

It will be seen from what I have said that both in the house and out of it work was a stern and exacting master, whose demands were incessant, satisfied only by the utmost diligence, and it was simply by this that so much was accomplished. It is true there were other incentives that gave force to the will and nerve to the arm which enabled our forefathers to overcome the numberless arduous tasks that presented themselves and demanded their attention daily throughout the year. All the inventions that have accumulated so rapidly for the last twenty years or more, to lighten the burden and facilitate the accomplishment of labour and production, as well as to promote the comfort of all classes, were unknown fifty years ago. Indeed many of the things that seem so simple and uninteresting to us now, as I shall have occasion to show further on, were then hidden in the future. Take for example the very common and indispensable article, the lucifer match. Its simple method of producing fire had never entered the imagination of our most gifted sires. The only way known to them was the primitive one of rubbing two sticks together and producing fire by friction—a somewhat tedious process—or with a flint and bit of punk, a fungous growth, the best of which for this purpose is obtained from the beech, and a heavy jackknife. Gun flints were most generally used. One of these placed on a bit of dry punk, and held firmly in the left hand, while the knife with its closed blade, the back of which brought in contact with the flint by a quick downward stroke of the right hand, produced a shower of sparks, some of which falling on the punk would ignite, and a fire was produced. In the winter, if the fire went out, there were but two alternatives, either this or a run to a neighbour's house for live coals.

There were many superstitious notions current among the people in those days, and many an omen both for good

and evil was sincerely believed in, which even yet in quiet places finds a lodgment where the schoolmaster has not been much abroad. But the half century that has passed away has seen the last of many a foolish notion. A belief in omens was not confined to the poor and ignorant, for brave men have been known to tremble at seeing a winding sheet in a candle, and learned men to gather their little ones around them, fearing that one would be snatched away, because a dog outside took a fancy to howl at the moon. And who has not heard the remark when a sudden shiver came over one, that an enemy was then walking over the spot which would be his grave, or noticed the alarm occasioned by the death watch—the noise made by a harmless little insect in the wall resembling the ticking of a watch—or the saying that if thirteen sit down to table, one is sure to die within a year. Somebody has said there is one case when he believes this omen to be true, and that is when thirteen sit down to dinner and there is only enough for twelve. There was no end to bad omens. It was bad luck to see the new moon for the first time over the left shoulder, but if seen over the right it was the reverse. It is well known that the moon has been supposed to exercise considerable influence over our planet, among the chief of which are the tides, and it was believed also to have a great deal to do with much smaller matters than this. There are but few who have not seen on the first page of an almanac the curious picture representing a nude man with exposed bowels, and surrounded with the zodiacal signs. This was always found in the old almanacs, and indeed they would have been altogether unsaleable without it, and the weather cast. How often have I seen the almanac consulted as to whether it was going to be fair or stormy, cold or hot, and the mother studying the pictures when she wished to wean her babe. If she found the change of the moon occurred when