

## THE CHEMIST'S DREAM.

The afternoon was sultry, and in the oppressive air of the class-room our professor's voice fell somewhat monotonously on inattentive ears. My thoughts wandered away to sylvan shades and grottoes of refreshing coolness, till I seemed to be exploring a narrow passage, which presently led me into a vast cave, where noble columns of sparkling stalactite supported an arched roof of purest crystal. I stood in one of nature's noblest halls, but not alone. A strange company had gathered there. "Black spirits and white, blue spirits and gray," were before me. A festive occasion had assembled, in joyous mood and holiday attire, the first-born of creation—the elements of things.

I was about to apologize for my intrusion and withdraw, but received an earnest invitation to remain as a guest at a picnic dinner-party about to take place, and for which fifty-six family invitations, I was told, had been issued. Sea and land had been ransacked for delicacies, and everything was put in requisition that could minister to the splendor of the entertainment, or to the enjoyment of the occasion.

Whilst awaiting the summons to the banquet, I looked around on the interesting party now rapidly assembling. And here these children of nature were seen, not as in the chemist's laboratory, writhing in the heated crucible, or pent up in glassy prisons, or peering out of gasholder and Florence flasks, but arrayed in their native beauty, each free as air, and all acting as impulse prompted. The Metals, the Gases, the Salts, the Acids, the Alkalies, the Oxides, all were there from the mine and the mint, from the workshop of the artisan, and even from ocean's depths, they had come, and many of them, especially the ladies, were most tastefully attired.

Chlorine wore a beautiful greenish-yellow robe, while the fair daughters of Chromium appeared in gay dresses of the liveliest golden yellow and orange-red. Iodine had only just arrived, and was not yet disencumbered of an unpretending outer-garment of steel gray, which enveloped her person, but when the warmth of the apartment compelled her to throw this aside, she appeared arrayed in a vesture of thin gauze, of the loveliest violet color imaginable. Carbonic Acid appeared in a plain dress of snowy white, while her mother, Carbon, wore the deepest sables, and a gloomy countenance; yet, not disdaining ornament, she exhibited ear-rings of polished jet, and a circlet of diamonds glittered on her brow. Nitrogen was there with her graceful daughter, Nitrous Acid, airy in all her movements, and clad magnificently in crimson.

Nor was the costume of some of the gentlemen of the party less remarkable. Sulphur wore a yellow suit, and Phosphorus, flesh-colored garments; while Phosphureted Hydrogen, or, as he is nick-named, "Will-of-the-Wisp," flitted amongst us in a robe of living flame—the dress in which the reckless youngster is said to haunt churchyards and marshy places, playing his pranks upon poor, benighted travellers. Gold, the king of metals, was of course arrayed in gorgeous apparel. His royal sister, Silver, came leaning on his arm. If this bright-eyed maiden had less of glitter, none that knew her failed to acknowledge her sterling worth. Mercury, that reckless being, was there, as lively and versatile as ever; now by the thermometer noting the subterranean temperature; now by the barometer predicting a storm in the regions overhead; now arm in arm with this metal, then with that; and they all, by the way, save stern old Iron, had hard work to shake him off. This strange character was nevertheless a philosopher of uncommon powers of reflection, and well versed in the art of healing. Potassium, though decidedly a brilliant fellow, manifested too much levity in his deportment to win respect, and was pronounced by those who knew him best, to be rather soft. In gravity, Platinum surpassed all the company; in natural brightness, Tin was outshone by few.

When Oxygen arrived, with his clear, transparent countenance and light elastic step, a murmur of congratulation was heard, and all arose to do him homage. He was a patriarch among them, and literally a father to many of the younger guests. His presence was the signal for adjournment to the banqueting room, where, of right, he took his seat at the head of the table. The apartment we had now entered was illuminated with an arch of flame, of dazzling bright-

ness, produced by a curious apparatus which Galvanism, who excels in these matters, had contrived for the occasion, from materials furnished by his friends, Zinc and Copper. Festoons of evergreens and wreaths of roses adorned this brilliant and fairy-like scene. The preparation of the more substantial part of the feast—the baking, boiling, roasting, stewing etc., had been committed to Caloric, of long experience in these matters. The nobler metals brought costly services of plate, and Carbon, united with Iron, furnished elegant steel cutlery. Alumina provided the finest china, and Potash and Silica jointly contributed glass of exquisite transparency. Among these sons of nature there is no craving for artificial stimulants, so Oxygen and Hydrogen were commissioned to find the drinkables, and the beverage they provided was the best, the purest, and the most refreshing that could be had. Carbon, with Oxygen and Hydrogen, found most of the vegetables; and Nitrogen aided them materially in procuring the meats abundantly presented. Some individual offerings to the feast caught my attention; as for instance, the oysters, which Carbonate of Lime had sent in the shell; the pyramids or ice-creams prepared by the daughter of Chlorine and Hydrogen; but Hydrocyanic Acid, the druggist, brought peaches and nectarines from his own conservatory.

The feast was ready, but not begun till the signal had been given by Affinity, a sort of chaplain to the elements, having officiated at the weddings of all the married ones of the company. As usual, the conversation did not become general till the dessert appeared, when jokes were cracked as well as nuts; the toast and song were called for; wit and innocent hilarity became the order of the day. Even Oxygen, their dignified president, relaxed from his sternness, and told many a tale of his own mischievous pranks in the days of old Father Chaos, when Time and himself were young—how he and Hydrogen would terrify the ichthyosauri and megatheria of the ancient world with earthquakes and conflagrations. Nitrous Oxide, too, that funniest of youngsters, amused us with his drolleries; Phosphorus made a flaming speech, and Potash a caustic one; while Mercury proposed as a toast, "The medical profession, to whom we say, 'Use us, but do not abuse us.'"

It chanced that I witnessed a curious little by-scene—a flirtation that Platinum was carrying on with Hydrogen, whom, to my surprise, I saw seated among the metals, and very much at home among them too. Great indeed was the contrast between Platinum, gray, heavy, and dull as he was, and the light and buoyant creature at his side; but there was soon evidence of mutual attraction. Platinum grew warm in his attentions, and ere long quite a flame was kindled between them. So passed the festive hour; all went "merry as a marriage bell," till suddenly Sulphureted Hydrogen, a most disgraceful fellow, entered, with an offensive air. In an instant all the metals, to whom he is particularly obnoxious, changed color. Lead grew even black in the face with indignation; Arsenic and Antimony seemed jaundiced with rage; Ammonia to whom his presence recalled disagreeable associations, in trying to avoid him precipitated several metallic oxides to the floor; while Chlorine, with more self-command, advanced to repel the intruder. Just at this moment a strange sound, like the trampling of a mighty host, assailed my ears. Methought it was "an earthquake's voice," and that now my fate was sealed. The arching grotto, the festive scene, faded from before my eyes, which opened, to my confusion, on the professor, who, having concluded his lecture, was leaving his desk, and on the empty forms, which the students had just quitted, and in so doing had ruthlessly destroyed my "baseless fabric of a vision," leaving alas, not "a wreck behind."

—From *Leisure Hour* of 1858.

## IDLE JOACHIM.

When Luther was one day asked for a contribution to some important Christian object, he found himself penniless. After a moment's thought he remembered that among his most valued possessions was a beautiful medal of Joachim, Elector of Brandenburg. Going to the drawer which contained it he said: "What art thou doing there, Joachim? Dost thou not see how idle thou art? Come out and make thyself useful;" and he gave the medal to the object for which he had been solicited. How many of us have idle Joachims hoarded

among our treasures, which, if made useful, would go far to lessen the misery, enlighten the ignorance, and promote the happiness of our fellows?

## Question Corner.—No. 3.

## BIBLE QUESTIONS.

## EXERCISE ON BIBLE ANIMALS.

1. "The righteous are bold as a —."
2. "The — and the — shall feed together."
3. "The — shall eat straw like the —."
4. "And they brought the — to Jesus."
5. "The poor man had nothing, save one little —."
6. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of —."

B. M. P.

## MISSING SCRIPTURE WORD.

1. "The statutes of the Lord are —."
2. "Woe to them that are at — in Zion."
3. "To be carnally minded is —."
4. "Out of the — came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness."
5. "Thou — my lot."
6. "They that be whole need not a —, but they that are sick."
7. "Mine eyes have seen — salvation."
8. "He shall redeem — from all his iniquities."
9. "Who is a rock save — God?"
10. "The fifth to —, he, his sons, and his brethren, were twelve."

The initials of the words to be filled in form the whole. Please name, and give Scripture reference.

## BIBLE QUESTIONS.

1. What city of Syria now in existence was contemporary with Sodom and Gomorrah?
2. What city was spared to afford shelter for Lot?
3. In what city did the Israelites bury Joseph.

## ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS NO. 2.

1. 1 Kings 15: 33.
2. 1 Kings 18: 40.
3. 1 Kings 17: 3.
4. 2 King - 5: 12.
5. 1 Chron 5: 28.
6. Eccl. 1: 1.
7. Jordan.

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