

[For the Canadian Illustrated News.]

A WOMAN'S ANSWER.

(Written on the night of the Ball.)

Within, the dancers dancing to a sweet, delicious tune;
Without, the glimmering starlight, and shimmering, ashen moon.
It was all the same—in the moonlight, and within, in the glare and show,
I felt the sackcloth and ashes of an unavailing woe.
I thought I had hidden my secret where nether eye could reach:
You entered the chamber sepulchral by the pitiless door of speech;
You lighted the lamps of memory, and looked, in their ghastly glow,
On the empty shrine, and the altar, and the bleaching bones below.
Though I hate you—I say I hate you—for entering that secret door.
My heart's Holgotha, you called it—I will speak this once—no more.
'Tis not that I seek for pity, or w'd take it from your breast.
But that some griefs in the telling lose the sting of a mad unrest.

To-night when you turned and left me, I felt such a worthless thing,
I fancied the pure-eyed flowers shrank away from me shuddering:
That the lights turned pale with horror and fell away from me,
Discerning through all my disguises my soul's infirmity.
I turned to the crowd led parous and tried in vain again
To forget your recriminations in the noise of other men.
I danced, and sang, and jested, but I felt, in my desperate mood,
The loneliest waste of Sahara would be less a solitude.
I hated my hands for their whiteness, my face for being so fair,
While the worm in my heart was gnawing with the blackness of dark-
ness there.
The music was dull and stupid, the faces like lumps of clay;
I hated their tuneless laughter, and so I came away.

You said you knew my story, but you do not know it all:
I have guarded my heart from pity, or scorn with an adamant wall:
There the altar where incense was burned to the idol that turned to
clay.
Holds the fire that will not be quenched till the altar shall crumble
away.

I tell you the fire still smoulders—at times the flames leap up.
Till I long for the pool of Oblivion, or the fabled Lethæan cup;
Or to clutch out my life in a frenzy, and hurl it madly back
To the God—if there be one—who sent it alone on its perilous track!
With a soul that was pure, perverted like the souls of the lost I sit,
And while angels hear sphere music, I hear the sound of the pit.
Oh I lay my head on my pillow in a slumber long and deep—
If in death there was no awaking but only an endless sleep.

It is not with men as with women—they plunge their thwarted hearts
Into some daring adventure, or the traffic of eager marts:
And so in the healthy endeavour their feverish heart-burnings abate.
We just sit, bitterly smiling, and order the maid who waits
To bring this or that cosmetic to brighten the pallid face.
Where the fire of the grief that will kill us has left its ashy trace.
And then—to our Sodomite banquets. It makes me almost wild
To feel I am lost as a woman who was pure when a little child!
I attempt no justification—I, the proudest soul on earth—
I have yet of honour, and truth, and legitimate earth.
I dare not go now to church, it breaks my irreverent calm
To hear the accord of the organ, and the penitential psalm.

When my "first love"—and last—and only, came as you said, like Jove
To Semela, I thought 'twas the burning of the sacred fire of Love.
His words were like "golden apples in pictures of silver set,"
But they were dead-sea fruitage, I keep their bitterness yet.
All that was good within me seemed drowned in a deep, dead sea,
And revenge was the only sweetness that life had left for me.
I knew my power and used it: I played with impositions I hearts,
And wrong them, and broke them, remembering manifold pains and
smarts.

I have never felt ruth, or pity, but for one—whom we need not name.
Does the candle pity the moth-flies who flutter to its flame?
Once, when my life was fresher, and my soul was full of truth,
Had we met, I might have loved him with the innocent heart of youth.

It "might have been," but was not. I watched his heart fill up
With a passion pure and glowing like wine in a crystal cup:
I made it a cure for ennui, this wonderful growth of love—
Begun as a cure for ennui, I meant, at last, to prove.
If a man could love as a woman, till 'neath the linden trees
I spilled the red wine from the goblet and gave him back the lees.
'Tis but the alloy of passion will in this heat expire.
As the dress burns away from the gold before the refiner's fire.
I knew his strong, true nature much better than you can know—
'Tis for him to walk with the angels, for me with the lost below—
From his very excess of passion a diviner light will come
Like Venus Aphrodite from the iridescent foam.

I despise my paltry triumphs—my miserable pride:
I said I had no beauty, but am glad of its power to hide;
No tell-tale wrinkle disfigures my temple's reined snow—
Is the summer sea less love's because of the waves below?
I am glad of my winning manner, of this white and satin skin—
The fair outside of the vessel that is so blank within!
To publish my sorrows—/—to trumpet my grief!
Oh, no, I must keep in my disguise, and hope that my life will be brief.
Well, I must woo with opiate sleep that once came unsought
When a mother's hand smothered the pillows with a charin now look
forget.

Already the lurid sunrise flares in the purple skies—
When we meet you will see no traces of tears in my brilliant eyes.

H. C. DE VERE.

(Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.)

GOSSIPS ON POPULAR SCIENTIFIC SUBJECTS.

NO. II.—THUNDER AND LIGHTNING.

Let me talk with this philosopher:
What is the cause of thunder?

KING LEAR.

The phenomena of thunder and lightning are sufficiently
familiar to our readers, but the cause may not be, therefore
we will endeavour to answer the question put by the old King
to Edgar.

The atmosphere affords almost daily indications of elec-
tricity. In fine weather, and generally at a time when no rain,
hail, or snow is falling, the electricity of the atmosphere will
be positive; and is negative generally when hail, snow, or
rain is falling. During storms accompanied by thunder,
lightning and rain, the electricity varies in amount and kind,
not unfrequently changing in quick succession, and at such
times usually settles into negative electricity. During the
passage of a cloud across the zenith, it often happens that
the electricity changes to negative, on the edge of the cloud
reaching the zenith—remains negative while the cloud is
passing, and again becomes positive on the cloud leaving the
zenith.

Lightning and thunder exhibit the phenomena of electri-
city on a large scale: the former is caused by the passage of
electricity between one cloud and another, or between a cloud
and the earth, and the latter is the noise produced by such
passage.

The air during a thunder-storm is sometimes so highly
charged with electricity, that it becomes visible in the midst
of the obscurity by a vivid light resting on all surrounding
bodies and particularly upon the water. Mention is made of
Luminous Rains, during which the ground seemed to be on
fire.

Some of the extraordinary effects of "the cross-blue light-
ning" which seems to "open the breast of heaven" are ex-
plained by the influence of the storm-clouds (cumulotratras),
in the upper region of the air, or atmosphere. The latter
attract, at the surface of the soil, an electricity contrary to

that with which they are charged. Frequently the pencils
of rays that one sees at the extremity of the points placed on
the conductor of an electric machine, when in motion, appear
in enlarged dimensions upon all kinds of salient objects,
metallic bars and uprights, the spires of belfries, and the
masts and yard-arms of ships.

Sometimes the clouds, during a storm, seem to give out a
continual emission of electricity, for they remain luminous a
long time. A physiologist, during a storm that he witnessed,
says:—

"Little by little a luminous point that made its appear-
ance in the midst of dense clouds, assumed breadth and
volume. It then, by imperceptible degrees, formed a zone,
or phosphorescent band, which revealed itself to my eyes as
about three feet in height; it at last subtended an angle of
sixty degrees."

There is a record of a storm in 1831 at Algiers, when some
French officers saw pencils of light at the ends of the hairs of
some of their comraces, and also luminous plumes at the ends
of their fingers.

Besides "the nimble stroke of quick cross-lightning" some
observers have described flashes of zig-zag lightning which
presented a slightly rounded form at the extremity where
they terminated; others have noticed what might be termed
arborescent or tree-shaped lightning, with extremely curved
ends with a tendency to terminate in balls of fire. Some
physiologists have described *globular lightning*, although they
have not yet been able to explain it or imitate it as they do
with ordinary lightning. It is entirely analogous, excepting
in dimensions, to the sparks of an electric battery. These
globes of fire, which are sometimes as large as a bomb, descend
to the ground with a motion slow enough to enable the ob-
server to note their shape. Their colour varies from dead
white to vivid red. Sometimes at the end of their course, a
plume seems to issue from them, and they explode with a
noise like that of a cannon, hurling zig-zag lightnings on all
sides of them, that produce the most fearful ravages.

The cold scientist may describe the phenomena of thunder
and lightning, by saying that "on the accumulation of clouds,
to a certain degree of density, and their approach towards the
surface of the earth, there ensues a stroke between the two,
of precisely the same character as the explosion of a charged
jar or battery, though incomparably more loud and luminous.

We have said enough about the science of thunder and
lightning. Our object is to gossip—our endeavour will be from
week to week to arrest the attention of those who take up a
book, as they take up anything else, merely *pour passer le
temps*, or as Coleridge says in English—for pass-time, or
kill-time. We hope none of our readers will come under the
class of spongers, which he describes as persons "who absorb
all they read, and return it nearly in the same state, only a
little dirtied."

We would rather address the *Mogul Diamonds*, "who profit
by what they read, and enable others to profit by it also."

Steam presses and penny literature we do not despise; yet
we cannot but think that the literature which embraced the
names of Shakespeare, Milton, Bacon, Hooker, and Jeremy
Taylor, carried with it deeper and more abiding marks than
the literature of this ephemeral era, when the duty of reading,
with the great majority, has gradually degenerated into the
pleasure of it.

Mountains, rocks, trees, seas, skies, clouds, the landscape
of Nature, have been touched by our painters, as it were, with
an enchanter's wand. Claude and Turner made Nature full
of poetry. Their works are like the doings of a poet who had
taken to the brush; their skies and clouds are wonderful
effects of colour and atmosphere. The latter had, perhaps, a
subtlety of expression, or rather a subtle power of expres-
sion, such as no other painter ever possessed; he has
made us familiar with every atmospheric phenomena but
thunder and lightning; these are impossible for the painter
on canvas, one of them requiring sound, the other absolute
light. What the brush cannot depict, poetry has graphically
described. Again, poetry has anticipated the philosophic
observer. We have culled from Shakespeare a few parallels on
the subject of thunder storms, incidents which probably he
had seen, and we trust our readers may experience some of
the pleasure we have had in arranging them, and may be in-
duced to search for additional illustrations of Meteorology in
the glorious mines from which the following are but broken
fragments. Let us turn to Julius Caesar, Act I., Scene 3.—A
street in Rome.—Thunder and lightning.—Enter Casca
and Cicero.

Cicero.—Why are you breathless? And why stare you so?

Casca.—Are you not mov'd when all the sway of earth
Shakes like a thing in fire? O, Cicero,
I have seen tempests, when the scolding winds
Have riv'd the knotty oaks; and I have seen
The ambitious ocean swell, and rage, and foam,
To be exalted with the threatening clouds,
But never till to-night, never till now,
Did I go through a tempest dropping fire.

Cicero.—Saw you anything more wonderful?

Casca.—A common slave (you know him well by sight)
Held up his left hand, which did flame, and burn
Like twenty torches joined; and yet his hand,
Not sensible of fire, remain'd unscorched.

It is true that Strabo, the philosopher, writeth, that divers
men were seen going up and down in fire, and furthermore
that there was a slave of the souldiers that did cast a marvel-
lous burning flame out of his hand, inasmuch as they that saw
it thought he had been burnt, when the fire was out, it was
found he had no hurt. But it is Shakespeare who speaks of "a
tempest dropping fire," and "stars with trains of fire," "blinding
flames," "terrible and nimble strokes of quick, cross light-
ning," "sulphurous and thought-executing fires."

In the account of the hurricane at Barbadoes in 1831, the
chroniclers speak of "darts of electric fire which were ex-
ploded in every direction," "fiery meteors falling from the
heavens, one in particular, of a globular form, its brilliancy,
and the spattering of its particles on meeting the earth gave
it the appearance of a body of quicksilver of equal bulk," "a
vast body of vapour appeared to touch the houses, and issued
downward flaming blazes which were nimble returned from
the earth upward," "at times the blackness in which the place
was enveloped was inexpressibly awful."

In Julius Caesar, Casca says:

"And yesterday the bird of night did sit
Even at noon-day, upon the market-place,
Hooting and shrieking."

In Hamlet, Act I., Scene 1, we have:

"As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood
Disasters in the sun, and the moist star,
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,
Was sick almost to dooms-day with colic."

At Bridgetown, the capital of Barbadoes, the whole of

the country was laid waste; no sign of vegetation was ap-
parent, the surface of the ground appeared as if fire had run
through the land scorching and burning up the productions
of the earth, "trees were rooted up by the blast," "the hor-
rible roar and yelling of the wind and the noise of the ocean
were frightful."

In King Lear, Act III., Scene 1, the old King is described
as:—

"Contending with the fretful element:
Rids the wind blow the earth into the sea,
Or swell the curled waters 'bove the main."

In another place Lear says:

"Blow, wind, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!
You envious traits and hurricanes, spout
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks.
And thou, all-shaking thunder,
Strike flat the thick rotundity of the world!
Crack Nature's moulds."

In the Tempest, Ariel says:

"Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,
I fling'd amazement: sometimes I'd divide,
And burn in many places: on the top-mast,
The yards and bowsprit, would I flame distinctly,
Then meet and join: Jove's lightnings, the procursors
Of the dreadful thunder claps, more momentary
And sight-out-running were not. The fire, and cracks
Of sulphurous roaring, the most mighty Neptune
Seem'd to besiege, and make his bold waves tremble,
Yea, his dread trident shake."

Again in Lear:

"You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers to the oak-cleaving thunder-bolts!"

Yet with all these fine lines we have not the sublimity of
that single expression in the book of Job, chap xxxviii., ver.
35. "Canst thou send Lightnings? or will they come, and
say to thee, HERE WE ARE?"

We, in the conclusion of this week's gossip, which may
appear to some fabulous—a fable—will apply a moral. Re-
member that while poor old Lear preaches to the raging ele-
ments, he preaches to the reader. What a memento of duty
to the wealthy and the opulent—the Dives of this world—are
the following words of the storm-beaten king:

"Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That hide the pelt of this filthy storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these? O! have ta'en
The little ear of this! Take physic, Pomp;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel;
That thou may'st shake the superflux to them
And show the heavens more just."

Art and Literature.

The Royal Academy of Scotland will give a dinner to Mr.
Thomas Faed, R. A., in May.

A tablet to the memory of Froissart has been placed in the
church of St. Etienne-du-Mont, in the Province of Hainault.

The first part of Mr. Swinburne's poem "Tristram," the pre-
lude to which appeared about a year ago, is about to be pub-
lished.

M. Guizot will shortly publish a book on "Imperialism,
Hereditary Monarchy, Constitutional Monarchy, and Republi-
canism."

The *New Berlin Musical Gazette* has discovered that the well-
known traveller, Madame Pfeiffer, was the original author of
the libretto of Meyerbeer's *Africaine*, and that Scribe remodelled
the text after Meyerbeer had composed part of the music.

An "Armorial of the Sovereigns and States of Europe," by
the Rev. John Woodward, is announced for publication. It will
include a history of the origin and use of every quartering borne
in every shield of the Sovereign princes of Europe; an account
of the various changes in the arms from the earliest period to
the present day, with copious pe ligures; and an account of the
origin, history, and present state of the different orders of
European chivalry.

Mr. Bontou, a dealer in curious books, has at his place in
Bristol what is doubtless the most valuable copy of the Bible
ever compiled. It represents the toll for thirty years of an
English collector of Biblical prints, engravings, drawings in oil
and water colours, and is roughly valued at \$10,000. Such sub-
jects as "Susanna and the Elders," or "Daniel in the Lions'
Den," are enriched with scores of illustrations drawn from every
field of art—the convent missals of the medieval ages, the
strange, fanciful, strikingly false drawing of the Italian masters,
the grotesque works of Dutch and German painters, and the
later and more truthful efforts of modern artists. In all, this
wonderful monument of loving devotion to a worthy hobby in-
cludes no less than 31,000 illustrations of various kinds, some of
them worth from \$50 to \$100 each, and extracts from some
thirty editions of the sacred text.

According to *Gilgiani*, a new process of cleaning pictures
has been discovered. The great difficulty has always been to
get off the old varnish, which by length of time has become
almost incorporated with the colour underneath, so that any
method employed to remove the upper surface is pretty certain
to carry off with it the delicate lines below. Some picture
dealers use corrosive substances, which make the matter worse.
An ingenious system has been discovered at Amsterdam, which
consists in simply spreading a coating of copahu balsam on the
old painting, and then keeping it face downwards over a dish of
the same size filled with cold alcohol at an altitude of about three
feet. The vapours of the liquid impart to the copahu a degree
of semi-fluidity, in which state it easily amalgamates with the
varnish it covers. Thus the original brilliancy and transparency
are regained without injuring the oil painting, and when the
picture is hung up in its place again two or three days after, it
looks as if it had been varnished afresh. The inventors have
given the public the benefit of their discovery. The process
has the merit of being a short one as compared with the old
methods.

OUR DIGESTIVE ORGANS.—The result of much scientific
research and experiment has within the last few years enabled
the medical profession to supply to the human system, where
impaired or infective, the power which assimilates our food.
This is now known as "Morsen's Pepsine," and is prescribed
as wine, globules, and lozenges, with full directions. The
careful and regular use of this valuable medicine restores the
natural functions of the stomach, giving once more strength
to the body. There are many imitations, but Morsen and Son,
the original manufacturers, are practical chemists, and the
"Pepsine" prepared by them is warranted, and bears their
labels and trade-mark. It is sold by all chemists in bottles
3s., and boxes from 2s. 6d., but purchasers should see the
name

6-12a

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