

POETRY.

WONDERS AND MURMURS.

*Strange that the wind should be so free
To play with a flower, or tear a tree ;
To range or ramble where'er it will,
And as it lists, be fierce or still ;
Above and around to breathe of life,
Or to mingle the earth and shy in strife ;
Faintly to whisper with morning's light,
Yet to growl like a fettered fiend at night ;
Or to love and cherish, and bliss, to-day,
What to-morrow it ruthlessly rends away !*

*Strange that the sun should call into birth
All the fair flowers and fruits of the earth,
Then bid them perish and see them die,
While they cheer the soul and gladden the eye !
At morn its child is the pride of spring,
At night a shrivelled and loathsome thing,
To-day there is hope and life in its breath.
Strange doth it seem that the sun should joy
To give birth alone that it may destroy.*

*Strange that the ocean should come and go,
With its daily and nightly ebb and flow—
To bear on its placid breast at morn
The bark that ere night shall be tempest-torn ;
Or cherish it all the way it must roam.
To leave it a wreck within sight of home ;
Then wash the dead to its cottage door,
And gently ripple along the strand,
To watch the widow behind him land !*

*But stranger than all that man should die
When his plans are formed and his hopes are
high,
He walks forth a lord of the earth to-day,
And the morrow beholds him a part of its clay ;
He is born in sorrow and cradled in pain,
And from youth to age it is labor in vain ;
And all that seventy years can show
Is that wealth is trouble and wisdom wo ;
That he treads a path of care and strife,
Who drinks of the poisoned cup of life.*

*Alas, if we murmur at things like these,
Which reflection tells us are wise decrees—
That the wind is not even a gentle breath—
That the sun is often the bearer of death—
That the ocean wave is not always still—
And that life is chequered with good and ill ;
If we know it is well such things should be,
What do we learn from the things we see ?
That an erring and sinful child of dust
Should not wonder nor murmur, but hope
and trust.*

VARIETIES.

Common Sense.—Common sense is a most valuable quality. The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way ; to see promptly what is the best thing to be done in the circumstances in which he is placed ; and what is the best way of setting about it. Of some people it may be justly said, they have every sense but common

sense ; they can tell you about the stars, writ fine poetry, and make fine speeches, and draw fine pictures, and play fine music ; but, as to handling a spade, or a hammer, or a stocking needle, they are as helpless as a babe or an idiot. They have scarcely an idea of the food they eat, or the clothes they wear ; nor do they know how, where, and by what means they are procured, and what they are made of ; but they depend altogether upon the skill, care, and industry of other people. And if they, like Robinson Crusoe, should be cast on an uninhabited island, though surrounded with the means of subsistence, they would perish for want of a notion how to bring them into use. They go through the world without opening their eyes to any of the common objects around them.

One of these learned men having had a hole cut in his study-door to admit a favorite cat, when the said cat brought him a kitten, deemed it necessary to send for a carpenter to cut a smaller hole, through which the kitten might pass ; never once recollecting that the kitten could pass through the same hole as the cat.

Another, walking round a favorite meadow, about a mile in circumference, when he had gone three parts of the way looked at his watch, and finding it was near dinner time, thought he had not time to go quite round, but must hasten back as quick as possible ; thus making his walk a mile and a half instead of a mile ! A poor day labourer would have known better than to commit such a blunder. But fine sense and exalted sense are not half so useful as common sense.

As every man knows that he cannot live long on earth, but will live in another and an unknown world for ever, it would be the part of common sense to be more concerned and more active in securing the interests of that long futurity, than those of this short and fleeting time.

PROCRASTINATION.—There are more people fail to perform their duty through procrastination than through direct opposition. Many persons, who dare not say, ' I will not do it,' satisfy themselves with admitting that the thing ought to be done, and resolving to do it to-morrow. The mischievous consequences of such conduct are perpetually seen in matters the most trifling and the most important. A hook or fastening to a window is observed to be loose ; a youth is desired to go directly and get a hammer to fasten it ; he thinks an hour or two hence will do just as well ; perhaps it has been in that state for months, and no harm has come of it ; it cannot signify leaving it an hour or two longer. A high wind rises, and the whole window, for want of that little fastening, is carried away, dashed in pieces, and injures some person in its fall.

A poor man had received some money, with which he intended to pay his rent. He had been exceedingly anxious to receive it for that purpose ; but having got it, he was satisfied ; and though his wife urged him to take it that evening, observing that it would look well to the landlord to be able to say that they brought it the same day it was received—he thought the next day would do just as well. In the night the cottage was broken into, and all the money stolen, by some villains who happened to know of his receiving it.

" That kitchen chimney ought to be swept."—The remark had been made day after day, and still the execution of it put off till to-morrow ; when at length the soot caught fire, and communicated to a beam in the chimney, the house was presently on fire. Happily notices were lost ; but one of the family broke his leg in jumping from a window ; and the loss of property was considerable.

FRUGALITY.—The following remark is copied from a sermon on frugality :—

When the Son of God was on earth, and went about scattering blessings ; when with a word he multiplied five barley loaves and two small fishes to feed many thousand persons, he could in the same manner have provided another meal whenever the need of his followers required it ; but, instead of that, he commanded them to gather up the fragments that nothing might be lost ; thus teaching us to regard frugality as a christian virtue.

EFFECTS OF PERSEVERANCE.—All the performances of human art, at which we look with praise or wonder, are instances of the resistless force of perseverance. It is by this that the quarry becomes a pyramid, and that distant countries are united by canals. If a man were to compare the effect of a single stroke of the pickaxe, or of one impression of the spade, with general design and last result, he would be overwhelmed by the sense of their disproportion : yet those petty operations, incessantly continued, in time surmount the greatest difficulties ; and mountains are levelled, and oceans bounded, by the slender force of human beings.

SLANDER cannot make the subjects of it either better or worse, it may represent us in a false light, or place a likeness of us in a bad one, but we are the same ; not so the slanderer ; for calumny always makes the calumniator worse, but the calumniated—never.

EMULATION looks out for merits that she may exult herself by a victory ; Envy spies out blemishes, that she may lower another by a defeat.