

Home Sickness.

When the stone, or any other inanimate body is taken from the place where it rested, and then set in motion in another, perhaps far distant place, it continues in that motion till it has again found a halting and resting place. To the force of gravity it remains indeed indifferent whether the point of rest be near or far from the rock from which the stone was broken, whether it be at the bottom of the sea, or in the human hand that holds the stone, or on the firm surface of the earth; the stone will never, of its own power, return to the spot whence it came.

Quite different is the case with those living beings who, by an indwelling force and by their own power are removed from the place where they arose, and carried to far distances. The Salmon is born, far from the mouths of great streams and from the sea-coasts, in the fresh waters of brooks and rivulets, in the vicinity of their sources. There, when it issues from the egg, it finds for the first time the most appropriate element and the most fitting nourishment. When it becomes somewhat larger and stronger, it leaves this place of its birth, swims down the stream and goes to the sea-coast, and deeper into the sea after its prey,—which consists of other water-animals. But when the time approaches for it to bring forth, then in the midst of the nourishment that surrounds it, the longing for home leaves it no rest; the egg-laying females, in company with their partners, swim in shoals up the rivers and their branches, to introduce their brood into life on the same spot where they themselves first came from the egg. If you catch a female Salmon in the spot where it has spawned, and make a mark on one of its fins, you may convince yourself that instinct leads the fish back every year to the same place, and when you take the eggs, which the same fish has laid out of the water and carry them in a vessel of water to another place in another river, in which Salmon has never been known, you lay the basis of a gradual population of Salmon in a new spot. For although fishes, as they increase in size, leave their birth-place, and take up their usual residence at a great distance, yet, when they are ready to produce a new, young generation of their kind, they return every year back to the same spot where they themselves were young. And so it is known to be in regard to all fishes that, at the time of spawning, seek a certain region of the shore, that they yearly return to the same place, the place of their own nativity. In such cases certainly the wandering impulse toward home, appears to have a holding-point and guiding thread in the memory of the animal, for the old Salmon returns homeward by the same way he went forth. But even without such a leading thread, the destined goal is reached by that force which connects the two ends of life and brings its course back to the starting point. A sea tortoise was caught near the Island of Ascension, and brought on ship-board. On its under shell certain letters and ciphers were branded. The design was to carry it to Europe, but growing sick on the voyage and appearing nearly dead, it was thrown overboard in the British channel. Two years afterwards, the same tortoise, sound and well, was again caught in the neighbourhood of the same Island of Ascension. Led by the longing for home, it had made its way through the water a distance of more than eight hundred German miles. Over as great or not inferior distances the journeys of the bird of passage extend; and yet, at the time of pairing, they all return whither they themselves were born, and, in the vicinity of the nest, in which they emerged from the egg, build their nests for their young.

Not merely from quite different lands and climes, but also from quite different elements, the out-running circle of animal life returns to its starting point. The horse-fly and the gnat come forth from the maternal egg in water, and in water the first period of their life is spent. Afterwards they become dwellers of the air, and enjoy the pleasure and freedom of a winged condition. Nevertheless, when she is to lay her eggs, the mother returns to the water; and so the female of the may-beetle forsakes the top of the high oak for the ground; and even the tree-frog leaves her green house in order to produce her young in the same place where she first saw the light—in the water. On the other hand, the helpless sea-tortoise, at the fit time, ventures out upon the land to lay its eggs in the sunny sand-bed, in which itself was born. The butterfly, who hovers, in its beautiful day, from flower to flower, and sucks their honey, seeks nevertheless, when its time comes, the unsightly nettle in order to lay its eggs on the leaves, from which it first drew its own nourishment.

In a somewhat changed form appears the attracting force, which claims the living to a certain abode, in the case of those mammals which man has taken under his care and culture. Even among these it is indeed often the being accustomed to a certain feeding place or stall which draws them from far distances, or which makes them leap and low with joy when they return from their beau-

tiful summer abode on the Alps to the neighbourhood of their native village. Even the attractive society of their own brute companions works so powerfully that those goats, that have escaped from man and enjoyed for years the free life of the *chamois*, cannot resist the charm of old associates and the accustomed stall when once again they hear the tinkling of the bells worn by their former herd. In many other cases a deeper reason for this home-longing is to be discerned. It is not merely the crib, but the crib of *his master* which the generous steed longs for; and the faithful dog, escaped from confinement, hastens back, many days march, not only to the dwelling of his master, but to his master himself, to whose person he is bound by grateful love. Thus may that force, which among all living animals, leads them back to the parental home or to the places where, without parental help life received its first care, be related to those emotions, which, in the bosom of man, are fashioned to gratitude and love.

Even man himself, in many cases, is overpowered by a longing for the place of his birth, for the *re-ance* of his early childhood.—He is, however, less bound by the force which connects him with an external home than any other living creature. Rather goes he, in obedience to his inclination, like the wandering dove, to such places of abode as best afford him the means of subsistence. But in his inner spiritual being he is truly at home only where those are whom he loves. Therefore, Jacob de Vries, in the midst of the earthly paradise of Cape Colony, felt a continual home-sickness for poor cold Greenland, because there he had enjoyed the love of human hearts, dearer and more precious to him than all the perfumes of the flowers, and all the deliciousness of the fruits of a warm beautiful land. Finally, from the case of human beings, whose true home and spiritual birth-place is not in the visible world, it is most clearly evident that the longing for home among all living creatures is the aspiration of gratitude, conscious or unconscious, to the origin and spring of life and all its joys. In the heart-sickening desire of home, which affects the wanderer from barren Lapland, as well as the Swiss, amidst the bustle of Paris, there shines unmarked, with the longing for the holy peace which childhood possesses, the remembrance of the love first enjoyed by man at his entrance into life, when he lay in his mother's arms.

Our father's house, however poor,
Nought on earth do we love more.

POETRY.

THE WATCHMAN'S SONG.

FROM THE GERMAN.

Hark! while I sing, our village clock
The hour of eight, good sirs, has struck.
Eight souls alone from death were kept,
When God the earth with deluge swept.
Unless the Lord to guard us deign,
Man wakes and watches all in vain.
Lord! through thine all-prevailing might,
Do thou Vouchsafe us a good night!

Hark! while I sing, our village clock
The hour of nine, good sirs, has struck.
Nine lepers cleansed returned not.
Be not thy blessings, by man, forgot—
Unless the Lord to guard us deign,
Man wakes and watches all in vain.
Lord! &c.

Hark! while I sing, our village clock
The hour of ten, good sirs, has struck.
Ten precepts show God's holy will—
Oh, may we prove obedient still!
Unless the Lord to guard us deign,
Man wakes and watches all in vain.
Lord! &c.

Hark! while I sing, our village clock
The hour of twelve, good sirs, has struck.
Twelve is of time the boundary—
Man! think upon eternity.
Unless the Lord to guard us deign,
Man wakes and watches all in vain.
Lord! &c.