had entwined the poor beast so firmly in its folds, that ere he had time to utter more than one feeble cry, he was crushed and dead. The perspiration broke out on my forehead as I thought of my own narrow escape; and only remained a moment to view the movements of the monster as he began to uncoil himself, I rushed through the brushwood, and did not consider myself safe until I was entirely free of the forest.—*Mason's Pictures of Mexico.*

#### A SKETCH OF ENGLISH SCENERY

Would you like to know what Old England is like, and in what it most differs from America? Mostly, I think, in the visible memorials of antiquity with which it is overspread; the superior beauty of its verdure, and the more tasteful and happy state and distribution of its woods. Everything around you here is historical, and leads to romantic or interesting recollections. Grey grown church-towers, cathedrals, ruined abbeys, castles of all sizes and descriptions, in all stages of decay, from those that are inhabited to those in whose moats ancient trees are growing, the ivy mantling over their mouldering fragments. Within sight of this house, for instance, there are the remains of the palace of Hunsden, where Queen Elizabeth passed her childhood, and Theobalds, where King James had his hunting-seat, and the 'Rye-house,' where Rumbald's plot was laid, and which is still occupied by a maltster—such is the permanency of habits and professions in this ancient country. Then there are two gigantic oak stumps, with a few fresh branches still, which are said to have been planted by Edward III., and massive stone bridges over lazy waters; and churches that look as old as Christianity; and beautiful groups of branching trees; and a verdure like nothing else in the universe; and all the cottages and lanes fragrant with sweetbrier and violets, and glowing with purple lilacs, and white elders; and antique villages round wide, bright greens, with old trees and ponds, and a massive pair of oaken stocks preserved from the days of Alfred. With you everything is new, and garing, and angular, and withal rather frail, slight, and perishable; nothing soft and mellow and venerable, or that looks as it would ever become so.—*Life of Lord Jeffrey.*

#### ALL PROGRESS COMPARATIVE.

It is now the fashion to place the golden age of England in times when noblemen were destitute of comforts, the wants of which would be intolerable to a modern footman; when farmers and shopkeepers breakfasted on loaves, the sight of which would cause a riot in a modern workhouse; when men died faster in the purest country air than they now die in the most pestifential lanes of our towns, and when men died faster in the lanes of our towns than they now die on the coast of Guinea. We, too, shall, in our turn, be outstripped, and in our turn be envied. It may well be in the 20th century, that the peasant of Dorsetshire may think himself miserably paid with 15s. a week; that the carpenter of Greenwich may receive 10s. a day; that labouring men may be as little used to dine without meat as they are to eat rye bread; that sanitary police and medical discoveries may have added several more years to the average length of human life; that numerous comforts and luxuries which are now unknown or confined to a few may be within the reach of every thrifty and diligent working man. And yet it may then be the mode to assert that the increase of wealth and the progress of science have benefited the few at the expense of the many, and to talk of the reign of Queen Victoria as the time when England was truly merry England, when all classes were bound together by brotherly sympathy, when the rich did not grind the faces of the poor, and the poor did not envy the splendour of the rich.

#### THE FRENCH WOMAN IN THE TIME OF LEWIS XV.

They rose from bed towards evening, put on their hoops: they had sometimes good reason for wearing hoops; they daubed themselves with rouge and patches, in those days there was no space left for a brush; and put on their loose robes with flowing trains.—After having wasted three or four hours in powdering their hair and laughing at their husbands, they went out to listen to some fashionable preacher, or to behold some *a la mode*. On all sides was heard, 'Ah, *zealiter*, que c'est joli!' ('Ah, my lord how charming!') The letter z was used at every chance; in lisping it the mouth made such a pretty smiling pout. Afterwards they would go to some sad tragedy, as *The Execution of Damians*, for instance; and they would exclaim (Madame de Preandau is our witness), while they were quartering the criminal by dragging his limbs apart with horses, 'Ah, les pauvres, *zevoux*, que ze les plains!' ('The poor horses, how I pity them!')—*Men and Women in France, during the last Century.*