

Literature, &c.

OUR WIDE, WIDE WORLD! WHAT IS IT?

Our wide, wide world! 'Tis a mystical thing,
A mystery past our knowing;
With its clouds that gather, their shadows to fling

O'er our pathway here, as they rapidly wing
Their flight to the land where mystery merges
Itself in the ocean of light, whose surges
Will dash o'er our way, and will scatter their spray.

Its foam o'er our spirits throwing.

Our wide, wide world! 'Tis the trumpet that peals

When souls are in battle contending;
When the conquered heart on the stained earth kneels

In prayer to its God, while its life blood seals
Its passports through death to the far-distant regions—

To eternity's rest, undisturbed by the legions
That here upon earth mingle sorrow and mirth,
Evil and good ever blending.

Our wide, wide world! 'Tis a mournful tone

To the spirit whom sorrow rendeth;
When the drooping willow, the cypress moan
Bends over, and speaks, to the soul that's alone,
Of a form that has fled, of a heart forsaken,
Of an eye that will never on earth awaken;
Earth hath no sound of a life beyond—
Of a night that surely endeth.

Our wide, wide world! 'Tis a joy-swelling strain,

That deep in the soul is vibrating;
In sweetness undying, it echoes again,
Wherever a heart can be found that would fain
Mingle with ours in a friendship unbroken,
Speak in those tones that on earth are unspoken.

The language of Heaven, to those only given,
Where Love performs the translating.

Our wide, wide world! It is wide, my friend.

Are they many the things that we cherish?
The mystery, conflict, and sorrow shall end,
When our wide world shall in eternity blend;
But the love that has cheered us, our burdens
lightening,

Our sorrows here sharing, our pathway brightening,

In glory will stand in that far-distant land,
Where its harvest will never perish.

NEW WORKS.

Tales and Sketches of New England Life. By Mrs. Stowe.

POVERTY.

PAUSE with me a while at the door of yonder room, whose small window overlooks a little court below. It is inhabited by a widow and her daughter, dependent entirely on the labors of the needle, and those other slight and precarious resources which are all that remain to woman when left to struggle through the world alone. It contains all their small earthly store, and there is scarce an article of its little stock of furniture that has not been thought of, and toiled for, and its price calculated over and over before everything could be made right for its purchase. Every article is arranged with the utmost neatness and care; nor is the most costly furniture of a fashionable parlour more sedulously guarded from a scratch or a rub than is that brightly varnished bureau, and that neat cherry table and bedstead. The floor, too, boasted once a carpet; but old Time has been busy with it, picking a hole here and making a thin place there; and though the old fellow has been followed up by the most indefatigable zeal in darning, the marks of his mischievous fingers are too plain to be mistaken. It is true a kindly neighbour has given a bit of faded baize, which has been neatly clipped and bound, and spread down over an entirely unmanageable hole in front of the fireplace; and other places have been repaired with pieces of different colors, and yet, after all, it is evident that the poor carpet is not long for this world. But the best face is put upon everything. The little cupboard in the corner, that contains a few china cups and one or two antiquated silver spoons, relics of better days, is arranged with jealous neatness, and the white muslin window-curtains, albeit the muslin be old, has been carefully whitened and starched, and smoothly ironed, and put up with exact provision; and on the bureau, covered by a snowy cloth are arranged a few books, and other memorials of former times, and a faded miniature, which, though it has little about it to interest a stranger, is more valuable to the poor widow than everything besides. Mrs. Ames is seated in her rocking-chair, supported by a pillow, and busy cutting out work, while her daughter, a slender, sickly-looking girl, is sitting by the window, intent on some fine stitching. Mrs. Ames, in former days was the wife of a respectable merchant, and the mother of an affectionate family. But evil fortune had followed her with a steadiness that seemed like the stern decree of some adverse fate rather than the ordinary dealings of a merciful Providence. First came a heavy run of

losses in business; then long and expensive sickness in the family and the death of children. Then there was the selling of the large house and elegant furniture, to retire to a humbler style of living; and finally, the sale of all the property, with the view of quitting the shores of a native land, and commencing life again in a new one. But scarcely had the exile family found themselves in the port of a foreign land, when the father was suddenly smitten down by the hand of death, and his lonely grave made in a land of strangers. The widow, broken-hearted and discouraged, had still a wearisome journey before her ere she could reach any whom she could consider as her friends. With her two daughters, entirely unattended, and with her finances impoverished by detention and sickness, she performed the tedious journey. Arrived at the place of her destination, she found herself not only without immediate resources, but considerably in debt to one who had advanced money for her travelling expenses. With silent endurance she met the necessities of her situation. Her daughters, delicately reared, and hitherto carefully educated, were placed out to service, and Mrs. Ames sought for employment as a nurse. The younger child fell sick, and the hard earnings of the mother were all exhausted in the care of her; and though she recovered in part, she was declared by her physician to be the victim of a disease which would never leave her till it terminated her life. As soon, however, as her daughter was so far restored as not to need her immediate care, Mrs. Ames resumed her laborious employment. Scarcely had she been able, in this way, to discharge the debts for her journey and to furnish the small room we have described, when the hand of disease was laid heavily on herself. Too resolute and persevering to give way to the first attacks of pain and weakness, she still continued her fatiguing employment till her system was entirely prostrated. Thus all possibility of pursuing her business was cut off, and nothing remained but what could be accomplished by her own and her daughter's dexterity at the needle. It is at this time we ask you to look in upon the mother and daughter. Mrs. Ames is sitting up, the first time for a week, and even to-day she is scarcely fit to do so; but she remembers that the month is coming round, and her rent will soon be due; and in her feebleness she will stretch every nerve to meet her engagements with punctilious exactness. Wearied at length with cutting out and measuring, and drawing threads, she leans back in her chair, and her eyes rests on the pale face of her daughter, who has been sitting for two hours intent on her stitching. 'Ellen, my child, your head aches don't work so steadily.'—'Oh, no, it don't ache much,' said she, too conscious of looking very much tired. Poor girl! had she remained in the situation in which she was born, she would have been skipping about and enjoying life as other young girls of fifteen do; but now there is no choice of employments for her—no youthful companions—no visiting—no pleasant walks in the fresh air. Evening and morning, it is all the same; headache or sideache, its all one—She must hold on the same unvarying task—a wearisome thing for a young girl of fifteen. But see! the door opens, and Mrs. Ames's face brightens as her other daughter enters. Mary has become a domestic in a neighbouring family, where her faithfulness and kindness of heart have caused her to be regarded more as a daughter and a sister than as a servant. 'Here mother, is your rent money,' she exclaimed, 'so do put up your work and rest awhile. I can get enough to pay it next time before the month comes round again.' 'Dear child, I do wish you would think to get anything for yourself,' said Mrs. Ames. 'I cannot consent to use up all your earnings, as I have done lately, and all Ellen's too; you must have a new dress this spring, and that bonnet of yours is not decent any longer.'—'Oh, no, mother! I have made over my blue calico, and you would be surprised to see how well it looks; and my best frock, when it's washed and darned, will answer some time longer. And then Mrs. Grant has given me a ribbon, and when my bonnet is whitened and trimmed it will look very well. And so,' she added 'I brought you some wine this afternoon; you know the doctor says you need wine.'—'Dear child, I want to see you take some comfort of your money yourself.'—'Well I do take comfort of it, mother. It is more comfort to be able to help you than to wear all the finest dresses in the world.'

We are now introduced to the abode of WEALTH.

Mrs. Elmore was sitting in her splendidly furnished parlour and around her lay various fancy articles which two young girls were busily unrolling. 'What a lovely pink scarlet!' said one, throwing it over her shoulders, and skipping before a mirror; while the other exclaimed, 'Do look at these pocket-handkerchiefs, mother! what elegant lace!'—'Well, girl,' said Mrs. Elmore, 'these handkerchiefs are a shameful piece of extravagance. I wonder you will insist on having such things.'—'La, mamma, everybody has such now; Laura Seymour has half a dozen that cost more than these and her father is no richer than ours.'—'Well,' said Mrs. Elmore, 'rich or not rich, it seems to make very little odds; we do not seem to have half as much money to spare as we did when we lived in the little house in Spring

street. What with new furnishing the house, and getting everything you boys and girls say you must have, we are poorer, if anything, than we were then.'—'Ma'am, here's Mrs. Ames's girl come with some sewing,' said the servant. 'Show her in,' said Mrs. Elmore. Ellen entered timidly, and handed her bundle of work to Mrs. Elmore, who forthwith proceeded to a minute scrutiny of the articles: for she prided herself on being very particular as to her sewing. But, though the work had been executed by feeble hands and aching eyes, even Mrs. Elmore could detect no fault in it. 'Well, it is very prettily done,' said she. 'What does your mother charge?' Ellen handed a neatly folded bill which she had drawn from her mother. 'I must think your mother's prices are very high,' said Mrs. Elmore, examining her nearly empty purse; 'everything is getting so dear that one hardly knows how to live.' Ellen looked at the fancy articles, and glanced around the room with an air of innocent astonishment. 'Ah said Mrs. Elmore, 'I dare say it seems to you as if persons in our situation had no need of economy; but for my part, I feel the need of it more and more every day.' As she spoke she handed Ellen the three dollars, which, though it was not quarter the price of one of the handkerchiefs, was all that she and her sick mother could claim in the world. 'There,' said she; 'tell your mother I like her work very much, but I do not think I can afford to employ her, if I can find any one to work cheaper.' 'Now, Mrs. Elmore was not a hard-hearted woman, and if Ellen had come as a beggar, to solicit help for her sick mother, Mrs. Elmore would have fitted out a basket of provisions, and sent a bottle of wine, and a bundle of old clothes, and all the et cetera of such occasions; but the sight of a bill always aroused the instinctive sharpness of her business-like education. She never had the dawning of an idea that it was her duty to pay anybody any more than she could possibly help; nay, she had an indistinct notion that it was her duty as an economist to make everybody take as little as possible. When she and her daughters lived in Spring street, to which she had alluded, they used to spend the greater part of their time at home, and the family sewing was commonly done among themselves. But since they had moved into a large house, and set up a carriage, and addressed themselves to be genteel, the girls found that they had altogether too much to do to attend to their own sewing, much less to perform any for their father and brothers. And their mother found her hands abundantly full in overlooking her large house, in taking care of her expensive furniture, and in superintending her increased train of servants. The sewing, therefore, was put out: and Mrs. Elmore felt it a duty to get it done the cheapest way she could. Nevertheless, Mrs. Elmore was too notable a lady, and her sons and daughters were altogether too fastidious as to the make and quality of their clothing, to admit the idea of its being done in any but the most complete and perfect manner. Mrs. Elmore however accused herself of want of charity for the poor; but she had never considered that the best class of the poor are those who never ask charity. She did not consider that, by paying liberally those who were honestly and independently struggling for themselves, she was really doing a greater charity than by giving indiscriminately to a dozen applicants. 'Don't you think, mother, she says we charge too high for this work!' said Ellen, when she returned. 'I am sure she did not know how much work we put into those shirts. She says she cannot give us any more work, she must look out for somebody that will do it cheaper. I do not see how it is that people who live in such houses, and have so many beautiful things, can feel that they cannot afford to pay for what costs us so much.'—'Well, child, they are more apt to feel so than people who live plain.'—'Well, I am sure,' said Ellen, 'we cannot afford to spend so much time as we have over these shirts for less money.'—'Never mind, my dear,' said the mother, soothingly; 'here is a bundle of work that another lady has sent in, and if we get it done, we shall have enough for our rent, and something over to buy bread with.'

Ellen repaired to the lady's residence, and brought back the material for making six fine shirts. These were finished on Saturday evening and taken home.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

'Why didn't you make these shirts as I told you?' said she sharply. 'We did,' said Ellen mildly; 'mother measured by the pattern every part, and cut them herself.' 'Your mother must be a fool, then, to make such a piece of work. I wish you would just take them back and alter them over,' and the lady proceeded with the directions, of which neither Ellen nor her mother till then had any intimation. Unused to such language, the frightened Ellen took up her work and slowly walked homeward. 'O, dear, how my head does ache!' thought she to herself; 'and poor mother! she said this morning she was afraid another of her sick turns was coming on, and we have all this work to pull out and do over. See here, mother,' said she, with a disconsolate air, as she entered the room; 'Mrs. Rudd says, take out all the bosoms, and rip off all the collars, and fix them quite another way. She says they are not, like the pattern she sent; but she must have forgot

ten, for here it is. Look, mother; it is exactly as we made them.'—'Well, my child, carry back the pattern; and show her that it is so.'—'Indeed, mother, she spoke so cross to me, and looked at me so, that I do not feel as if I could go back.'—'I will go for you, then,' said the kind Maria Stevens, who had been sitting with Mrs. Ames while Ellen was out. 'I will take the pattern and shirts, and tell her the exact truth. I am not afraid of her. Maria Stevens was a tailoress, who rented a room on the same floor with Mrs. Ames, a cheerful, resolute, go-forward little body, and was ready to give a helping hand to a neighbour in trouble. So she took the pattern and shirts, and set out on her mission. But poor Mrs. Ames, though she professed to take a right view of the matter, and was very earnest in showing Ellen, why she ought not to distress herself about it, still felt a shivering sense of the hardness and unkindness of the world coming over her. The bitter tears would spring to her eyes, in spite of every effort to suppress them, as she sat mournfully gazing on the little faded miniature before mentioned. 'When he was alive, I never knew what poverty or trouble was,' was the thought that passed through her mind. And how many a poor forlorn one has thought the same. Poor Mrs. Ames was confined to her bed for most of that week. The doctor gave absolute directions that she should do nothing, and keep entirely quiet—a direction very sensible indeed in the chamber of ease and competence, but hard to be observed in poverty and want. What pains the kind and dutiful Ellen took to make her mother feel easy! How often she replied to her anxious questions, 'that she was quite well,' or 'that her head did not ache much!' and by various other evasive expedients the child tried to persuade herself that she was speaking the truth. And during the time her mother slept, in the day or evening, she accomplished one or two pieces of plain work, with the price of which she expected to surprise her mother. It was towards evening when Ellen took her finished work to the elegant dwelling of Mrs. Page. 'I shall get a dollar for this,' said she; 'enough to pay for mother's wine and medicine.'—'This work is done very neatly said Mrs. Page, 'and here is some more I should like to have finished in the same way.' Ellen looked wistfully, hoping Mrs. Page was going to pay her for the last work. But Mrs. Page was only reaching a drawer for a pattern which she put into Ellen's hands, and after explaining how she wanted her work done, dismissed her without saying a word, without the expected dollar. Poor Ellen tried two or three times, as she was going out, to turn round and ask for it; but before she could decide what to say, she found herself in the street. Mrs. Page was an amiable, kind-hearted woman, but one who was so use to large sums of money that she did not realize how great an affair a single dollar might seem to other persons. For this reason, when Ellen had worked incessantly at the new work put into her hands, that she might get the money for altogether, she again disappointed her in the payment. 'I'll send the money round to-morrow,' said she, when Ellen at last found courage to ask for it. But to-morrow came and Ellen was forgotten; and it was not until one or two applications more that the small sum was paid. But these sketches are already long enough, and let us hasten to close them. Mrs. Ames found liberal friends, who could appreciate and honour her integrity of principle and loveliness of character, and by their assistance she was raised to see more prosperous days; and she and the delicate Ellen, and warm-hearted Mary, were enabled to have a home and fireside of their own, and to enjoy something like the return of their former prosperity. We have given these sketches, drawn from real life, because we think there is in general too little consideration on the part of those who give employment to those in situations like the widow here described. The giving of employment is a very important branch of charity, inasmuch as it assists that class of the poor who are the most deserving. It should be looked on in this light, and the arrangements of a family should be so made that a suitable compensation can be given, and prompt and cheerful payment be made, without the dread of transgressing the rules of economy. It is better to teach our daughter to do without expensive ornaments or fashionable elegancies; better even to deny ourselves the pleasure of large donations or direct subscriptions to public charities rather than to curtail the small stipend of her whose 'candle goeth not out by night' and who labours with her needle for her self and the helpless dear ones dependent on her exertions.

LUXURY.—If we decipher the inscriptions on the tombstones of great nations, we find that the disease which brought them to the grave was luxury. Disobeying that law of the moral universe which requires riches to be diffused and imported—not absorbed—they swept together the wealth of the world and heaped it up at home, till from excess, it stagnated, and bred a fatal corruption. Hardy and vigorous in youth, their energy brought prosperity; prosperity brought luxury, and luxury ruin. These stages appear to succeed each other in the progress of nations as regularly as summer succeeds to spring and autumn to summer. Men will not be taught in this matter by the experience of their predecessors; neither will nations.