

POETRY.

A PSALM OF LIFE.

BY LONGFELLOW.

Tell me not in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.
Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.
Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.
Art is long, and time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still like muffled drums are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.
In the world's broad field of battle;
In the bivouac of life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife!
Trust no future, how'er pleasant,
Let the dead past bury its dead!
Act—act in the living present!
Heart within and God o'erhead.
Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing leave behind us
Footprints on the sand of time;
Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.
Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

PARENTS' DEPARTMENT.

Education of the Heart.

It is the voice of the age, to substitute learning for wisdom—to educate the head, and forget there is a more important education necessary for the heart. The reason is cultivated at an age when nature does not furnish the elements necessary to a successful cultivation of it; and the child is solicited to reflection when he is only capable of sensation and emotion. In infancy the attention and the memory are only excited strongly by things that impress the senses and move the heart; and the father shall instil more solid and available instruction in an hour spent in the fields, where wisdom and goodness are exemplified, seen and felt, than in a month spent in the study, where they are expounded in stereotyped aphorisms.

No physician doubts, that precocious children, in fifty cases for one, are much the worse for the discipline they have undergone. The mind seems to have been strained, and the foundations for insanity are laid. When the studies of maturer years are stuffed into the head of a child, people do not reflect on the anatomical fact that the brain of an infant is not the brain of a man; that the one is confirmed and can bear exertion, the other is growing, and requires repose; that to force the attention to abstract facts, to load the memory with chronological and historical or scientific detail; in short, to expect a child's brain to bear with impunity the exertions of a man's, is as rational as it would be to hazard the same sort of experiment on its muscles.

The first eight or ten years of life should be devoted to the education of the heart—to the formation of principles rather than to the acquirement of what is usually termed knowledge. Nature herself points out such a course, for the emotions are the liveliest and most easily moulded, being as yet unalloyed by passion. It is from this source that the mass of men are hereafter to draw their sum of happiness or misery; the actions of the immense majority are, under all circumstances, determined much more by feeling than reflection; in truth, life presents an infinity of occasions where it is essential to happiness that we should feel rightly; very few where it is necessary that we should think profoundly.

Up to the seventh year of life, very great changes are going on in the structure of the brain, and demand therefore, the utmost attention not to interrupt them by improper or over excitement. Just that degree of exercise should be given to the brain at this period as is necessary to its health, and the best is moral instruction, exemplified by objects which strike the senses.

It is perhaps unnecessary to add, that at this period of life, special attention should be given both by parent and teachers, to the physical de-

velopment of the child. Pure air and free exercise are indispensable, and wherever these are withheld, the consequences will be certain to extend themselves over the whole future life. The seeds of protracted and hopeless suffering have in innumerable instances, been sown in the constitution of the child, simply through ignorance of this great fundamental physical law; and the time has come when the united voices of these innocent victims should ascend "trumpet-tongued" to the ears of every parent and every teacher in the land. "Give us free air and wholesome exercise, leave to develop our expanding energies in accordance with the laws of our being, and full scope for the elastic and bounding impulses of our young blood."—*London Quarterly Review.*

Power of Priestcraft in China.

We quote the following from Smith's Consular Cities of China. The case is instructive, as showing the condition of the pagan millions, with which that vast empire swarms. In one of the temples on the hill of Nantai, I witnessed a curious specimen of the power of priestcraft, which still retains its hold on a portion of the people. In a little temple, consisting of two or three courts, dedicated to one of the Taoist deities, and intrusted to a few priests, I met a Chinese, who had come to obtain deliverance from domestic grief. The cause of his affliction was the sickness and expected death of his wife. The husband, dressed out in his finest clothes, and loaded with offerings, stood before a platform, in anxious expectation, while a priest went through a variety of evolutions, tossings and tumblings on the floor, to procure a good omen. With his head bound in a red handkerchief, or turban, the priest vigorously danced, with impassioned gestures, round a table laden with cakes and fruits, while two attendants, beating a gong and a drum, kept time with his performance. At one time he prayed in softly-uttered tones; soon again he employed scolding accents to the deity whom he invoked. At one moment, he would endeavor to coax away the angry spirit; at another, he would terrify it away by whipping the air. After half an hour's frantic noise, and persevering somersets on the ground, he rose and placed a hair-pin on the head of the anxious husband, after binding the hair into the peculiar tuft of the Tao sect. Some more paper was burned outside the temple; the priest ceased from his flagellations; the husband bowed down several times before an idol which stood near; and after paying the usual fees to the priest, returned, apparently satisfied, to the scene of his domestic affliction.

AGRICULTURE.

Stirring the Soil.

Every one knows that the first operation of the gardener, whether a new garden is to be made or an old one re-planted, is to dig the ground; though comparatively few persons are aware why this is so essential. When any soil (except sand or loose gravel) remains unstirred for any length of time, it becomes hard, and its particles adhere so firmly together as not to be separated without manual force. It is quite clear that, when soil is in this state, it is unfit for the reception of eggs; as the tender roots of the young plants will not be able to penetrate it without great difficulty, and neither air nor water can reach them in sufficient quantity to make them thrive. When a seed is put into the ground, it is the warmth and moisture by which it is surrounded that makes it vegetate. It first swells, and the skin with which it is covered cracks and peels off; then two shoots issue from the vital knot, one of which descends, and is called the root, while the other ascends to form the leaves, stem, flowers, and fruit. In nature nothing is superfluous, and yet every thing has been provided for. The two principal uses of the root are, to give the plant a firm hold on the ground, and to supply it with food. For the first purpose, the root either spreads so widely through the surface soil as to form a sufficient base for the height of the plant, or it descends a sufficient depth into the earth to steady the part above ground; and in either case the growth of the plant is wisely and wonderfully proportioned to the strength of the support which the root affords it. For the second purpose—that of supplying the root with nourishment—the root divides at the extremity of each shoot, into numerous fibres or fibrils, each furnished at its extremity with a spongiole, or spongy substance, which affords the only means the plant possesses of absorbing the moisture necessary for its support. It is thus quite clear that every thing that tends to nourish and increase the growth of the root, must contribute to the health and vigor of the rest of the plant; and that no plant can thrive, the root of which is cramped in its growth, or weakened for want of nourishment. This being allowed, it is evident that the first step towards promoting the growth of any plant, is to provide a fitting receptacle for the root; and this is done by pulverizing the ground in which the seed is to be sown, so as to render it in a fit state for the roots to penetrate it easily. Thus, they will be neither checked in their growth for want of room, nor obliged to waste their strength in overcoming unnecessary obstacles. The second point—that of affording the root abundance of nourishment—may also be obtained by pulverizing the ground; as pulverization, by admitting the rain to percolate slowly through the soil, affords a proper and equitable supply of food to the spongioles, without suffering the surplus water to remain so long around the roots as to be in danger of rotting

them. These are some of the reasons why it may be laid down as a rule that all ground should be stirred before seeds are sown in it. There are other reasons such as mixing the manure with the soil, and exposing the worn out soil to the atmosphere, or replacing it with the fresh soil beneath—which direct that the soil should be stirred; but those already detailed seem sufficient.

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