

fail in making that dear girl as happy as she should be.

'What should we care for any one, Jenny, when we have each other. And really I don't see what more a woman's heart could wish than such a shower of beautiful things. I was only dear, and it's very kind in our friends.'

Just then at the very latest possible hour, the messenger so watched for was heard ascending the steps.

'I sha'n't turn my head this time' said the bride, despondingly. 'I knew it's too late for Cousin James now.'

Very likely it was, for he was a middle-aged gentleman of very regular habits, who had dispatched his office-boy with the parcel and now delivered early in the evening. Why they had just arrived was best known to the messenger himself, who did not wait for explanations.

It seemed as if that string would never come untied. Harold took pity on the impatient, fluttering little fingers; and cut it with his knife finally. One, two, three wrappers!

'And it's so heavy. What can it be?' said the bride, eagerly.

Then a strong pasteboard packing-box edged with blue. Harold began to comprehend the mystery; but nothing was further from the young girl's excited imagination than the plain, substantially bound 'Oxford Family Bible,' which presented itself when the cover was raised.

Tears of disappointment and mortification sprang to her eyes as she looked up to Harold.

He was sorry for her, though, to him, it seemed a very wise and proper gift from the judicious guardian, who had always had her best welfare at heart. He wondered that no one not even his own good mother, in all the circle of relatives, had made the same choice.

'Read the note Jenny,' he said soothingly, as he would have done to a grieved disappointed child, putting it into her hand.

She gave it back to him open; but she could not make it out through her tears. They were alone now; so he drew her head down on his shoulder, and read in his grave, and manly voice—

'I send you an unusual gift, dear child, for you have always been as dear to me as my own soul has been; yet I can think of no other so suitable, coming from me, at this time. A family Bible is not what it used to be in my young days; not held in such loving reverence, or consulted with the faith and trust of the old time. Still, knowing Harold as I do, and how readily you are won to the right way when it is set before you, I hope that in your household it will never be neglected and unused, as is in so many homes.

'I do not approve of bridal presents in the light they have come to be considered. They are too often only vehicles of ostentatious display, oftentimes ill-afforded, and given grudgingly in secret; and the truest friends are wounded by seeing their modest offerings, placed in glittering contrast with what cost far less thought and care, overlooked and slighted by the recipient for some useless bauble. Envy and heart-burning; every kind of ill-feeling seems, to me, to grow out of this much-abused custom. I had made up my mind to discontinue it in future, before I knew that I was soon to be called on to give you away. Harold could not ask anything more precious at my hands; and tell him, from me, that if at any time my council, credit, or more tangible proof of the entire confidence I have in him will be of any service, he must not hesitate to call on me as if I was his own father.'

The reader's eyes grew misty now, while a smile of sudden satisfaction and pleasure flushed his bride's upraised face. It was so kindly said, that, in spite of her expectations, she could not be vexed at her guardian; and her disappointment began to lose its keenest edge.

'For yourself, my dear child, accept all I can offer of heartfelt good wishes and earnest prayers for your future happiness. I doubt not other friends have lavished more costly gifts.—None have thought of you as I have this day in selecting mine, save, indeed, your mother and your future husband.

'God's blessing be on you both.'

'What more could we ask, darling?' said Harold, kissing her forehead softly; and at that moment, free from all external worldly influences, she was ready to answer, 'Nothing.'

THE SEA SWALLOW.

As we were passing the Carniata Islands off the western coast of Borneo, we were visited by the term of sea swallows, which I had seen in my former passage up the China Sea, not many hundred miles from the same spot, as this species has a certain range among the Islands that stretch the sea between Borneo and Sumatra.—The bill and feet are deep black; the throat and upper parts of a snow white. All the upper parts are of a brownish black, which reflects a peculiar redness when the sun shines directly upon them. The feathers upon the head, nap, and back, are edged with white; hence the smaller the feathers on any part, the greater is the quantity of white. There is also a white line over the eyes. The purity of the white is admirable, which appears the more striking because it is contrasted with the black. The tail

is forked and lone, as are also the wings. But, notwithstanding the advantage of flight, this bird is soon tired, owing to the incessant motion of the wings. When tired; it cannot rest upon the wave, as the petrels; and other birds do; but is obliged to seek for some object whereon to alight. When it comes on board ship it is generally very fatigued, and glad to repose under any circumstances. Hence they are thought to be very foolish birds, and have obtained the whimsical name of boobies in allusion to their want of head pieces. The one I am describing had a black and lively eye; and rested with great composure in the cabin while I took a sketch of it; but as the wings were dropped or raised to support the different muscles, the outline and attitude were so often changed that it turned out to be a very stiff and unfaithful likeness.—Long's voyage of the Himalch.

TRUE GROUND OF CHRISTIAN COMFORT.

I have for thirty-five years been in search of Christian comfort, but have never found it, but in one frame of mind—self-renunciation: i. e. when the mind is brought to discard all idea of ability or merit of its own, and relies wholly for its justification, sanctification and redemption on the merits of Christ. Its faith; its repentance, its prayers, its performances of every description, must find their acceptance always through the righteousness of Christ. The purest thoughts, the most devout exercises, must be washed in the blood of Christ, or they never find their way to God, and this must be constantly believed, or there will be no genuine peace. All that peace which is derived from thinking of our own works or frames, is false or transitory. It is false, because it is built on self-righteousness; it is transitory, because it has no foundation in truth. A great deal of the early experience of Christians is of this sort. But as they make more progress in the divine life, they have more upon the work of Christ for everything.—This is being built up in the most holy faith; this is becoming grown in Christ Jesus; this is the full corn in the ear, and the mustard seed that I have learned these many years. That Christ is to be all in our joy, all in our hope, all in our duties all everything and in all of everything in religion; we must have no thoughts or exercises, but Christ must be the leading idea. His merits must never be forgotten, never be the least slighted, if we would preserve our comfort—and why so? Because there is nothing else but this can stand before God, and between this and the holy law. There is no peace for the truly enlightened conscience, when it is not sprinkled with blood. He that expects to preserve his hopes or his joys by depending on his outward or inward works, has learned nothing as yet. Believing we rejoice.—Then let us expect nothing but through Christ, hear nothing but through Christ. Let him be Alpha and Omega in all our religious experiences, and we shall be comforted believers. And particularly let us keep in mind that all our imperfect services must be accepted only through the perfected righteousness of Jesus.—Watchman & Obs.

SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

We find in an English paper the following extract from an unpublished lecture on the progress of the arts and sciences, and the antiquity of Freemasonry.

'Freemasonry, we are informed, was reduced to rules at the building of Solomon's Temple, and there is every reason to believe that some bond of union was necessary in such a congregated mass of workmen.

'The number of masons employed in building the temple was one hundred and thirty thousand, six hundred, besides the men of burden, not freemasons, who amounted to seventy thousand more.

'The footstone of this mighty fabric was leveled in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, the third after the death of David, and the four hundred and eightieth after the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea. The building commenced in Mount Moriah, on Monday, the second day of the month of Zif, which answers to the twenty first of our April, and it was finished in all parts in a little more than 7 years, on the eighth of the month of Bull, which answers to our twenty third day of October, being the second month of the sacred year, and the eleventh of Solomon's reign. Every piece of the edifice, whether timber, stone or metal, was ready cut, framed or polished at Jerusalem, so that no other tool was wanted, no other sound was heard than was necessary to join the several parts together. All the noise of the the ax, hammer and saw, was confined to the forests of Lebanon and the quarries and plains of Zeradeth, that nothing might be heard among the masons of Zion but harmony and peace.'

LOOK OUT FOR THE WOMEN.

Young man keep your eye peeled when you are after the women. If you bite at the naked hook, you are green.

Is a pretty dress or form so attractive? or a pretty face, even? Flounces, boy, are of no consequence. A pretty face will grow old.—Paint will wash off. The sweet smile of the flirt will give way to the scowl of the termagant. The neat form will be pitched into dirty calico.

Another and a far different being will take the lovely goddess, who smiled sweet smiles and eat your sugar candy.

Keep your eye peeled, boy; when you are after the women. If the little dear is cross and scolds at her mother in the back room, you may be sure that you will get particular fits all round the house. If she blushes when found at the wash-tub, be sure, sir, that she is of the cod-fish aristocracy—little breeding and less sense. If you marry a girl who knows nothing but to commit woman-slaughter upon the piano, you have got the poorest piece of music ever got up. Find the one whose mind is right and then pitch in. Don't be hanging back like a sheep thief, as though ashamed to be seen in the day time, but walk up like a chicken to the dough, and ask for the article like a man.

THE ISRAELITES.

I used to wonder—and always did till now—at that stupidity of the Israelites which so angered their leader—their pining after Egypt, after finding it impossible to live there. It was inconceivable how they could long to go back to a place of such cruel oppression, for the sake of anything. I now wonder no longer, having seen and felt the desert, and knowing the charms of the Nile. One evening lately, just at sunset, the scene, struck upon my heart, oppressing it, with the sense of beauty. A village was beside an extensive grove of palms, which sprang from out of the thickest and richest clover to the height of eighty five feet. Their stops waved gently in the soft breeze which ruffled the surface of a blue pond lying among grassy shores. There were golden lights and sharp shadows among the banks where a stream had lately made its way. The yellow sand-hills of the desert just showed themselves between the stems of the more scattered palms. Within view were some carefully tilled fields, with strong wheat lupins and purple bean Blossoms; and some melon and cucumber patches were not far off. Cattle were tethered beside the houses; and on a bank near sat an old woman and a boy and girl, basking in the last rays of the sun with evident enjoyment, though the magical coloring given by the Egyptian atmosphere could not be so striking as to English eyes. But what must it have been in the memory of the Israelites, wandering in the desert where there is no color, except at sunrise and sunset, but only glare—parched rocks and choking dust or sand! I will not attempt now, for no one has ever succeeded in such an attempt, to convey any impression of the appalling dreariness of the desert. I can only say that when it rose up before me in contrast with that nook of the valley at sunset, I at last understood the surrender of heart and reason on the part of the Israelites, and could sympathise in their forgetfulness of their past woes, in their pining for verdure and streams, for shade and good food, and for a perpetual sight of the adored river, instead of the hateful sands that hemmed them in whichever way they turned.—H. Martineau.

SLANDER.

How frequently is the honesty and integrity of man disposed by a smile or a shrug! How many good and generous actions have been sunk into oblivion by a distrustful look, or stamped with the imputation of proceeding from bad motives, by a miserable and seasonable whisper! Look into companies of those whose gentle nature should disarm them, we shall find no better account. How large a portion of chastity is sent out of the world by distant hints—noded away, and cruelly winked into suspicion by the envy of those who are passed all temptations of it themselves! How often does the reputation of a helpless creature bleed by a report—which the party who is at the pains to propagate it beholds with much pity and fellow-feeling—that she is heartily sorry for it—hopes in God true—however as Archbishop Tillotson wittily observes upon it, is resolved in the mean time to give the report her pass, that at least it may have fair play to take its fortune in the world—to be believed or not according to the charity of those into whose hands it should happen to fall!

SCRAPS.

Apt Reply.—'Why,' said a beau, 'you are neither sugar nor salt—rain will not hurt you.'

'No, but we are lasses,' said the lady. The gentleman sent for an umbrella right off.

A notion seller was offering a Yankee clock, finely varnished, glass in front, to a certain lady, not remarkable for personal beauty. 'Look how beautiful it is, said the vender.'

'Beautiful, indeed, a look at it almost frightens me!' said the lady.

'Then, marm,' replied Jonathan, 'I guess you'd better take one that haint got no looking-glass.'

An Irish lady wrote to her lover, begging him to send her some money. She added, by way of postscript, 'I am so ashamed of the request I sent after the postman to get it back, but the servant could not overtake him.'

A butcher was lamenting to his Irish Landlord, that the people of this village so few and so poor that he was unable, as formerly, to find customers for a whole bullock. 'Kill half a one at a time,' replied the squire.

ERUPTION OF MOUNT VESUVIUS.

Naples, May, 10, 1855.—The lava has now advanced ten miles from its source, and is now doing terrible damage. I have before me the report of Cozzolino as to the latest changes that have taken place about the cone. Just at the base of it a lake of fire has been formed, which looks like a red sea in an undulatory state. In the very centre of this has formed another crater, and which is throwing out red hot stones.

On the morning of the 7th the crater, at the very summit, fired, as it were, two heavy cannonades, and after sending forth lightning, flames and stones broke up altogether. In the middle of the cone ten craters have been formed, and from these the lava pours forth like a river, and runs on the side of the Cavello as far as the Minatore; here four other craters have been formed which throw up bitumen in the manner of pyramids, and resemble gigantic exhibitions of fire-works. The whole of the summit of the crater is, therefore, like a sponge, and must inevitably fall. The thin crust trembles under your feet; you may see the stones dance with a tremulous movement. The part immediately round the crater looks like the sides of a heated copper boiler. Such is the true statement of what is going on the summit.

There are reports of an opening towards Pompeii, which is not unlikely, and of another towards Resina; but I have not been up for some days, as the danger is now very great.—Before I write again I shall make the attempt. Last night I went to the scene of most stirring interest, after an interval of two days. The whole length of this usually quiet road was like a fair, and such were the throng of carriages which were moving along in three lines that it was with difficulty we ever reached our destination. As we approached the menaced neighbourhood the inhabitants were removing their goods, and on a bridge in the middle of the little township of Cercolo, through which in the winter time thunders down from the summit of the Vesuvius one of these mountain rivers so well known in Italy, stood a company of sappers.

Creeping over the solid handsome, solid bridge into the bed of the river, we went up in the face of the lava, which was now coming rapidly down. Here again were sappers, raising mounds on either side to divert the ruin from some private grounds and keep the lava in one straight course. The smoke which rose over the heads of the multitudes told us we were close on the spot, and, climbing up the bank and walking along the top, we looked down on this mighty mass of fire. How changed the neighbourhood in two days! Where I walked on Sunday night was now a sea of fire. The side road by which I came into the main stream from Pollena and Missidi Somme was now full of blackened coke. The houses on the borders of the village had fallen—in one, thirty poor people lived; a small chapel was swallowed up, a gentleman's villa, and a sad extent of vineyard and garden ground.

On the other side of the great lava-bed another stream was branching off to Sabastiano.—We had hoped to have crossed it and ascend to the cascade again, but it was no longer possible; for, as one says speaking of a marsh in the winter, the lava was out. The fire here had begun to enter the burial-ground of the little town, but was diverted from its course by a wall. On the opposite side of the stream were the king and all the royal family. The banks on either sides were thronged with curious and anxious multitudes, whose faces were lighted up with the blaze of hundreds of torches and with the more resplendent flame of the rapidly descending lava. Since the morning it had moved a mile. It was like a vast river of glowing coke.

As it moved on, the tens of thousands of lumps rolled and tumbled one over the other, crackling and grinding, and grating; and when, from the very face of it, a large lump fell off, the appearance was that of an iron furnace when the iron is being drawn. To make the resemblance more complete, at such times men darted forward with long poles, taken from the neighbouring vineyards, and pulled out great masses of lava in which they embedded money for sale. What struck me at first, and still strikes me as the most majestic feature in the whole scene, is the slow, silent, irresistible motion of that fiery flood. Active almighty power without an effort! Sweeping everything before it overcoming every obstacle, growing up against intervening walls or houses, and devouring them bodily, and then marching on in the same silent, unrelenting, irresistible manner as before.

There was a spot beneath my feet where a fall of mason work had been built to break the winter floods. To this spot all eyes were directed. The fiery river would fall over it in an hour; as yet it was distant seventy yards perhaps. Gradually it rose in height, and swelled out its vast proportions, and then vast masses fell off and rolled forward; then it swelled again and again till it had arrived at the very edge.—There was a general buzz and murmur of voices. The royal family stood opposite to me, intermingled with the crowd, looking on with intense anxiety.

At last it broke, not hurriedly, still with a certain show of majesty. At first a few small lumps fell down; then poured over us the liquid