

For the Pearl.

ON THE CHURCHBELL TOLLING AT A FUNERAL.

The Churchbell's solemn peal I hear,
It fills my soul with awe.
Some one now drops a sacred tear
For his dear friend, but ah
What can such tears avail the dead,
Who has his final exit made.

Bright hopes of future fame once may
Have dwelt within his breast;
When he was young, when he was gay,
And fortune him cared,
He knew not then of this world's cares;
His many dangerous paths and snares.

His heart which now has ceas'd to beat,
Perhaps has loved like thine,
May oft have offer'd incense sweet,
And knelt at Beauty's shrine—
That lifeless clay may have contain'd,
A throne where virtue always reign'd.

Life's chequered scene with him is past,
He in the tomb will lie,
Until the last great trumpet's blast
Shall echo through the sky;
When lightning's glare and thunder's roar,
Proclaim that time shall be no more.

St. John N. B. }
Feb. 12, 1839. }

G. M. R.

DIALOGUE OF THE UNBORN.

SCENE—The air over Japan, half-a-mile above the earth.
Myrto and Erpius in their respective balloons.

Myrto. Good morning, Erpius! What a delightful surprise it is to meet you here! It was but yesterday I heard you were hunting eagles among the Ural mountains.

Erpius. That was quite true. I have travelled here overnight, having satisfied myself with the sport. I came here merely because there is to be dry weather in this quarter for several weeks; and, having a slight sore throat, I am desirous to avoid damp until I am quite well again. Had I thought of meeting you here, it would have proved an additional inducement. May I ask what cause has brought you here?

Myrto. I had no intention of being here; but my wife, Paulina, has a friend, a Japanese lady, and being very desirous of seeing her, she prevailed on me to accompany her. I left her with her friend only five minutes ago, and they are not ten miles off. I am merely sailing about here, enjoying the delicious air and sunshine, and amusing myself with my wife's pet pair of tame condors. There they are, over the top of that hill towards the north.

Erpius. Are you accompanied by any of your family?

Myrto. One little boy. The rest are all either at home or otherwise occupied; and on leaving we did not propose making any long stay. At first I thought my great-great-grandfather would have accompanied us; but he is beginning to get a little staid, and preferred remaining at home cultivating his flowers. Indeed, I do not wonder he likes quiet; for he is upwards of 150 years old.

Erpius. Oh, that is a trifle! One of my ancestors is 180 years old, and is to be married a second time, in a month, to a very nice person of 150. I think you must have met him at my table. His name is Pylas.

Myrto. What! old Pylas! I remember him perfectly. His sprightly conversation amused us all very much at a pic-nic party, conducted by your lovely Paulina, on the banks of one of the thousand branches of the Amazon. His contribution to the feast consisted of a splendid roasted rhinoceros, and a huge fragment of an iceberg for cooling the wine. But there was need for abundance; for I think the party consisted of 3000 at least. That was only three years ago; and I think Pylas had then a wife alive, and a fresh and fair wife, too.

Erpius. His wife died soon afterwards, at the age of 140. It was surmised that she had shortened her life by excessive indulgence in stimulating gasses. In fact, she was always helping herself to a gulp of exhilarating gas, or cephalic gas, or melancholic gas, or imaginative gas, or tranquilizing gas, or some such article. She made two gasmakers' fortunes, and never travelled without an assortment of gasses, in the most condensed form. However, *de mortuis nil nisi bonum* is a maxim we must not forget.

Myrto. You may forget it when you will for me; it seems to inculcate that charity should be most displayed where it can be of least use. I would say *de mortuis nil nisi verum*. But, pray, tell me how you mean to spend your time in this region? I presume that, being in rather delicate health, you will not pass your nights, nor even the whole of your days, in the air. Your apparatus, too, seems scarcely calculated for that.

Erpius. Oh, this is a mere hunting apparatus, of small size, and wants, as you see, the self-acting plummet-works for keeping its place in the air during all changes of wind. But I have frequently passed the night in this little bark; and, in the present steady weather, I can easily adjust it before going to sleep, so as to find myself within ten miles at farthest when I awake. It is a London-made article, and acts admirably.

Myrto. The London ones are still the best; those made in Cen-

tral Asia are cheaper; but, if you happen to get into the middle of a thunder storm with one of them, it is very apt to give out a bad smell.

Erpius. As to passing the night in the air, I have not thought of that one way or other. I am fond of the air, and am well provided with the means of securing a uniform temperature.

Myrto. Let me urge you, my dear friend, on no account to sleep in the air. Damp or electrical clouds, passing across, frequently produce mischief, independently altogether of change of temperature. Had you consulted our friend Dr. Abercrombie on the point, I feel assured he would have agreed with me.

Erpius. To him then let us leave it. It so happens that this is just the hour when he is to be consulted at his own house at Edinburgh. Let us adjourn to the next electrical telegraph, and we shall have his answer in two minutes.

Myrto. I am delighted to have the opportunity of getting the Doctor's opinion. There is the telegraph, not two miles off, and we shall be there as soon as you can frame your question. Now, then, get ready; for I see the telegraph keeper at the door of his bureau.

Erpius.—(Addressing the officer of the Telegraph.)—Will you have the goodness to dispatch this message, and say when I may expect an answer?—(giving him a scrap of writing.)

Officer. The time required will consist of that occupied in sending the message from the telegraph-bureau in Edinburgh to the house of your friend; and in receiving his answer, and carrying it back at the rate of fifty miles an hour, with the addition of half a minute for the operation of the telegraph. I now despatch it.

Myrto. Can you tell us what changes are now in contemplation on the telegraphs?

Officer. I do not hear of much. It is said that the Telegraphic Council have now under consideration the best means of extending one to the North Pole, for the use of the population there, which is now pretty numerous, as in summer many people go there who dislike night; and, in winter, astronomers resort there, that they may be constantly making observations; besides numerous young men, for the purpose of fishing and hunting. It is also a great resort for pleasure parties at all times of the year. But numerous complaints have been made of the defective state of the communications. The nearest telegraph is at Spitzbergen, which is several hours distant.

Myrto. I have myself experienced the inconvenience, having a year ago made one of a pleasure party to the North Pole. Nothing could be more strange, amounting almost to pain, than the consciousness that you were cut off from the great mass of humanity by so dreary an interval. An ingenious attempt was made to communicate by the aurora borealis, but without success.

Officer. Here is your answer:—"Dr. Abercrombie advises Erpius not to sleep in the air; at all events, not unless he has got the protective nictitating nightcap."

Erpius. As I have not got the nightcap, I shall Myrto, follow your and the Doctor's advice.

Myrto. You do well; and I can ensure you a comfortable sleeping-place. But we have still time, if you are so inclined, to enjoy the beautiful twilight, by making a run across the island.

Erpius. With all my heart. (They proceed together in their balloons.) And now, Myrto, tell me what you of the Great Council of Europe are about?

Myrto. That is a wide question; and it is almost needless to go into detail at present, as the whole will be stated in our report to the Annual Universal Meeting, which will take place within three weeks.

Erpius. At least, tell me, was your last calendar of offences a heavy one?

Myrto. I lament to say it was. The state of Ireland has given the Council considerable anxiety. Offences, under the head of culpable ignorance, still prevail to an extent unknown in any other part of the globe. In one case, in particular, a schoolmaster in the south of Ireland was convicted of having his pupils in such a state that boys of eight years committed several errors in the differential calculus; while, in the higher branches, particularly in the doctrine of encyclopedic ratios, a gross degree of ignorance and misconception prevailed. This aggravated case was certified by the European council to the next Universal Meeting; and it is thought the teacher will be sentenced to suffer three consecutive sarcasms from the president.

Erpius. A dreadful sentence! to be sneered at before the whole world!

Myrto. Then we had much about the usual number of cases of selfishness from Scotland, insincerity from France, and so on. One Russian magnate was convicted of omitting the proper mark of respect to a peasant's wife.

Erpius. Has the Council as yet done anything regarding the great educational question of teaching ancient history to the children?

Myrto. Nothing has been done, farther than much copious discussion. The idea, however, seems to gain ground, that ancient history should either be wholly excluded, or, at least, restricted to the more advanced classes. There is, in fact, a large party who seem as much ashamed of being descended of our ancestors of the nineteenth and preceding centuries, as it is related these

ancestors themselves were scandalized with a theory, propounded at that time, that mankind were merely improved orang outangs, and had originally tails. It has actually been proposed, that the whole records of ancient history, from the end of the nineteenth century backwards, should be utterly destroyed, with the exception of the sacred writings; and excepting also a complete library in each of the four quarters of the globe, under the control of the respective General Councils.

Erpius. The facts of history are, unquestionably, of a sort not to be readily introduced into the youthful mind. The existence, nay, the universal prevalence of so dreadful a practice as war, the shedding of human blood, the every-day perpetration of fraud and violence in a thousand shapes—tyranny, slavery, democratical violence, vulgarity, and brutality: all these things having now been so completely banished from the face of the globe, it is not necessary that the youth of the world should be too early familiarized with the ideas of them; and I incline to the opinion that, by prematurely accustoming them to such objects of contemplation, there may be danger of rousing the dormant mischief within their bosoms; for human nature is still essentially the same as it was three hundred years ago.

Myrto. I go along with you to a considerable extent; but I doubt the policy of excluding from the education of youth anything with which it is necessary or proper they should be acquainted in mature age; and I cannot but differ from those who would banish, as much as possible, the records of history from the contemplation of mankind. If these records shew, in fearful perspective, ages of blood, and tears, and toil; yet by these sufferings were laid the solid basis on which the present beautiful fabric of human society is built.

Erpius. It would, undoubtedly, argue a weakness of mind, to avert one's eyes from any part of human history. We must embrace the whole subject from the acorn to the oak, before it can be truly useful or even interesting. How can we fully relish the calm, unless we know the evils of the storm?

Myrto. We owe an infinite debt of gratitude to our predecessors, for struggling through the evils of life in a world which offered them little but discomfort, and which we can compare only to a house without doors or windows, and totally unfurnished. Only conceive the greater portion of the human race spending one-half of every year, shivering from a too low temperature, and groping about in comparative darkness, while, to the opulent few, uncomfortable means of light and warmth were supplied, by the dreary and dangerous toil of multitudes in subterraneous mines, and on oceans whose dangers they knew not how to overcome. It is by such considerations only, that we can appreciate those discoveries now so familiar to us, by which we can extract light and heat directly from the elements themselves, by merely evolving and calling into activity that which is at all times and everywhere present.

Erpius. Perhaps the earth, at that time, more resembled what was called a haunted house, two-thirds of its best apartments being locked up and rendered useless, on account of some goblin which the inmates had not skill to exorcise. Those glorious countries upon the equator, which now supply the world with food, and luxuries, and products of every kind, were then haunted by yellow fevers, agues, plagues, or other mischiefs, worse than the wild beasts, snakes, or mosquitoes; and thus our impotent ancestors fell the victims of that exuberant nature which is to us so tractable and invaluable a handmaid. They even knew no easy mode of purifying the air intended for respiration. From their miserable means of locomotion, the labourers' hours of recreation and repose were passed in the less salubrious atmosphere which brooded over the scene of his toil; instead of his being lightly wafted twenty, fifty, or a hundred miles, to a smiling cottage, on some sunny hill-side, where the purest breath of heaven might expand his lungs, and fill his heart with cheerfulness.

Myrto. Much also of that, as of many other evils, arose from the necessity of the population being so stationary. It was not enough, as now, that the people should be in those regions during the seasons of cultivation and of harvest; they were necessarily kept there during all the year round, to brave the trying vicissitudes of the rainy season, and of the scorching summer suns. Indeed, there is scarcely any region of the earth where it is salutary to remain the whole year round, even for the strongest constitution; to say nothing of the unpleasantness of a long, cold, cheerless winter, such as that of Russia, or even of Scotland.

Erpius. How wretched to be imprisoned in a country during the whole of a winter, a rainy season, or a hot season, instead of following the gracious sun into those climates where, for the time, his happiest influence dispenses beauty and salubrity, as all who are so inclined can now do. Indeed the human race could not then be said to possess the world so much as to subsist upon it. Each individual was nailed to a little locality, like a limpet to his native rock, and to roam was to incur danger and distress.

Myrto. It was ever the belief of our species, that the world was made for their use; yet the greater part of its resources remained, for thousands of years, unproductive. Until the nineteenth century, little had been done towards establishing rapid communication on land; and, at the same era, the use of steam first, in reality, conferred a partial command of the seas. These imperfect contrivances have since been superseded by agents