

RHYMES FROM RUCKERT.

The two following sonnets are taken from a collection entitled *Aprilreiseblätter*, (Leaves from an April journey,) of which they are the 66th and 81st.

I.

Nature and man are constantly at war ;
The crooked lines, which, in her sportive glee,
On stone and ledge she traces joyously—
Fond man will never leave them as they are,
But makes them straight ; each rude rock he must square,
To yield him planks, forsooth, must train the tree.
Thus rocks and trees curb'd to his ends must be,
And from his home the eagle he must scare.
But, when these arts wild nature would engage,
And her free sports would chuck with formal chain,
She stirs herself, high swelling in her rage.—
Then the plank moulders till it cracks in twain,
Then springs green moss from walls that shake with age ;—
Nature stands free, where ends proud arts domain.

II.

Heav'n is a scroll, the hand of God holds fast—
A mighty scroll, with ground of azure-blue,
Which to this hour hath kept its constant hue ;
E'en to this vast World's end that hue shall last,
And mystic words, which from God's mouth have pass'd,
Are written on this scroll with cyphers true ;
Yet lest it be unrolled to mortal view
As a great seal the Sun is on it plac'd.
When from the scroll night takes the seal away
A thousand signs beam to the wand'ring eye,
Which but one mighty hieroglyph display,
Telling that "God is love—love ne'er can lie."
And this one phrase—no Understanding may
Interpret it—its import is so high !

BILLARD'S ADVENTURE IN A WELL.

The story of the unfortunate Dufavel, who was buried accidentally in a well, and remained in it for a long period, is not without a parallel in the story of mining transactions in France. In the department of the Indre, and parish of Fleure-la-Riviere, March 27, 1837, about half-past eight in the morning, Etienne Billard, a working mason, descended a well one hundred and twenty feet deep, for the purpose of examining it preparatory to some repairs. When he had reached the bottom, or nearly so, an extensive portion of the sides fell in upon him, and shut him out from the light of day ; but, by a remarkable piece of good fortune, the materials, in falling, formed a small arch of about three feet in diameter around his head. Had it not been for this, he would have been either fatally hurt by the heavy stones of the masonry, or would have been suffocated immediately. Every other part of the well around his body was filled compactly with the fallen materials. The noise of the irruption was heard by some workmen near the spot, who immediately ran up to it. On listening intently, they heard the cries of Billard, and the certainty that he was yet alive inspired the hope of delivering him. Sending off one of their number to alarm the neighbouring inhabitants and authorities, these workmen then lowered a lighted candle down the well, the danger of a farther fall of the sides deterring themselves from going down. The candle went down one hundred feet, thus showing that about twenty feet of the mass, or a considerable portion thereof, lay above the unfortunate Billard. In reply to their call, he was heard distinctly to say that he could not see any thing of the light. "I am assured," he moreover said, "that I am a lost man. But I suffer no pain, and I breathe freely."

No ordinary difficulty, it was obvious, stood in the way of relief in this case. For workmen to descend into the narrow deep well, and attempt to clear away the ruins, without some security against a farther fall of the sides, was a dangerous task. The authorities of the district, as soon as they arrived, and saw the nature of the accident, sent off an express for the district superintendant of roads and bridges, Monsieur Certain. He was at some distance, and did not arrive till next day. In the mean time, one man, a slater, ventured to descend to the top of the fallen mass of stones and earth, which proved, as had been shown by the candle, to be about one hundred feet below the orifice. Urged by the indistinct cries for help which they heard from poor Billard, the men on the spot began to lift the stones forming the sides of the well. When Monsieur Certain arrived, he descended without hesitation into the well, and put several questions to Billard respecting his situation. M. Certain judged it proper to continue the raising of the sides of the well, as the displacement of the lower part would render it most imprudent to go on otherwise. No side boring could be executed with such speed as the whole well could be cleared. The soil, fortunately, was clayey and firm. While this labour was going on day and night, with the utmost rapidity compatible with a proper degree of caution, the friends and fellow workmen of Billard descended occasionally to animate him with the cheering sound of kindly voices, and with the assurance that help was near.

On the morning of the 29th, the governor and head engineer of the department of the Indre arrived. M. Ferrand, inspector of works, was with them, and descended into the well. He gave his assent to the continuation of the operations going on, which some of the anxious friends of the prisoner were beginning to exclaim against, from their seeming slowness. In presence of the gentlemen mentioned, the labours were continued, and on the evening of the 29th the well was clear to the upper part of the fallen mass. Without delay, the process of lifting them was begun ; but from the size of the stones, the work went on very tardily, through the difficulty of hoisting them to such a distance above. After they had advanced a certain way, a new difficulty met them in the face. It was impossible to tell the exact state of the arch formed so miraculously over the head of the unfortunate man, or its degree of stability. It was necessary, therefore, to go on with the elevation of the stones with extreme care and delicacy, otherwise the unsettlement of any portion of the heavy masses above him might have caused his instantaneous death, either from a crush or suffocation.

At ten o'clock in the evening of the 29th, the workmen were calculated to be about six feet above the captive, who had now been shut out from the light since the morning of the 27th. It was impossible to send him food by a bore as in the case of Dufavel, and he had therefore the pressure of hunger added to his misery. His voice was heard more clearly as the workmen went on, and they could now even tell the exact point where he was confined. But during the night of the 29th his voice became a source of fear and alarm to the labourers above him. Billard's motionless condition, his want of food and air for so long a time, began to overthrow his moral courage. His reason gave place to delirium, his hope to despair. The workmen heard him at one moment lamenting his fate and piteously crying for food, and at the next moment they heard him abandoning himself to the most extravagant gaiety. Laughter heard in such a situation was a thing almost too deplorable and shocking for human ears to listen to. When consulted on the meaning of the symptoms on the part of Billard, M. Nabert, a surgeon who had never quitted the spot since the time of the accident, recommended the workmen to hurry on their labours, as the man could probably survive but a few hours in this state.

In consequence of this advice, a new direction was given to the work, and in place of passing down by the side of the spot where the poor man was supposed to be, the excavation was carried slopingly down to his head. In fine, after three days and three nights of incessant toil, the head of Billard was reached, and cleared of all surrounding matter. The instant that this took place, it was notified to those above by a cry, and the deafening shouts that were immediately raised, showed what an assemblage had gathered around the place to learn the issue of the case. The deliverance took place exactly a quarter of an hour before eleven o'clock in the morning of the 30th. When raised once more to the daylight, every precaution was taken to prevent any bad effects from a change so sudden. He was carried to a neighbouring house, with his body and head well wrapped up, and there he was laid in an apartment, from which the light was in a great measure excluded. After some spoonfuls of light broth and a little wine had been administered to him, he fell immediately asleep, never having tasted that blessing during his confinement. Before sleeping, he had spoken in such a way as to show that his mind had recovered its tone. His pulse was weak but quick, beating 126 times in a minute ; his skin was cold, his thirst burning, and his tongue stuck almost to the roof his mouth. While confined, he had eaten a portion of the leather front of his cap or bonnet, and he had even, he said, endeavoured to grind with his teeth a stone that lay before his mouth.

Etienne Billard soon recovered. His imprisonment had not been so protracted as to render the vital heat difficult of restoration. His body, however, though not mangled or bruised, as it might have been expected to be, retained for a long time a feeling of dull pain, from the pressure that had been exerted upon it.

SPANISH WOMEN.—The Spanish women are very interesting. What we associate with the idea of female beauty, is not perhaps very common in this country. There are seldom those seraphic countenances, which strike you dumb, or blind, but faces in abundance which will never pass without commanding admiration. Their charms consist in their sensibility. Each incident, every person, every word, touches the fancy of a Spanish lady, and her expressive features are constantly confuting the creed of the Muslem. But there is nothing quick, harsh, or forced about her. She is extremely unaffected, and not at all French. Her eyes gleam rather than sparkle, she speaks with vivacity, but in sweet tones ; and there is in all her carriage, particularly when she walks, a certain dignified grace which never deserts her, and which is very remarkable.

The general female dress in Spain is of black silk, called a *basquina*, and a black silk shawl, with which they usually envelop their heads, called a *mantilla*. As they walk along in this costume in an evening, with their soft, dark eyes dangerously conspicuous, you willingly believe in their universal charms. They are remarkable for the beauty of their hair. Of this they are

very proud, and indeed its luxuriance is only equalled by the attention which they lavish on its culture. I have seen a young girl of fourteen, whose hair reached her feet, and was as glossy as the curl of a contessa. All day long, even to the lowest order they are brushing, curling, and arranging it. A fruit-woman has her hair dressed with as much care as the Duchess of Ossana. In the summer, they do not wear their mantilla over their heads, but show their combs, which are of very great size. The fashion of those combs varies constantly. Every two or three months you may observe a new form. It is the part of the costume of which a Spanish woman is most proud. The moment that a new comb appears, even a servant girl will run to the melter's with her old one and thus with the cost of a dollar or two, appear the next holiday in the newest style. These combs are worn at the back of the head. They are of tortoise-shell, and with the very fashionable, they are white. I sat next to a lady of high distinction at a bull-fight at Seville. She was the daughter-in-law of the captain-general of the province, and the most beautiful Spaniard I ever met. Her comb was white, and she wore a mantilla of blonde, without doubt extremely valuable, for it was very dirty. The effect, however, was charming. Her hair was glossy black, her eyes like an antelope's, and all her other features deliciously soft. She was further adorned, which is rare in Spain, with a rosy cheek, for in Spain our heroines are rather sallow. But they counteract this slight defect by never appearing until twilight, which calls them from their bowers, fresh, though languid, from the late siesta.

The only fault of the Spanish beauty is, that she too soon indulges in the magnificence of enloupment. There are, however, many exceptions. At seventeen, a Spanish beauty is poetical. Tall, lithe, and clear, and graceful as a jennet, who can withstand the summer lightning of her soft and languid glance ! As she advances, if she do not lose her shape, she resembles Juno rather than Venus. Majestic she ever is, and if her feet be less twinkling than in her first bolero, look on her hand, and you'll forgive them all.

ENGLISHMAN ASCENDING VESUVIUS.

The Countess of Blessington, in her recent work, "The Idler in Italy," remarks that travelling English make the worst appearance abroad of all nations, on account of the large portion of uneducated men whom wealth allows, amongst us, to quit their country for a season. The traces of this in continental albums are, she says, very conspicuous. The following is a grotesque picture presented by her ladyship of a fellow-countryman whom she found toiling up the slopes of Vesuvius.

"A most piteous sight was presented to us by the ascent of a very fat elderly Englishman, who commenced this painful operation at the same time that we did. He was, like me, preceded by a guide with leathern straps, to which he adhered with such vigorous tenacity, as frequently to pull down the unfortunate man, who complained loudly. The lava, gravel, and cinders, put in motion by the feet of his conductor, rolling on those of the fat gentleman, extorted from him sundry reproaches, to which, however, the Italian was wholly insensible, not understanding a word of English. The rubicund face of our countryman was now become of so dark a crimson, as to convey the idea of no slight danger from an attack of apoplexy ; and it was bathed in a profuse perspiration, which fell in large drops on his protuberant stomach. Being afraid to let go the leather straps for even an instant, he was in a pitiable dilemma how to get at his pocket handkerchief. One of our party offered to take out his pocket handkerchief, seeing how much he stood in need of it ; an offer which he thankfully accepted, but explained that his pocket was secured by buckles on the inside, to prevent his being robbed ; a precaution, he added, that he well knew the necessity of, as those Lazaretos (*Lazaroni* he meant) would not otherwise leave a single article in it. It required no little portion of ingenuity to separate the pocket inside ; and while the operation was performing, he kept praying that his purse, snuff-box, or silver flask, might not be displayed, lest they might tempt the Lazaretos to make away with him, in order to obtain those valuables.

"I took care to conceal my watch," said he with a significant look, "for I know these rascals of Lazaretos right well. Why, would you believe it, ladies and gentleman ? they pretty nearly knocked me down in that dirty village where the donkeys are hired. I was up to their tricks, however, and saw, with half an eye, that when they pretended to fight among themselves, it was a mere sham, as an excuse that I might get an unlucky blow between them, when, I warrant me, they would soon have dispatched me, and have divided my property amongst them, but they saw your large party coming, and that saved me."

I asked why, if his opinion of the Neapolitans was so bad, he ventured alone with them on so hazardous an expedition. "Indeed, ma'am, I never had such a foolish intention ; for, would you believe it, I have come to that there dirty village no less than three times, in the hope of meeting a large party of English who might serve as protection for me, but until to-day never saw more than one or two persons, therefore I returned as I came. I had heard, however, so much of this burning mountain, that I was determined