



Life, Literature and Education.

[Contributions on all subjects of popular interest are always welcome in this Department.]

"Two men have labored fruitlessly, and exerted themselves to no purpose. One is the man who has gained wealth, without enjoying it; the other is he who has acquired knowledge, but has failed to practice it."—[Sa'di.]

THE COUNTRY ROAD.

From the busy fields of farmer-folk,
It starts on its winding way,
Goes over the hill, and across the brook,
Where the minnows love to play;
Then past the mill with its water-wheel,
And the pond that shows the sky;
And up to the bridge by the village store,
And the church, with its spire so high.

You would never think that the country road,

From the hill to the store, could be
So long to a boy with an errand to do
And another boy to see.
You can never dream how short it is
From the farm to the old mill pond,
Nor how very much farther it always is
To the schoolhouse just beyond.

Oh, the country road! at the farther end
It runs up hill and down,
Away from the woods and the rippling brook,

To the toiling, rushing town.
But, best of all, when you're tired and sick
Of the noisy haunts of men,
If you follow it back, it will lead you home
To the woods and fields again.

—[St. Nicholas.]

PEOPLE, BOOKS AND DOINGS.

Lord Roberts, the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, has sent a telegram announcing his intention of coming to Quebec to attend the Tercentenary celebration.

The Chinese Anti-opium League, of British Columbia, has sent a petition to Ottawa asking the Government to prohibit the manufacture, sale, or importation of opium into Canada.

A delegation of prominent Japanese will start in August on a tour through Canada, the United States and Europe, to inspect the Houses of Parliament in those countries, in order to secure ideas and suggestions for the new House of Parliament to be built at Tokio, Japan.

A collection of Burns' manuscripts, among which was the well-known poem, containing the lines,

"A chiel's amang you taking notes,
And faith, he'll prent it,"

went for only £170 at a sale in Sotheby's salesrooms, London, Eng. At the same sale, the manuscript of Mrs. Thrale's famous journal of Dr. Johnson sold for £2,050.—[Saturday Night.]

A SOLILOQUY.

Do I stop as often as I should to think what I am doing with my mind? As I am a Christian, I believe that it is the only part of me that can live. It is surely the great talent that has been given me for now and all time. Moreover, it is almost completely in my own power—what am I doing with it?

Possibly I am not a great sinner. I am honest, but that is no great boast; everyone should be honest. I am industrious. I provide well for my family. I have no vicious ways. Neither are these tremendously to my credit; a man must be a beast, rather than a man, if he is not industrious, if he is not kind to his family and a good provider, if he has vicious ways. Still, the question stands, "What am I doing with my mind?"

Am I, for instance, stuffing it, literally stuffing it, with lands or houses, or a big bank account, or fine furniture, or fine gowns, or social position? If so, will I be satisfied when the great tragedy, the great weeding time comes. . . . I lie on my last bed—nearer and nearer the thick black veil which hides the Infinite comes. When it touches all that can endure of the Ego that was, I must go through. Tear the poor brain apart, cast out from it the things that cannot go! Throw them out—the lands, the houses, the bank bills! Then go on, miserable, shrivelled remnant, all that is left of me—creep through the veil to face the great Unknown!

Our religion teaches me that a well-developed mind is not an absolute essential to entrance upon a future, blissful state; yet it is not unreasonable to suppose that, since my mind is the most precious thing that has been given me, the only thing that can endure, it should not be wholly filled with things that do not, in the long run, count. May I consider this well. Then, my own fault be it, if this precious possession be made a mere repository of brick and stone and mortar, clouds of earth, fine raiment, and jealous ambition, rather than a temple filled with lofty aspiration, high-thinking, gentleness, meekness, goodness and truth."

COUREUR-DE-BOIS.

OUR MISTAKES.

We are at times inclined to curse our mistakes; but it is our sad propensity to do a great many foolish things. Among the most foolish, is not grumbling and grovelling about among the results of a slip one of the worst? Should we not rather rise, like Antæus, with new vigor from each experience? No man or woman voluntarily makes a mistake, and no man or woman worthy the name will sit about crying over spilled milk. The truly noble will rather clench his fists, set his teeth, and go forth determined to ride down the misfortune which he has brought upon himself; and, in so doing will he gather strength and confidence, aye, and power, which is a very different thing from mere strength—which might not otherwise have come to him. Muscle is not the only thing which grows with use.

Again, do we ever realize the tenacity with which the things we learn by our mistakes cling to us? We may learn a thousand things by

right-doing, and forget them; let us learn one by a bitter experience, and we will not again trip into that pitfall. Verily there is compensation in all things.

Of all mistakes, perhaps the most worrying are those which put between us and our friends. We blunder, are misunderstood, pride steps in, and the mischief is done. But should such a condition of affairs ever be permitted to stand? It is not, after all, so very hard to say, "I was mistaken; forgive me?"—not nearly so hard as to go through a lifetime of difference. Lapses should be guarded against with all one's might, but should one occur, it is well to remember that, after all, a mistake is only a mistake. If yours, seek reparation; if another's, remember to deal as you would be dealt by.

"Be not too rigidly censorious,
A string may jar in the best master's hand,
And the most skillful archer miss his aim;—
I would not quarrel with a slight mistake."

SOME NOTES FROM MY OLD LOG, IN SOUTH AFRICA.

A DUTCH COURTSHIP AND WEDDING.

II.

"I wish you could have seen a Dutch wedding whilst you were in Pretoria," was once remarked to us. As we did not, I must tell what was told us of the manners and customs there anent: "First catch your hare," applies as aptly to the preliminary step in matrimony as it does to its ditto in cookery. But after what a dull, prosaic, dead-alive fashion does a young, Boer maiden enter the toils! Dumbieddikes might have been a Dutch changeling, or Sir Walter Scott might have visited South Africa in his dreams, otherwise, how could he have pictured such a suitor? Fancy its being possible for it to be a matter of uncertainty, amidst a bevy of sisters, until the very handkerchief is thrown to one of them, which is the object of the swain's adoration! Yet such is the case usually, and it is harrowing to think of the pangs which might thus be caused to six or more maiden hearts, if each should have laid the flattering unction to her soul that she, and she alone, was the lodestar of love-sick "Pieter's" dreams. Not being a Mormon, "Pieter" (it saves an initial, and Pieter will serve our purpose as well as any other name) must choose one; and, in spite of taciturnity, who knows but that the cunning fellow has long made up his mind which sister he shall ask to become his vrow? His caution and pride alike deter him from making the venture at all until he and his family have some assurance that she and her family are pretty safe to come to terms. Pieter is very young, but that is no obstacle to his success. Pieter is bashful; and if he were not, it is ordeal enough to render him so when the actual moment has arrived for him to make his proposals in due form and in person; for, I need not say that, if getting a wife depended upon Pieter's writing a love letter, he would undoubtedly end his days a bachelor. Arrived at the house of his father-in-law-to-be, if fortune favors him, he "off-saddles" by invitation (you have no manners if you do so, be you who you may, uninvited), and enters the "fore" or general room. He is got up regardless of expense, as far as his own clothes and his animal's accoutrements are concerned, and somewhat sheepishly he goes through the usual round of hand-shaking. Does he, or does he not, contrive to convey by that dumb magic, which can make even a hand-clasp eloquent, the whole tale of his hopes to the maiden he desires to win presently? Deponent sayeth not, and the chances are that Pieter feels too many eyes upon him to risk even the little bit of comfort that tender finger-questioning might procure. Then pity our poor Pieter as he sits patiently until bedtime comes, often not uttering a syllable, and then only to reply to questions apart as the poles from the object of his visit. But, supper and prayers over, he knows it must be now or never with him. If he is invited to remain, he is sure of the consent of the father and the mother; and here let me venture this little remark: woman's rights have never been agitated for or against in South Africa, that I know of; but this is probably because women have so full a share permitted them. No Dutch husband dreams of deciding anything in matters of business, or which can in the remotest degree affect the welfare of his family, without consulting his wife; and he thus realizes the truth of another good old adage, "Two heads are better than one." Pieter, asked to remain, then takes the first step permitted him. He has managed to find out which of the doors leading out of the living-room (in a large Boer house there may be four or five) leads to that which she occupies. There he stands, or sits, if he is wise and there is anything to sit upon, until she passes in. "Now for it, Pieter; pluck up your courage; 'faint heart never won fair lady,' neither will you, without a bolder front than you have been able to wear for these last few weary hours."

A whisper, and kind of a struggle, which is no struggle at all, and a "no" which is so like a "yes" that it will do just as well, and our Pieter has won the day; no, not the day, for it is night, and the question which he has asked, and which, after all, is equal to the question of questions, is whether she will "sit up and keep company with him!" If she has consented to do this, she has virtually consented to "sit up" with him as long as they both shall live. There is a primitive simplicity about this which robs it of all guile, and, lest it shock the sensitive nerves of any tenderly-nurtured, duly-chaperoned young lady in this our land, where "such things would not be tolerated," let me assure her that our young folks have less chance of whispering their sweet nothings unheard, than any nineteen out of twenty engaged couples here, where more outward fences bristle around to guard them from the faintest appearance of even a harmless indiscretion. Pieter is human; so, given the opportunity, he would probably like to kiss Gretchen, and Gretchen would probably like him to kiss her, too; why shouldn't she? But think of the giggles of the five disappointed sisters, from the "ha, ha!" in sardonic tones of the one