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Poetry.

BEAUTIFUL SNOW.

BY A. ST. GEORGE.

Gentle as Charity,
Emblem of Purity,
Coming from Heaven from whence all Blessings
flow—
Would we were like thee,
Then would burn brightly
The love-lights that set every heart in a glow.
Life would be purer,
Happiest surer,
Every dark deed put away out of sight—
If only the lesson
Taught by the blessing
Thou bringest to earth we would all learn aright.

ALLITERATION WITH AYRTON.

A stands for Architect, Artist, and Ass,
A stands for AYTTON. A stands for Alas!
He boasts he's no Artist, an Architect not.
Then Alliteration makes Ayrton out—What?
An Edile he said he was glad he was none.
Then why he was raised to the office of one?
O Gladstone, your reason! Spak Premier and say
An Edile what moved you to make such an A?

PRESERVATION OF TELEGRAPH POSTS.

A Belgian report on the preservation of telegraphic posts decides that chloride of zinc is the best and cheapest agent to employ. It is admitted that differences in the nature of the posts affect the results. In the preservation of telegraphic posts, the use of zinc is not only economical, but it is also very effective. The chloride of zinc is used in the form of a solution, and is applied to the posts in a very simple manner. The result is a very durable and effective preservation of the posts. The use of zinc is also very economical, and is well adapted to the requirements of the telegraphic service.

A labourer's wife recently presented her husband with five children at a birth.

THE BEST IN THE WORLD!

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A splendidly illustrated weekly journal of

POPULAR SCIENCE, Mechanics, Inventions, Engineering, Chemistry, Agriculture, and the kindred arts, enters its twenty-fifth year on the first of January next, having a circulation far exceeding that of any similar journal now published.

THE EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT OF

The Scientific American is very ably conducted, and some of the most popular writers in this Country and Europe are contributors. Every number has

to be read, and is published with the Engravings of Machinery, New Inventions, Tools for the Workshop, Farm and Household, Engineering Works, Dwelling Houses, Public Buildings.

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To Inventors and Mechanics

This journal is of special value, as it contains a weekly report of all Patents issued at Washington, with copious notices of our leading American and European Inventions. The Publishers of the Scientific American are the most extensive Patent Solicitors in the world, and have unequalled facilities for gathering a complete knowledge of the progress of invention and Discovery throughout the world; and with a view to mark the quarter of a century, during which this journal has held the first place in Scientific and Mechanical Literature, the Publishers will issue on January first the large and splendid Steel Engraving by John Sartain of Philadelphia, entitled:

'Men of Progress—American Inventors,'

the plate costing nearly \$1,000 to engrave, and containing nineteen likenesses of illustrious American Inventors. It is a superb work of art.

Single pictures, printed on heavy paper, will be sold at \$10, but only one subscribing for the Scientific American the paper will be sent for one year, together with a copy of the engraving, on receipt of \$10. The picture is also offered

in premium for clubs of subscribers.

Cash Prizes \$1,500.

In addition to the above premium, the Publishers will pay \$1,500 in Cash Prizes for lists of subscribers sent in by February 15th, 1870. Persons who want to compete for these prizes should send at once for prospectus and blanks for names.

Terms of Scientific American, one year \$3.00 six months \$1.50; four months \$1.00. To clubs of 10 and upwards, terms \$2.50 per annum. Specimen copies sent free, address the Publishers, JOHN & CO., 37 Park Row, New York.

HOW TO GET PATENTS.—A pamphlet of Patent Laws and Instructions to Inventors sent free, dec 16

Interesting Case.

MR. BAKER'S RING.

(From Chamber's Journal.)

Mr. Baker himself told us this story. He said it was true; nor is this unlikely. I have known Mr. William Henry Baker personally for a number of years, and I am inclined to think he has never in all his life told the truth. Now, it is so manifestly improbable that the most consistent man should contract a long and extraordinary story, without at some period telling the truth by sheer inadvertence, that it is quite likely Mr. Baker may have committed himself in this instance.

Only once, gentlemen, said Mr. B. have I been deceived. William Henry kept his eyes open, in a general way; William Henry also takes the liberty of seeing out of them. He uses them as a rule, for purposes of observation, gentlemen. Still I admit I was once taken in by a dead swindle as could be; I am not ashamed to own it. I made money by it after all; but I was swindled.

It was about a diamond ring. I knew the fellow who had it for many years in the way of business. He was a commercial traveller, and used always to flash this ring about when he came round on his journeys. A jeweller friend of mine, who happened to be in my office once when Mr. Blok called, asked, I remember, to be allowed to examine it; and had pronounced the stones to be of the purest water, telling me afterwards the ring was worth seventy pounds. Mr. Blok's initials were engraved inside the hoop of the ring; "B. B." and besides that, it was ring of peculiar and rather old-fashioned make. Indeed having once seen the ring, no one would be likely to mistake it for another. Well Mr. Blok got into difficulties, and went so desperate to the bad, that I never saw nor heard any thing more of him. But about two years after whilst walking down a back street my eye was taken by a ring exhibited in a pawnbroker's window. "Mr. Blok's ring," I exclaimed directly; "I'll swear to it." It was in a tray with a number of very ready looking rings, and was as discoloured and dirty as they were. I went into the shop and asked to look at it. The pawnbroker, an old Jew, said, "Yes; I might see his rings, but he didn't know much about rings, himself. They were sure deemed pledges,—flash what they wish,—and they wash all marked at the month's advance on them; with a very small overplus for interest,—thash all he knew."

There was no mistake about it. It was Mr. Blok's ring, and had his initials inside. But how did the Jew get it? He would soon tell me. "I bought it," he said, "from a man who had pawned two years ago in the name of Smith. Thash all he knew. Would I buy? It wash dirt cheap,—three poundish twelve; and it cost him all the month's!"

I bought the ring, after beating him down half a crown, partly to prevent his suspecting its value, and partly well knowing the disposition of the peculiar people—to oblige him. I wore my new purchase about, with no little inward satisfaction at having bettered a Jew at a bargain. There is a certain commercial club in our town, which I occasionally visit. The members are of an easy and somewhat lively disposition; generally given to indulge in that playful style of banter popularly known as "chaff." My diamond ring came in for a good share of it. I can stand chaff as well as most men, but I put it to you, if, when you know very well your brilliant was real, it isn't a little annoying for the chaff of a whole body of people to assume the character of persistent disbelief in the value of your jewel? Still I took no notice, and affected not think the remarks intended for me.

I hardly know what made me go and call on my friend the Jeweller. It was not that I had any doubts of the genuineness of the diamonds, especially as he was the identical man who had before sold Mr. Blok's ring at seventy pounds. But it had been so adomed into my head they were false, that I wanted just a formal confirmation of the estimate he had previously formed of their worth.

O yes, said my friend the Jeweller; I recognize the ring again directly. Want to know what it's worth? (He put it in the scales.) Well—him—about seven and twenty shillings for old gold.

En! said I, as pale as a turnip. Why didn't you tell it was worth seventy pounds? Yes, he answered; when it had diamonds in it,—not when it has paste.

Talking the matter over, the Jeweller suggested, that on Mr. Blok getting into difficulties, the first thing he did was to sell the diamonds out of his ring, and get their places supplied with the Jew, as a paste ring.

Well, William Henry, said I to myself, the Jew has jeweled you, and the club has chaffed you, and you may consider yourself trod upon after the manner of speaking.

But the worm will turn.

Did the Jeweller let out diamonds on hire? I asked.

He would have a certain alteration, which I suggested, made in my ring in a fortnight's time?

He would. And keep it secret?

Certainly,—business was business. For the whole of that fortnight I never went near the club; that was probably the reason why my appearance at the club dinner was greeted with such lively sallies about Baker's Paste. One would be wag recommending me whilst helping a tart, to keep my fingers out of the paste. Believing him to be a good natured fellow, I thought it time to open fire.

Gentlemen, said I, for some weeks I have listened to the casual observations in which the name of Baker has been a worthy associate with paste and pastry, but have refrained from making any remark, having been firmly persuaded they could only apply to industrious tradesmen employed in the manufacture of home baked bread. (Oh, oh!) It now occurs to me that such remarks were intended in allusion to the ring I wear.—a ring,—I take this opportunity of informing you,—which unlike the wits who have amused themselves at its expense, is indebted for its brilliancy to nature.

They looked me, they heaped opprobrious epithets on the name of Baker, they laughed and talked me down.

I'll bet him five pounds it's paste, said one. So will I, said another. And I And I said eleven of them.

Really, gentlemen, said I, I am sorry you take the matter so much in earnest. All I can tell you is, I believe my ring to be a diamond ring, and this, notwithstanding I will freely admit I only paid a very small sum for it.

They laughed and looked me still more at this admission. They said that settled the question, and that it was paste.

I told them I didn't think it was.

Well, would I bet?

I would rather not.

More hoating.

At length very reluctantly, I overcame my scruples. I bet.

We adjourned to jeweller's.

Without question, they were diamonds, the Jeweller decided, and some of the finest he had seen. He ought to know, as they were his property,—bought by me for the occasion.

Eleven fives is fifty five, gentlemen. Having established the value of my ring, and freed the name of Baker from suspicion, I paid for the hire of the real gems, and had the paste stones re-set in their places, believing after all, the reputation for diamonds to be as good as the possession of them, and free from the anxiety.

It was talked about and nois d'air did it even broker lived. You should have seen him.

Ral stones! Oh my heart! Seventy-five poundish—dead robbery—clean gone.—Oh my boots and bones! not to know that folkshe do sometimes come and pawn real diamonds for paste, so as to have less interest to pay for taking care of their rings! O my blessed heart, only think of it!

He came to me. He grovelled, and wriggled, and twisted himself before me. He prayed me to sell him his ring again. O my true Mischief! Baker you must sell it to me, or I shall be a ruined old man. The time was not out, and Mischief Smith has come to redeem it, and he says that it wash a legacy, and if he does not get it by Saturday next he will ruin me—sh—help him he will. O Mischief Baker, think of it; twenty poundish—all in gold—should money. Now, my true; what do you say?—thash a good man!

What did I say? Could I turn a deaf ear to the distress of the old man? There are people who might do it, gentlemen, but not people of the name of Baker,—not W. H. Baker. I certainly did ask him for more money we compromised it at last at twenty two ten, which he paid, part in six-pences and coppers and owes me to or twice his penny to this day.

Twenty two, nine, and sevenpence half penny, and fifty five pounds is seventy seven and seven and a half. It just paid for the real diamonds; for I bought the ones I had previously hired of the Jeweller, and had them set in a ring the fac simile of Mr. Blok's, except the initials inside are W. H. B.

That was the only time I was ever swindled, gentlemen, Mr. Baker concluded.

Traction Engines.

Locomotives for common roads are still the subject of much interest among a class of inventive engineers, and from time to time new improvements or modifications are proposed. The latest of these is that described by a foreign exchange.

"The frame or body of the engine is adapted to carry upon it the load which is to be transported and also a steam boiler, by preference an upright boiler. This frame or body is supported by two locking or screwing frames, one at the front and the other behind, and each of these frames has two sup-

porting-wheels, which are the road wheels of the engine. Each locking frame turns upon a perch-pin, and the frame or body is supported by friction rollers running on a circular track on the locking-frames. The locking of the leading frame is effected by any suitable arrangement of steering gear, and the two frames are geared together by toothed arcs so that they turn simultaneously. Either locking-frame carries upon it two steam cylinders, driving by means of connecting-rods an axis having corresponding cranks, and from this axis motion is transmitted to the road-wheels by gearing suitably arranged to allow of the frame or body and the axle. There are two locking-frames on each road-wheel, one with external, the other with internal teeth. The driving-pinion is between them and is able to be put into gear either with one or with the other by moving a block carrying the pinion axis in a suitable guide-slot.

FIFTIETH ANNUAL REPORT

Of the Charlotte County Agricultural Society.

Your Committee are glad to be in a position to report, that this Society having reached the venerable age of Fifty Years—and is still in a flourishing condition, now ranking amongst the oldest in the Dominion, if not the only Agricultural Society in the British Empire, that has continued in an unbroken succession for so many years.

To you of the present membership, is committed its present welfare and progress for the future, and we hope that at the conclusion of another cycle of 50 years it may be found vigorous and flourishing; its membership in for the diffusion of information, beneficial to the Agriculture and humanity at large. What varied thoughts and reflections crowd upon the mind, on looking back over a period of fifty years, what changes, what improvements. Then the very simplest and most primitive methods of tillage were employed; now scientific knowledge is being widely diffused, and improved implements of husbandry are being continually introduced. It is true our progress might have been made, but let us be thankful for what has been done, and take courage, and renew our efforts, still striving after further improvements.

Where are the members whose willing hands and anxious wishes for their country's good, first formed this Society, alas, all with two exceptions, viz: the Hon James Brown, and David Mowatt, Esq. are gone to their rest, but the result of their labors remains, befitting as our fellow-men.

The results of the operations of the Society during the past year have been most favorable. In accordance with Divine promise, seed-time and harvest have come and passed, and the husbandman has been abundantly rewarded for his labors. Crops in this section of the county have been more than an average, both in quantity and quality. The committee, desirous that improvement should be made in our breed of cattle, purchased from H. Mowatt, Esq. a Bull, raised by James Russell, Esq. the dam of which was half bred Ayrshire, the sire a full bred Alderney, formerly presented to the Society by Mr. Sharp, of London, England. They also purchased from Mr. Archibald McFarland, a Cheshire Bore, imported by him from Boston, Mass., U. S. from both of which purchases the stock of this district has been much improved. In reply to questions No. 8, 9, 10 and 11, of the series proposed by the Board of Agriculture, we beg to say—That in consequence of the want of positive information regarding the powers of the Board of Agriculture, we are not prepared to offer any opinion as to what legislation is necessary for rendering it more useful and effective. We further recommend that reasonable salaries be allowed to the officers for their services, as in our opinion, the five per cent by the present law allowed, is altogether insufficient recompense for the work done.

We also recommend, that power be given to every society to dispose of its stock, in implements, seeds, &c. at such times, and on such terms, as in their discretion they may deem advisable, as it is impossible to make a general law on this subject, which would operate beneficially in every locality.

This Society is willing to contribute towards the purchase of stock by the Board of Agriculture, under special circumstances. We also think that any attempt made to apply the provincial grant every third year to the purchase of stock, seeds, &c. would be objectionable, and likely to break up Societies in many districts, and we consider the Annual Shows indispensably necessary to the maintenance of interest in the working of the Society.

The signboard of a tavern, near Strabourg, France, bears the following inscription:—"Strong beer and wine of the first quality.—Customers drinking more than twelve glasses will be sent home in a carriage free of charge, in case they are unable to walk." Rather heavy drinkers.

Almost a Ghost Story.

On a Christmas night, some fifty or sixty years ago, there were gathered about the wide fireplace of a large New England kitchen, a happy family circle, consisting of a well-to-do farmer, who was a magistrate—knows far and wide as "Squire Percival"—his comely wife, two fair daughters, a niece and last, but not least, a son, just home from Yale for the holidays.

The night without was seasonably cold, and brilliant with moon light and starlight. The fire stone brazier stood on the brow of a hill behind a protecting line of tall pine trees, the only green in the wide landscape. The deep hill-side and the valley beneath were heavily blanketed with snow.

The early part of the evening had passed merrily with games, jests and a song. But for an hour or two the conversation had taken a drift into the realm of the supernatural. One ghost had succeeded another till, as the "witching time of night" approached, and the fire burned low, the circle instinctively drew strange together, with thrills and shudders of strange spiritual dread, which is yet akin to the keenest pleasure—an awe-sans-joy, an exquisite terror. The solemn sighing of winds among the pines, heard in the pauses of ghostly recitals, added its weird raspy, weird effect to the theme.

Just as young John Percival had concluded a wild German legend, which he declared "splendid stuff for dreams," the outside door was heard to open suddenly. All looked around more or less curiously, to see standing on the threshold the slight form of a fair young woman, clad in white, and looking strangely pale, and cold, and luminous, like untroubled moonlight.

"With the glide of a spirit," she came forward. Her feet were quite bare, and her arms were drooping quite bare. Masses of fair hair fell over her shoulders, but her eyes were dark and fixed with a melancholy stare. Her lips were slightly parted and almost colorless. She came to the edge of the hearth and there, having passed, uttering a beautiful appalling figure.

For a moment all the startled group remained as silent as that strange visitor—then a young girl caught her breath in a hysterical scream, which was instantly answered by a cry from the pale lips of "the woman in white" into whose blank eyes rushed a wild, leering light. She gazed about her in terror and bewilderment, then glanced down upon herself, and sank cowering upon the floor, covering her face with her hands, and giving way to childish proxyams of weeping.

The farmer's wife, a woman of rare sense and presence of mind, at once divined the truth.

"What a cheap—well, well, she said, 'She must be half dead with cold. Girls, bring some wrappings!'

Immediately all was bustle. The farmer and his son discreetly vanished from the scene, and the kind mother, daughter, and niece devoted themselves to their bewildered charge, who still wept and sobbed under their kind ministrations, but declared that she felt no cold and no pain, though her delicate feet were actually bleeding from her long walk up the icy hillside and over the crusted snow.

After having been tenderly put to bed, however, she became sufficiently composed to reply to the few questions which had been put to her. She said that she was Lucy Elliott, the niece of the village physician; that she had lately been taken from school on account of nervousness, and sent to him for medical treatment, but that homesickness and loneliness had made her worse. She had occasionally walked in her sleep before, but only about the house and grounds at home, and on summer moonlight nights, said she thought the moon bewitched me," she said, smiling through her tears. That night she had, before going to bed, looked across the little valley to the pleasant house on the hill, watching the cheerful Christmas lights gleaming through the pine trees, and longed to be one of the happy party there, though she was a stranger to all.

She had cried herself to sleep she said; and that was all she knew of her mysterious tramp over the snow and stones and ice. Not a memory, not a thought could she recall till the moment when she found her self standing on that hearth, in her night dress, with so many wondering eyes fixed upon her.

O, dear! who do you think of me? What can you think of me now? she asked. I never mind what we think of you, my poor child, said the good motherly Mrs. Percival, we love you already, so just drink this nice ginger tea and go to sleep.

The poor child got a little natural sleep, and in the morning appeared somewhat better. But she was still very pale, with a painfully sly, grivelled look. She was suffering from a than was expected from the exposure, but more from the nervous shock of the night before, and by the advice of her uncle, who had been summoned, consisted to remain with her new friends for a few days.

Young John Percival was hospitably kind to the invalid guest, not seeming to perceive