

value, and literature was at an end? Take away this green ground colour on which Dame Nature works her embroidery patterns, and where would be the picturesque scarlet poppies or white daisies, or the gray of the chalk cliffs, or the golden bloom of a wilderness of buttercups? Its chief service to beauty is as the garment of the earth. It watches night and day, at all seasons of the year, "in all places that the eye of heaven visits," for spots on which to pitch new tents, to make the desert less hideous, fill up the ground-work of the grandest pictures, and give the promise of plenty on the flowery meadows where it lifts its silvery and purple pinacles breast-high, and mocks the sea in its rolling waves of sparkling greenness. It is beautiful when it mixes with *oupine* and *turitis* on the ruined bastion or grey garden-wall; beautiful when it sprinkles the brown thatch with tufts that find sufficient nourishment where green masses have been before; beautiful when it clothes the harsh upland, and gives nourishment to a thousand snow-white fleeces; still more beautiful when it makes a little islet in a bright blue mountain lake, "a fortunate purple isle," with its ruddy spikes of short-lived flowers; and precious as well as beautiful when it comes close beside us, in company with the sparrow and the robin, as a threshold visitant, to soften the footfall of care, and give a daily welcome to the world of greatness.

"If a friend my grass-grown threshold find,
Oh, how my lonely cot resounds with glad!"

Is it only for its velvet softness, and the round pillow knolls it heaves up in the vistas of the greenwood, that the weary and the dreamer find it so sweet a place of rest? or is it because the wild bee flits around its silvery pinacles, and blows his hugh as he goes with a bounding heart to gather sweets; that the hare and the rabbit burrow beneath its smooth sward; that the dear lark cowers amid its sprays, and cherishes the children of his bosom under its brown, matted roots; that the daisy, the cowslip, the daffodil, the orchises—the fairies of the flower world—the bird's foot trefoil—the golden-fingered beauty of the meadows, the little yellow and the large strawberry trefoil, are all sheltered and cherished by it; and that one of its simple children, the *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, or sweet-scented vernal grass, scents the air for miles with the sweetest perfume ever breathed by man?—*Hibberd's "Brambles and Bay Leaves."*

A tender conscience is an inestimable blessing; that is, a conscience not only quick to discern what is evil, but instantly to shun it, as the eye-lid closes itself against a mote.

TATTLING.

"Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people."

The disposition to tattle may arise either from malignant motives, or from a natural propensity to gossip. The latter, whilst it may be less criminal in intention is often not the less injurious to society in its results. A fondness for news-bearing leads to spreading abroad details of personal character which had better be locked up in one's own bosom.

Rumours circulated, with however innocent an intention, usually grow in their progress. What was true at first becomes a vile untruth before it has run its race; and the person who started the snow-ball or rather soot-ball, to rolling, is responsible, in no small measure, for what it accumulates before it has reached the bottom of the hill.

The propensity to hear news, in common with all other passions, gains by indulgence. A fondness for telling it begets a desire for hearing it, until at last the tatter becomes little else than a locomotive news-office.

It is not only the tattler himself, however, that sins. Those who give a ready audience to his tales become partakers of his guilt. Without auditors he would have but little encouragement to prosecute his work. Not a few there are who become thus accessory to this great evil, occupying toward the tale-bearer the same relative position as the receiver of stolen goods to the thief who purloined them. "Calumny," says Leighton, "would starve and die of itself, if nobody took it in and gave it lodging. When malice pours it out, if our ears be shut against it, and there be no vessel to receive it, it would fall like water upon the ground, and could no more be gathered up."

Every right-minded person owes it to himself to close his ears against the tattler. Instead of a countenance indicative of interest in the details of gossip and slander, let it be seen that such narratives meet your disapprobation. New topics of conversation can easily be introduced to turn away the thoughts from the unwelcome theme; or, as a true friend to the absent, who little suspects the mischievous work which has been going on against