

FAIR VISION AND BRUTAL FACT.

Floating idly in a skiff one evening, I looked out westward over the level floor of water to where it met a wall of blue with saffron base. And it seemed, as fancy touched my sight, that there, for the sun, stood an opened door into a paradise of light—light celestial, pure and holy—home of happy spirits cleansed of all grossness, and living in harmony and love. 'Twas a blessed, blessed vision of the world that might be. And oh, the heart warmth in those rays streaming through the heavenly portal! Oh, the rush of freedom and strength that came with that glimpse of a larger and purer life! brief spasm, it seemed, of slumbering energy divine.

But a cry broke harshly in—a laugh wild and wierd—and the vision and its glory had vanished. And in its stead this was the sight: On the shore near by stood an asylum for insane, and through one of the grated windows of the vast prison a poor madman was stretching out his arms and shouting in his strange frenzy. From other windows peeped a few faces of that sad gathering of shattered reasons. But it seemed as if the one maniac shouted for them all, and in his cry mingled a mockery and despair that chilled to the marrow. Have you ever known the blank bewilderment of a mind lost in black despair? Were you ever as one whose one friendly light had gone out at night on the moor?

Further along to the right stood a penitentiary. How ever forget that sullen procession that passed me one evening to enter the great iron gates!—that negro giant who glared upon me with the unreasonable rage of a beast till I sickened at the horrible perfectness of his ruin? Those massive, cold stone walls forever building, forever reaching outward like the murderous arms of a devil-fish to kill our social virtue.

Still further along to the right stood a factory—saddest of all in its savage unreason—a factory where little children worked, stifled, and were soul-starved. One child I often saw looking wistfully out from amidst the noisy whirl of spindles, wheels and shafting. The delicately oval face, the dark eyes and dark luxuriance of hair were maddening to see in that setting of dreary toil. I remember looking in anger and desperation up to the serene sky and tranquil clouds, over the rippling lake and pleasant islands and all the peaceful glory of an autumn landscape, to find somewhere the reason and explanation of it all.

From my skiff I could see that the asylum, the penitentiary and the factory stood out upon a dull background, which to describe would entail the long, weary catalogue of commonplace sorrow and sin—small loves, shall hates, small ambitions, selfishness of the favoured few, hopeless drudgery of the masses, darkness of night lit only here and there by fitful gleams of noble purpose, flashes of a longing and a striving for better things.

Which, then, is true—the fair vision or the brutal fact? Upon which are we to fix our faith? In the strange double reality of the fact itself I've found the answer. Those fitful gleams and those flashes are real, and the light they shed is the same that streamed through the heavenly portal. And now when I dream of a happier world, where men shall work together like brothers, and love shall girdle the earth with generous deeds, though blind prophets of despair see naught but the darkness of night and wail their lamentations, still in the flickering light of love's deeds around me, I know the night to be a lie and slander and the dream to be supremely true.

Kingston.

R. BALMER.

AUTUMN'S LAMENT.

Summer's dead and	Of the cold earth,
Autumn weepeth	All the scented
From her limbs	Sweetness sleepeth:
Her garb is rent;	Autumn need
In the bosom	No more lament.

For the spring,
The thousand-throated,
Soon will sing
With merriment;
And the olden
Spirit-fragrance
That, in air, so
Softly floated,
Will arise from
Earth's warm bosom,
Be with bird-song
Sweetly blent.

And the meek and
Mild-eyed cattle,

Sleeping in the
Summer sun;
And the shouting
And the prattle
Of the happy
Children homing;
And the tired,
Contented workman,
After his day's
Work is done:
Cease thy weeping,
Summer cometh
After chur-ish
Winter's gone,

J. H. BURNHAM.

A TRIP TO THE NORTH SHORE.

IT chanced that a friend and myself spent part of our summer vacation in the islands along the north shore of Lake Huron. We had talked a good deal of an expedition to the La Cloche Mountains, which were a perpetual presence on the northern horizon, and now we were going there.

This resolution was arrived at in the little village of Shaftesbury, on Manitoulin. A party of five was organized, and the yacht *Manitou*, famous in all those waters, was chartered for the trip. The youthful postmaster of the village was in command of the yacht and the expedition, and was forthwith designated "Captain." Years before, he and I had gone to school together, and in our little trips in an old boat on the village pond he had doubtless acquired considerable skill in nautical affairs. The young man from Knox College, who was in charge of the Presbyterian mission station at this port, went with us. The Missionary was characterized by a far-away look in his mild brown eyes and a most unclerical straw hat. A solemn-looking Pedagogue and two worthy mechanics, friends of the captain, made up the party.

So, being fitted out with tent and stores, we made an early start one morning, and in a strong fair wind the *Manitou* went flying through the islands and across the channel. By this time the wind had increased to a gale, blowing directly upon an open and rocky shore, and we had much ado to keep our boat from drifting upon it. There are people who would have laughed to see the soulful-eyed Missionary and the dignified Pedagogue vigorously poking away at the rocks with their long oars to prevent the *Manitou* from breaking to pieces upon them. After beating about for a time, vainly trying to effect a landing, the Captain discovered a quiet and cosy little bay further down the coast, and soon we were safely anchored in it.

After lunch we started up the mountains which here come down to the shore. In this locality they do not present the aspect of utter desolation which characterizes the range farther east—at least as seen from the deck of the steamer upon which we came up the lake. Near the base there are in many places considerable tracts of scrubby forest, and here and there far up the sides the eye is relieved by little patches of greenery. The least trace of soil seems to be sufficient to nourish the huckleberry bushes, which grow here in great abundance. It may be stated that the bruised and broken fruit which city grocers call huckleberries, is but a sorrowful pretence to those who have seen them in their native mountains. A cluster of these berries on the bush, with all the wild beauty of their bloom still on them, set against the dark green background of the leaves, makes a picture which an artist would love to dwell on.

It was in something after this fashion that the Pedagogue used to hold forth to us frequently while we were climbing the mountains. But we observed that he invariably concluded his æsthetic harangue by eating the cluster he had been admiring.