

The "Inferno" of Civilization.

THE PAPER'S FILE.

"Through me you enter the abode of woe. Through me you pass into eternal pain. Through me among the spirits lost you go. So Justice by her Creator did constrain. Thus Dante saw, in ages long since gone. Went on the gates of Hell, by honey borne. He trod its circles horrible and vast. Saw tortures endless, while the demons ply Their scourges on the lake of liquid fire. While under it uncounted numbers lie. Hopeless front out fit ever to aspire To the mild Purgatorial realm beyond. Where Hope might whisper in their ear again. Of blessedness, when at the last from land Of sin released, they might hope to gain The heavenly cities, and behold the light. No longer lurid, and the light not seen. That enshines up the heavenly vessel's flight Into the presence of the "Holy Three." Sad was the vision of the "Inferno" seen. Even in fancy, yet in England here, Is an "Inferno" made by human law. Where wretches lie and suffer year by year. And Gollum sees his children die. Famine slowly for the want of bread. Till fathers' hearts are broken with their cry. And envy those who slumber with the dead. Forgive me if my tale should weary some. While on couches richly curtained o'er. I would relate it, ere kind Death shall come. To bear me with him to the further shore. What if it be to Hell of Dante? I Have known such sorrows that I fear it not. Here on this earth, in bitterest misery. For many a year "Inferno" was my lot. Where was my sin that I should suffer so? And wherefore were my children also slain? Yet happy they, that they should quickly go From this sad world, and endless rest attain. For they at least were innocent and pure. What'er remains for me, for them is rest. If Heaven exists, as I was taught of yore. They must have found it, and are with the blest. And she, my partner, true through good and ill. And oh alas! how far more ill than good. Unmurmuring, and ever faithful still. When hope was lost, her love all change with stood. If some men's sins to judgment go before. Did ours not go? Verchance we suffered this. As the old scape goats whom the Jewish law Chased from their camp, with insult and with hiss. To bear the wrath of God for others' sake. Perhaps you think I speak in blasphemy: Grief must have vent or else my heart will break. I am no Job to hold my peace and die.

I was the younger of two children, born Within the outskirts of the city, vast As nations in her numbers:—our life's dawn No cloud obscured, no shadow overcast. Would I had never lived to see that sun. Whose light for years has wearied me to see. Yet then all joyously my race was run. In pleasant ways I dwelt, and joyed to be. Thus years passed by, I feared the violin. And loved its speaking music to evoke: It seemed to me a spirit dwelt within. And each emotion of the heart awoke By turns, beneath its influences, separate. Love, peace, or honor, joy, and grief and pain. Or sometimes breathed the voice of earnest prayer. Ah how I loved to listen to the strains! I played the measures that I knew so well. And still new beauties grew upon my ear. Under the magic of its fall and swell. Now a soft melody, and now high and clear. This was my happy time, I joined a set Of young musicians, sweetly passed the days. By turns we sang each other's houses near. To play in concert, chants, and hymns of praise. Or songs we sang together: "Home, Home." And many a song of Tompion or Burns. Arose to heaven beneath the summer moon. While many a heart a softer lesson learns. Time passed two years, and then I met with her Whom now for evermore, I loved, and love Through all eternity, and thought will stir My blood when I remember—far above All other happiness, was it to meet My Beatrice, robed and veiled as sweet. Mingled and met in melody as sweet. As angels' chorals, freed from pain and sin. Soon we were wedded, swiftly passed the days. And two fair children stilled upon our life. I had no money troubles; many ways I had of earning bread for child and wife. I did not think the liver of all good. Verchance enough for that his hand bestowed. For soon our troubles came, I understood. There had been fever down the country road Where we lived. One day a burning pain Came on me as I rose from off my bed. Then passed away, and then it came again. And my face flushed a deep and burning red. I knew no more till weeks had come and gone. Then I returned to consciousness and found My tender wife with features wan and worn Beside my bed, but gone was earthly sound. Gone was the joy of life to me, the thrill Of harmony, no more would violin bear Its message to my ears, or organ fill With stormy music, lightning pain and care. Nor was this all, for with sound passed away My means of living, music was my trade. Of hearing occupations. Wife would say "Your friends will help you," with a smile which made My tears flow over, for full well I knew There was no hope, excepting in some work Fit for a laborer; I would pursue Some unskilled labor; but at heart would lurk Dire apprehension, that I should not price Employment in a market overstocked With unskilled labor; but some men are kind. They heard my story, perhaps with feelings shocked. At the disaster that had wrecked my life; And for a time I had some work in hand, Hard work it was, but thinking of my wife And children, I worked eagerly and planned To use it as a stepping stone, to save Enough to start a tiny shop at last. But work fell off, and my employer gave Notice to leave; with other men I passed An anxious time in seeking everywhere For work, and day by day our goods were pawned. And deeper grew anxiety and care. As day by day went by, and still there dawned No hope of work, and at last hunger stared With wretched eyes into each troubling soul. To die were easy if I had but dared. To take my life, and so attain the goal Of many desperate mortals; but I feared To murder soul and body in the act. And yet full oft to me it then appeared As hardly sinful, when so hunger racked. To take our lives; and yet in all the pain Of mind and body, no reproachful word Passed Beatrice's lips, for to complain She knew my brain to madness would have stirred. And so she smiled and spoke of better days In store for us; as people make believe, And told their misery with fancy's rays. Then so we strove each other to deceive.

And yet I saw her wasting, day by day. Thinner and thinner grew the lovely face. Or hectic colour on the cheeks would play. And then I saw that now her earthly race Must end unless some work could soon be found. I think that day I lost my reason, all My brain seemed wilding; out I went around The city market, there upon a stall I saw some meat, in shadow of a door. And thought I was not noticed—this I touched. As if to please it, surely no one saw. Another moment, eagerly I clutched And fled away for home. A sudden blow Stretched me upon the earth. I rose and found A hand upon my collar. Would she know I thought, and longed to hide beneath the ground. With sudden shame. What need to tell thereof? The gazing eyes about. I could not plead. Even for pity, yet in my mind's breast Was a dim feeling, if they knew indeed The misery which urged me, they might spare To add thereto. Yet, I was dead and dumb Because an agony too great to bear Precluded utterance from my lips to come. And so I left the dock. Three months went by Within a prison cell, and all the while I heard within my ears my children's cry. And saw my Beatrice's pale lips smile Trying to cheer them to the last, my name I did not give the constable, none knew My home, and thus I thought to spare her shame. And was so careful not to leave a clue. Last she should suffer, if perchance she heard That I had been convicted as a thief. Yet now, alas! I could have wished some word Had been sent to her, for perhaps the grief Had been less bitter, if she knew that I Had not deserted her, when all seemed lost. Lonely and helpless in her misery. I found at last how much my silence cost. Had I foreseen the tidings brought by fate. On my release, I should have tried to tell At least where I was living. Late, too late! To save the beings that I loved so well. At last I was released, and homeward sped. To find it empty. Neighbors of the dim When questioned about Beatrice said, That she obtained plain sewing, but the sum Was all too small to feed them—they were dead. Perhaps you say, she should have entered in The last dire refuge of the destitute. And look upon it as a deadly sin To shun the workhouse. Well she rested the fruit. She knew full well that if above the ground I should return, and finding they had gone. Through the vast city should have searched around. And never found them. Faithful she had borne Unto the last her troubles. Children died Both in two days, and then she passed away. I found their graves, and shortly by their side I hope to mingle with the churchyard clay. Henry B. Black. Hyde Court, Gloucestershire, England.

How a Foolish Prince Learned a Lesson.

There was a young prince who could not bear the sight of a spider or a fly. "They are such ugly creatures that I cannot bear to look at them," he said. "They are never of any use and I can not see why they were made. I should like nothing better than to know that every one of them had been killed." In course of time this young prince became a man, and was made a general in the king's army. One day a great battle was fought, and he was so beset by his enemies that he was obliged to hide himself in a thick wood. Being very tired he lay down in the shade of a spreading oak and fell asleep. While he was thus sleeping he was discovered by one of his enemies, who crept quietly toward him, intending to kill him. But just at that moment a horsefly bit the prince on the hand and awakened him. He sprang up quickly, and seeing his danger, drew his sword to defend himself. But the coward, who had hoped to take him by surprise, turned about and ran away as fast as his legs could carry him. Several days after this the prince, being still closely followed by his enemies, concealed himself in a cave not far from the seashore. He had been there but a short time when a spider came out from under a rock and wove its web across the cave door. Even before the spider had left off its weaving several soldiers who were searching for the prince passed that way. "See this cave!" said one. "Very likely he has hidden himself within; let us stop and see." "Nonsense," said the others, "do you not see the spider's web across the door? How could he go inside without brushing that down?" And without another word they all hurried on and made no stop. The prince, who had heard their words, raised his hand toward heaven and thanked the maker of all things for his goodness. Afterwards, when he had driven all his enemies out of the country, he was fond to telling everybody of the lesson he had learned from the spider and the fly. And never, so long as he lived, could he bear to see anyone hurt the smallest creature.—Selected.

It is a common belief in the rural districts of all countries that when hogs carry straw or sticks in their mouths rain will soon follow. The oldest known apple tree in America is in Cheshire, Conn. The seed was planted 140 years ago, and the tree still bears a few apples.

Cloud and Sunshine in Every Life.

Yours of Rev. Dr. Van Dyke of New Jersey.

Over every human life, however bright the sunshine, a cloud may come. Every person covets what he chooses to consider success, some riches, some fame, some pleasure, some domestic felicity. No one, however, realizes all his ambitions—indeed, not all are worth realizing. There is always a something which mars happiness—possibilities of anguish in every condition, spots weaker than others in the strongest bar of steel, the capability of tannish in the purest gold, spots on the sun. A person's weaknesses—consequently his sources of suffering—may be just beside his strongest traits of character. He may be honest, but overreacting; strong willed, but obstinate; economical, but penurious; just, but unmerciful, courageous, but censorious; affectionate, but passionate. Unselfishness may sharpen daggers that pierce the heart, and intensity of affection may be a pledge of keenest pangs. A person, it may be, acquires riches, but health is gone, or domestic happiness has taken departure, or waters of grief are flooding the soul. Prominently successful along some lines, he is conspicuously unsuccessful along others. It takes but little to render a person miserable, it takes much to render some happy. As it needs only a trifle to prevent wealth from producing contentment is it a mark of wisdom to sacrifice for its acquisition that which is of more value—health, comfort, reputation, character, principle, conscience—the hope of an eternal world? "And man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth." Does the river consist in the driftwood? Is carrying to the ocean? "Five feathers make fine birds," but a fine residence and a fine equipage are not capable of always making the heart merry. Of those who covet fame, some win the prize; but cares increase, responsibilities augment, disappointments multiply and arrows of envy become keener and more numerous. He who courts public favor courts a fickle dame, one who, disqualified to bestow happiness, may flatter littleness and contempt greatness. In history there are few sadder chapters than those which record the cares, worries and reverses of some who acquired prominence. Moses was a mighty man, but he was driven into exile, and sleeps in an unknown grave. Elijah was a rare specimen of true greatness, but Ahab's folly and Jezebel's hatred came near driving him to suicide. Daniel was a great man, but for his peculiar species of greatness Nebuchadnezzar thought a lion's den the fittest place. Isaiah was a man of rare strength of character, but Manasseh laid him between planks and sawed him in twain. Such a desire to see the emptiness of human greatness would do well to read the biographies of the kings, sixty in number, who during six hundred years ruled the Eastern Roman Empire, its capital Constantinople, and they may be inclined to thank God that they are permitted to live in obscurity. Is the Scriptural admonition, "Be humble," unworthy of notice? The man who is on his back in the cellar can get no lower—one thing for which he may be thankful. The man on the housetop may grow dizzy, and, falling, may suddenly terminate his exalted career. Most persons desire to be on the mountain summit, few prefer the valley, though the winds are less fierce and the storms less violent. On every human life, however dark the overhanging cloud, there may be sunshine. It is never so dark that it can be no darker. Discouragements are never so many that there are no grounds for thankfulness. A cloud on every pathway and sunshine possible in every heart. A burden on every life, and no soul that way not thrill with joy. A crook in every lot, and no crook so tortuous that it may not end in celestial bliss. No trail without its alleviations. Poverty imparts energy, fosters self-reliance, prompts to industry and teaches us to prize the blessings we have without murmuring over those we have not. Ill-health forces attention to the laws of health, sweetens the disposition and directs attention to the nearness of eternity's curtain. Bereavements have their alleviating compensations. Obscurity has its special advantages. Physical disabilities have their compensations.

The dead are saying much that is better. The blind can see no more. The person who cannot resist from the temptation to run into the last foot-ball game. The person who cannot resist from the temptation to run into the last foot-ball game. The person who cannot resist from the temptation to run into the last foot-ball game.

It is well to observe that all things considered different from that of mountain has both rocks and the valley floods as well as beams love.—New York fl.

Flower Missions.

I am a firm believer in flower missions. Nothing so sweet and pure as the flowers could be created for mere beauty. The world brighter and better in their presence. They are teachers of duty in good and true. Those who have seen engaged in flower mission work can tell many a pleasing but true stories of the effect even a single flower on deep distress and women. One could not walk through a street or court in the tenement house districts of any city with a bouquet without many eager requests for a flower. The ragged, dirty, uncared for children of the street would crowd around with uplifted hands and eager voices, calling out: "Give me a flower!" "Won't you give me one?" "Please give me just one!" In the great railway stations of any of our large cities are low, zinc lined boxes filled with water and flowers. The flowers are the gift of those living in the suburbs, but who come daily to the city bringing with them large or small bouquets of flowers for their own gardens. Three or four times a day come men, or girls, or it may be older persons, to the stations and take the flowers to the sick and the poor in all parts of the city. The hospitals and charitable institutions and tenement house districts are visited and the blossoms are distributed among those who would never see a flower but for this beautiful charity. There are those who are unable to make light of this kind of work, even to sneer at it as a piece of sentimental nonsense, but this is generally belong to the class who are engaged in doing anything to the world better or happier. No man is than over sneers at the well known method of others to do good, even though the method adopted may not seem the best. Some one has well explained the purpose of this work in the following words: "Flower-mission work is an embodiment of three distinct thoughts: first, the recognition of its beautiful as a part of God's purpose of pain and suffering as having its place in His economy; third, the identification of the two with the thought of willing suffering from the strong and beautiful to those in sorrow and pain." There is something more than mere sentiment in these three thoughts. Some of the sweetest and most profitable lessons can be taught through the medium of the flowers. If there are any flower missions in your town or city give them your thought and your services, and a blessing will come to you as well as to others. To know how to be silent is more difficult, and more profitable than how to speak. Don't measure things from the scale of your own speciality. The man who cannot drive a horse may be worth a 10,000-ton steamship. In what month do women have their monthly? In February, because it has only eight days to talk in, whilst the men have thirty and thirty one. A naughty little boy was because his mother wouldn't let him down to the river on the sabbath on being admonished, said want to go in swimming with I only wanted to go down and the bad little boys get drowned in swimming on Sunday.