

Literature. &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

MIDNIGHT MASS FOR THE DYING YEAR.

BY PROFESSOR LONGFELLOW.

Yes, the year is growing old,
And his eye is pale and bleared!
Death, with frosty hand and cold,
Plucks the old man by the beard,
Sorely,—sorely!

The leaves are falling, falling,
Solemnly and slowly;
Caw! caw! the rooks are calling,
It is a sound of woe,
A sound of woe!

Through woods and mountain-passes
The winds, like anemths, roll;
They are chanting solemn masses,
Singing, Pray for this poor soul,
Pray,—pray!

And the hooded clouds, like friars,
Tell their beads in drops of rain,
And patter their doleful prayers;—
But their prayers are all in vain,
All in vain!

There he stands, in the foul weather,
The foolish, fond Old Year,
Crowned with wild flowers and with heather,
Like weak, despised Lear,
A king,—a king!

Then comes the summer-like day,
Bids the old man rejoice!
His joy! his last! O, the old man grey,
Loveth her ever-soft voice,
Gentle and low.

To the crimson woods he saith,
And the voice gentle and low
Of the soft air, like a daughter's breath,
Pray do not mock me so;
Do not laugh at me!

And now the sweet day is dead!
Cold in his arms it lies,
No stain from its breath is spread
Over the glassy skies,
No mist nor stain!

Then, too, the Old Year dieth,
And the forests utter a moan,
Like the voice of one who crieth
In the wilderness alone,
Vex not his ghost!

Then comes, with an awful roar,
Gathering and sounding on,
The storm-wind from Labrador,
The wind Euroclydon,
The storm-wind!

Howl! howl! and from the forest
Sweep the red leaves away!
Would, the sins that thou abhorrest,
O Soul! couldst thus decay,
And be swept away!

For there shall come a mightier blast,
There shall be a darker day;
And the stars, from heaven downcast,
Like red leaves be swept away!
Kyrle Eleyson!
Christie Eleyson!

From Godey's Lady's Book to January

MY AUNT AT HOME.

AMERICAN Country Life is seldom well painted. Our writers are too apt to take European models, rather than sketch from reality the home scenes that may be found everywhere in the interior of our wide land. A lady of Michigan, who signs her name Ettie Elton (very pretty as a *nomme de plume*), has sent us a sketch that we think charming. Many of our readers, will, no doubt, remember characters similar with Aunt Anner—at least in the act of preparing good dinners. Here is the picture of a feast that is fit for a New Year's festival.

Another morning. Time rolls on. Days come and go, borne on and down the swift river of time, like yonder broken bough upon the rippling stream, scarce leaving their impress on its dimpled bosom.

But memory hath, with eager hand, snatched some choice relics as they floated by, and treasured them in the never-full garner of her storehouse. This morning, I have been turning over these relics; and among those I love most is a picture of my Aunt Anner. There she stands out before me, the very personification of intelligence, neatness, industry, and good order.

This visit in the country somehow reminds me of her and her home on the hill-side, where in the morning of my life, I used to love so well to visit. It was a rare enjoyment to me to leave the crowded, dusty city, once or twice a year, and go away into the beautiful, quiet country where I could romp freely, chase butterflies, climb fences to reach for birds' nests, ramble the fields for strawberries, sit with my little brother under the old elm-trees, and fish for trout, in short do anything that I wanted to; and Aunt Anner's was just the place to go for that. There were meadows, and forests, and lawns, and marshes were the checker-berries grew, and mountains where mosses and ferns had covered the rocks with velvet cushions even softer and more beautiful than this

great arm-chair I am sitting in. And then my aunt—she was one of those free, independent, dignified, social, intelligent, industrious, plain, easy women, whose description, words are of little consequence in giving. To appreciate, one must know her. As near as I can remember, she was always about thirty years of age, manifesting in her appearance no probability of ever growing old. Her light brown hair looked as if it never would grow grey; and her blue eye, so full of decision and meaning, you could never fancy would ever become dimmed by age and covered with spectacles; her firm rows of teeth you would not believe would ever decay and fall out, although when she laughed you could see that one upon each side was missing; but what of that! it had always been so—that is, since I could remember; and, if it were not so, she would not look Aunt Anner. Her person betrayed no evidence of a splendid lady whose best hours had been spent in contriving how to look beautiful. Her mind was too highly cultivated for that, her conversation too intelligent, and her library too well stored with solid literature.—She was what I call a real, bonifide, substantial, sensible woman, whose friends revered, and whose enemies were scarce; and even her husband's friends—those merciless critics of woman's worth—could not but say; 'Abram's got a good wife.' Perhaps she gained this eulogium because nature had given her the strength to perform all the duties of a good housewife without keeping help; and no woman could turn out a richer cheese or more of the sweet, golden butter from her dairy than she could.

My uncle was a man who was neither very tall nor very short. He had grey eyes, and brown hair, interspersed somewhat with lines of silver, with a face so like his own that no one else ever looked exactly like him. He was rather slow of speech; but, whenever he spoke he was always sure to say something. He walked with an easy gait, which seemed to say: 'The world is well enough so long as Anner and I are comfortable.' He had a good home, a good farm, a span of good horses, a score of good cows, and a nice dairy-room, which was always tidy and well filled with what would 'bring the cash any time.' His garden always yielded the choicest currants, the smoothest gooseberries, the largest, hardest drumheads, and the greenest, sourest pickles of any in the neighbourhood; besides the greatest variety of roses, and pinks, and tulips, and daisies, and chrysanthemums, and marigolds, and larkspurs and the tallest hollyhocks, and sunflowers, and the bluest bluebells, and reddest pinies in the world—that is, that either Uncle Abraham or I had ever seen.

No wonder, then, that he could sit so quietly by the fire during the winter evening, and read his newspaper. It would be no use for him to seek pleasure anywhere in the world, save in his own peaceful home.

There was no little Eddie or Willie, no Carrie or Jenny, to climb upon my uncle's knee, and say, with a kiss, 'Good-night, papa.' No, they were all alone, and yet they never seemed lonely.

But their pleasant home was too delightful a retreat to be left entirely to their own enjoyment. Too many friends had they to be left long alone. Almost any bright day in Autumn when the gorgeous sunlight had assumed a mellow hue, when apples were in their prime, and peaches turned their crimson cheeks towards the kitchen window, you might see my aunt, flying around there, rolling paste, slicing fruit, stuffing bread and butter into empty chickens, and every now and then opening the oven door, and lifting with a spoon the boiling liquid from the pan, and pouring it over the crisping, simmering leg of veal or mutton, which would then only simmer the louder, and send forth such a grateful odour that you would be puzzled to know what it was making such a fuss about—whether it was trying to thank my aunt for being so very kind as to bestow upon it such high honors as to place it in their oven, and after that upon her table, where it would be the object upon which to lavish praise, or whether it was trying to fret because it had been deprived of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, without so much as saying: 'By your leave, sir.' Be this as it may, I fancy there was less cause for complaint than there would have been had it been consigned to the care of some greasy Bridget, or smutty Chloe, who would leave it to bake in a cold oven, or else burn it as black as a coal, while they were gossiping with the wood-sawyer in the back yard; and thus deprive it of all the eulogies its death would now call forth.

The rumbling of carriage-wheels arrests the attention of Aunt Anner. She wipes her hands, and looks out of the window. 'Somebody has come Abraham,' said she; 'go out and see who it is, and open the gate.' My uncle rises from his newspaper rather reluctantly—although at heart he is willing enough—steps once or twice in the wrong direction, not a little confused at the sudden transition of his subject, takes down his straw hat from the hook where it always hung when it is not on his head, and, after being pleasantly entreated to hurry, at least six times, by his ambitious wife, gets out at last, and finds truly that he is not at Washington contesting great political questions, neither in Mexico commanding a host of armed men, nor yet in France struggling to shake off the despotic yoke; but is verily the host who is to entertain company for an indefinite length of time to come.

And now they are beginning to rush into that cozy parlor—loads of friends from a distance—all unexpected they come, and are re-

ceived—oh, so welcome! No matter if the nice precision with which that parlor has been arranged is broken up; no matter if hats and shawls, and bonnets are laid upon tables, and sofas, which were in such perfect order a few moments before; and no great matter if curious little girls do peep into the gilt-edged books to see if there are pictures there; and if little Johnny should venture to take the shells from the table, and make villages on the floor in the corner; or if Ettie should pluck a leaf from that great rose geranium by the window—nobody would be hurt; but prudence in the case would be wisdom at least; for if Aunt Anner should look sternly at one of her little nieces or nephews, it should make their mischievous little fingers burn, and they would feel the truth most convincingly that, if she was their *ma*, they would always have to mind.

Well, the salutations go around. More than once the visitors are informed of the glad surprise they have occasioned, and of the fact that, because it was so pleasant they thought 'somebody would come.' The friends who have not come are inquired after; and the wish repeated and re-repeated that John, and Sarah, and Elijah, and Pattie, and—I can't tell who all—were 'here too.' Even the Maltese cat on her rug in the corner purrs louder, and stretches her paws complacently, seeming to realize that all goes on well, and that her position in life is far above the common level of cats in general.

Then comes the dinner, all in order, *par excellence*, and such discussions as are had over the meats and vegetables, the pies, puddings, and tarts, and other appendages which are not only necessary, but indispensable, to a complete dinner to a farmer's home, where the larder groans with plenty, and the benevolent hand of the owner delights to put all therein to the best possible use for which it is designed.

Oh, ye who have been reared in the pent-up city, whose murky atmosphere breathes nothing but gaunt poverty, and dire, pale-faced want on one side, and on the other the grossest extravagance in magnificent display, where the wholesome gratification of appetite is entirely supplanted by the mock elegancies of fashionable life, where the formalities of etiquette have become the substitute for all the realities of that friendship which hath something in it more than a mere name to which to court the favor of the fickle goddess, ye have never enjoyed, in your splendid homes, so much of real luxury as crowned that homely feast. In all your brilliant festivals, where pride and ambition reigned supreme, where you have lavished your thousands in striving to excel your haughty neighbor, whom you despise in your very heart, but who has been invited to your grand entertainment just to show her, that your display of silver, and glass, and china will exceed hers after all, and that your gold, and diamonds, and pearls are a little more brilliant and costly than either hers or Mrs. Prinkham's, never, in all your gorgeous apparel, surrounded by liveried servants obedient to your every command, have you realised a sensation of real happiness which will compare with one such friendly festival as I have described at my Aunt Anner.

THE PRESERVATION OF HEALTH.

To keep the body free from pain and disease is the universal wish; and it is a most reasonable wish; but reasonable as this wish is, it is an indisputable fact that nothing in the economy of life is more virtually neglected than attention to the preservation of health, and the acquisition of that knowledge which conduces to ward off the accidents likely to superinduce disease and lead to a premature termination of life. Few people imagine that any care or concern is necessary respecting that which is the groundwork of all comfort and the jewel of existence, till they find themselves attacked by disease or infirmity, occasioned either by irregularity and abuse of life, or ignorance of the corrective principles on which health and disease depend. The grand secret for the enjoyment and preservation of health, and prevention of disease, is included in four short words, Temperance, Cleanliness, Air, and Exercise. The chief cause of most of the diseases to which the human body is subject, is a superabundant acid in the stomach; and this superabundance of acid is occasioned by overloading the stomach with food or drink. For the stomach can digest only a certain portion of food in a given time, namely that which is in contact with its sides; all the rest must wait its turn; consequently, if the stomach be overloaded, the superabundant food will ferment, and generate an acid; and the portion of food thus fermented and converted into acid, when it comes in its turn to be spread over the sides of the stomach to be digested, instead of being fit to be converted into healthy blood, frets and irritates the stomach by its acrid and corrosive qualities, and very often produces inflammation, more or less violent, which is indicated either by heartburn, eructation, stomach-ache, or other distressing sensations. Nor is this the whole of the injury; for if the effects of the acid be not arrested, all the organs which sympathize with the stomach partake of the distress, in proportion to their previous constitutional strength or debility.—Burnard.

TAMING RATTLESNAKES.

In looking over an old file of newspapers, the other day, we found the following statement, quoted from the *Literary Gazette*, of April 17, 1824:—'The *Richmond Enquirer*, an American journal, states some curious facts respecting

rattlesnakes. A Frenchman, M. Neale, being in North Carolina, endeavoured to procure some rattlesnakes, with a view of forming a collection. Several observations, followed by experiments, induced him to believe that this venomous animal was capable of being tamed. The means which he employed to effect this object are unknown, but the fact is that he succeeded in a most surprising degree. He ascribes his success entirely to the power of music, and pretends that a tender melody is sufficient to tranquillize the greatest irritation on the part of the animal. M. Neale is now at Richmond (Virginia), where he makes a kind of exhibition of his curiosities. He has two living rattlesnakes. The male is four feet eight inches long, and has eight rattles in his tail, which shows that he is nine years old.—The female is smaller, and has but five. M. Neale has had them in his possession thirty months. Their docility is so great, that having talked to them a little, and stroked them with his hand, he takes them as if they were rope's ends, and puts them up to his breast until they wind round his neck and kiss him.—Far from injuring their master, these dreadful reptiles seem to emulate one another in evincing their attachment to him. Besides the education of these snakes, M. Neale reposes his security in another cause; for he has a remedy for their bite, of which he makes no secret. The first thing, he says, is to wash one's mouth with warm oil, then to suck the wound, afterwards to drink plentifully of a decoction of snake-root, which operates as an emetic; after which there is nothing to fear. M. Neale opens the mouths of his snakes, and shows their venomous fangs. They are in the upper jaw, two on each side; and if extracted are renewed. They are pointed, bent behind, and lie flat towards the throat when the animal does not want to make use of them. The venom (as is known) exudes from a little bladder which is at the root of the tooth. These animals change their skin in summer, once every two months. Every year, except the first, they acquire a new horn rattle, whence they derive their name. Consequently, the number of these rattles indicate their age. They seldom shake them, and only when they are irritated, or rather when they want to fix the attention of their prey; that is to say, of the most lively animals, such as birds and squirrels. M. Neale maintains the truth of the charming power which these snakes have been said to possess; having observed an instance of it in his garden, on the part of his own snakes the victim, conquered by his own fears, falling from branch to branch, and rock to rock, until his enemy darted upon him. But he denies that there is anything offensive in the breath of these animals, having frequently received their close embraces: on the contrary, he is convinced that it is soft and agreeable! The rattlesnake is not the only description of snake which M. Neale tamed. He has tamed every kind; and they are all obedient to his orders.

WOLVES IN KAFFIR LAND.

WOLVES in Kaffir-land are very ferocious.—Here is a story told by a recent traveller:—'A little girl about eight years of age, was reclining on the ground in the cool of the day, when four of those monsters rushed upon the place. One of them seized the little creature by the head, a second by the shoulder, and the other two by the thighs. The people of the kraal flew to her help with all possible speed, and succeeded in releasing her, but apparently too late. They tried their medicines for a few days, but finding all hope fail, and as from heat and flies she had now become loathsome, they gave her the choice, either to be put to death by the youths of the place, or go to the woods to die, or be further devoured as might happen! The little girl chose the woods, determining in this forlorn condition to cast herself on the mercy of the Christian Settlers' Institution; and, although she had never been at the station she believed from what she had heard that, could she reach the place, she could receive the protection and help which he who claimed the endearing name of father had long refused to give, and which she had no right anywhere else to expect among her own nation. With this resolution she set out, and although she had to travel several miles through deep glens, succeeded in reaching the station, an awful picture of deformity and suffering, all but in a state of nudity, covered with large wounds to the number of fourteen, among the most ghastly of which was that of the head and face; the wolf, having endeavoured to grasp the whole head, had torn the mouth open to the ear, and stripped the head of the upper part of its covering, making a terrible wound of eight inches. Through the mercy of God she is quite recovered, and scarcely at all deformed; but she refuses ever to return to those who forced her into the woods to die.'

THE COMFORTS OF UGLINESS.

Is it not a comfort to be free from all the petty solicitude and toil which the consciousness of personal beauty subjects one to,—to comb the eyebrows twenty times a day, to watch perpetually the changing lustre of the eyes, and the fluctuations of colour in the complexion? An ugly fellow is free from all these cares. Beautiful faces are often unmeaning, and fine persons deficient in agility and active vigour. It is ugliness, or something very near it, that is compatible with strong manly expression in a countenance; and it is the thick-set, broad, coarse form that is usually the most remarkable for active strength. Personal elegance and beauty are flowers which quickly