

and divisions into two parties over everything that comes up. What will you be with a *newspaper* among you?" However, the paper was launched; and certainly was meek enough to disarm the forebodings and criticisms of the old rural oracle. The original articles (in small pica) were neither long nor obscure, however wanting in vigor; and the "story" on the first page was generally some American western adventure, which might very properly be suspected to have first graced the classic pages of some comic almanac. The whole was printed with type that tried my young eyes, and puzzled my young brain so much, that I did not know what to make of it, till the successor of this worthy editor told me, some years after, that "the type was old rubbish; had been in use ever since the war of 1812!" Nevertheless, to "contribute" to this paper was a matter of secret ambition with me. On the sly, a piece of "poetry" was laboriously hammered out. On the sly, it was copied, and duly sent by post to Gorton; postage, 4½ d., properly smoked on at Skendle, and marked "paid" in red ink. And it came out! Someway, the unreality about it; the world-weary air, so clumsily put on; and the secret conviction forcing itself upon me that "there was *nothing in it*," would, in after days, have set me against ever doing such a thing again. It is well for us when we are young that we don't know as much as afterward! And so, like the falls and accidents of childhood, we don't mind these little mishaps and mistrusts of ourselves, but try again. The only confidant I made was a young friend who had been trying his fortune in another local paper, in the heroic prose line. He began a "story" for a paper in the county-town. First chapter, pretty good—many characters introduced—era, the Ages of Chivalry. Second week, great preparations for action—not much really done. Third week, obvious falling off—author "tired of it." Fourth and last week, desperate endeavor to bring the thing to a close—could only be managed by "getting rid" of the hero of the tale, which is done by having him fall from his horse and break his neck! I was a little consoled by this exchange of con-

fidences, and continued to write at intervals for this, that and the other paper.

No one in youth will ever write well till he falls in love. Perhaps that is one reason why such an experience is so general—it is a great help to literature! It seems to me now, in looking back, that the strange and never-properly-defined part of the whole matter is, how all the dreams and fancies of ardent youth centre round some object, and invest that object—often so plain and uninteresting in other's sight—with all the charms and virtues that we have ever imagined. I suppose much of the infelicities of married life result from a disappearing of these fictitious attributes. Like many others, I was saved from a great many absurdities by fancy veering about to a number of objects in succession. In those days, the country "singing school" was a favorite institution with the young people. Mr. Steggins, Professor of Vocal Music, would go round among the farmers, to see how many "scholars" he could get. If a sufficient number, 25 or 30, could be obtained, he "opened." Sometimes a "committee," consisting of three or four young men, would guarantee the requisite amount of "support;" and then the school was opened—generally with a free lesson. Never was anything ever invented better calculated to suit farmers' boys and girls. I can truly say that I approved of singing schools, and several times "supported" them, and never thought the uniform dollar wasted,—yet I never got much music. Most of us went for the *company*—though we *paid* for the *music*.

The rural choirs that resulted sometimes from these singing schools were primitive concerns. It was my privilege once to be at a Temperance tea in the township of Beverly, when the grace before meat was sung, not said. The words were,

"Be present at our table, Lord," etc.,

in long metre, and the choir struck up homely common-metre—"Ortonville!" Nor did they stop to refit after the first couplet, but went heroically through it—snapping off a syllable or two here and there, to make the words fit the tune, exactly on the principle of the old fiddler in