

THE LAKE.

(Translated from Lamartine.)

Must we for ever to some distant clime
Drift through the night despairingly away?
And can we never on the sea of Time
Cast anchor for a day?

O Lake! one year hath past with all its pain,
And, by the waves she hoped once more to see,
Here, on this shore, I seek myself again,
But ask not where she is!

Thus didst thou murmur in thy rocky caves—
On their torn flanks thy waters thus did beat,
While the gay Zephyr flung thy foaming wave,
Around her fairy feet.

One summer eve we floated from thy shores,
Dost thou recall it?—Not a sound was heard,
Save when the measured cadence of our oars
The dreamy silence stirred.

Then tones more sweet than earth shall ever bear,
Sweet tones that never will be heard again,
Woke slumbering echoes round the haunted mere
That listened to the strain:

"O blissful Time! suspend thy flight,
Dear hours, prolong your stay,
And let us taste the fleet delight
Of this enchanting day.

Alas! too many filled with woe
Thy tardiness regret:
For these, outstrip the winds, but oh!
Earth's happy ones forget!

I ask some moments more, in vain—
Time's wings move swiftly by:
'O rapturous eve,' I sigh, 'remain,'—
Lo! night is in the sky.

Come, let us love—the minutes flee—
Love may not long abide—
Time's river knows no eddy, and we
Drift onward with the tide."

O jealous Time, say, why must hours like these,
That thrill the heart with youthful passion's glow,
Take wing more quickly on the summer breeze
Than dismal hours of woe?

Can we not fix one joyous moment's trace,
Must it from earth be cancelled evermore?
Shall Time each record of our love efface,
Refusing to restore?

O grand Eternity! O solemn Past!
Ye, whose abyss engulfs our little day,
Speak, will ye grant again the bliss, at last,
That once ye snatched away?

O lake below'd, mute caves, and forest green,
Whose beauty Time ne'er suffers to depart,
Keep fresh the memory of that evening scene,
Fair Nature, in thy heart!

Keep it, dear Lake, in sunshine and in storm,
In all the varied aspects of thy shore—
In these dark pines, and rocks of savage form
That round thy waters soar.

Still let it live in every breeze that sighs,
In each soft echo that the hills repeat,
In every star that on thy bosom lies
With lustre, calm and sweet.

Let night-winds murmur to the reeds her name,
Let the faint fragrance that embalms each glade,
Let every sound and sight and scent proclaim,
"Here, two fond lovers lay."

Montreal.

GEO. MURRAY.

THE WEATHER.

It is a common remark that "the weather" forms the staple topic of observation between strangers when thrown together in such proximity that they must, or are greatly moved to, speak; and it is also the initial subject or starting-point of nearly every conversation among friends. In part this fact is probably due to the influence of long traditional and inherited mental habit. From the earliest periods of his conscious existence man must have felt an urgent concern about the weather. His supply of food and comforts depended upon it. This however should have been a decreasing interest. As his knowledge advanced and developing ingenuity enabled him to protect his crops from the vicissitudes of the weather, to shelter himself from the storm, to preserve his life in spite of flood or drought, and in some sort to utilise or compensate the changing temperature and conditions of climate by organised systems of agriculture, well-sinking, drainage, house-building, and manufacture, man might have been supposed likely to think less, though perhaps he would speak frequently, of the weather. Meanwhile there is another and more pressing reason why the weather forms the most natural and generally interesting topic of remark. It is the recognised and accepted cause and explanation, the standing apology for all our depressions and dullness, when it is bad and we are moody. It seems to establish a community of sympathetic feeling, even between strangers, to make an introductory admission that the weather is bad; while, on the other hand, it sets up an excuse for unwonted hilarity and affirms a reason for common enjoyment to say that the weather is fine.

In so far as this last-mentioned personal interest in the weather explains our frequent allusions to it in ordinary conversation, it is noteworthy and suggestive that the topic seems to have an increasing fascination for us, and that we both think and speak more about it than our grandfathers did, although in their time agricultural interests were more general, and in many urgent respects the weather was more important to them in its relation to crops, shelter, and locomotion than it is to us. In spite of our growing independence of sunshine and rain, of storm and calm, of wind and tide, we are increasingly subject to the weather, because more directly influenced by its character and changes. This is the point we deem significant, and to which we desire to devote a few moments' attention. The tendency of modern civilization is to multiply personal relations with

the external, to render man increasingly subject to the influence of circumstances, and to limit his independence. As an animal, man is necessarily less self-contained, as regards the appliances of his existence now, than when he clothed himself less carefully, lived more in the open air, and fed and worked with less apparatus than will at present suffice him. It should never be forgotten that, as we augment the number and enhance the efficiency of our aids in life and labour, we reduce the powers and possibilities of an independent existence. The help we have had in the past we must have in the future, and it must be more helpful, because we have lost—or are gradually losing—the capability of doing without the accustomed assistance at our command. Every disguised power languishes. This is the law of Nature in the government of living organisms. The weather, which must be regarded as one of those natural conditions of life from which man might have been expected to emancipate himself by the domestic arts of manufacture and architecture, albeit he had placed himself in bondage to other circumstances, has a growing hold on his thoughts and sensibilities. This is the paradox. How are we to explain or understand it?

It is not mere custom, though habit has much to do with the fact, that we think and speak more frequently of the weather than on any other topic. The reason we take to be this. Every genuine step forward in the way of refinement and what is called culture is achieved by the development of new forms or degrees of physical sensibility. If man is more humane than he was, that simply means that his brain and nervous system are now organised so as to respond more readily to the influence of other brains and nervous systems, and have become what we call "sympathetic." Sympathy in mind is really sympathy in body; the finer tone or function is possible because the instrument is more highly pitched or more delicately strung. Culture improves the nature by rendering the organism more sensitive to impressions of pleasure and pain; and it is mainly, if not solely, because we are ourselves pained by the pain of others and derive pleasure from their enjoyment that we are interested in those around us. There is no greater mistake than to suppose that what is called a sensitive nature or a philanthropic character is necessarily unselfish. The chances are greatly in favour of its being even more thoroughly selfish than other natures which seem less demonstrative of fellow-feeling or may even appear callous to the suffering and indifferent to the happiness of those around. It is well that this should be recognised, because, however desirable it may be that humanity should be increasingly sympathetic and emotional—and this is doubtless Nature's way of welding mankind into a community—it is only right that we should know the facts, and avoid the mistake of supposing that we are better at heart or nearer perfection because we are more sympathetic. In truth we are only more sensitive. The contingent result of this growing sensibility of the organism is greater delicacy of feeling and impressibility; and, as a consequence, we are increasingly susceptible to the influence of changes in temperature, atmospheric pressure, and electrical conditions which would not have been noticed by our sturdy ancestors. Let us see how these things affect us.

The brain and spinal cord may be regarded as central points or stations in the nervous system. They are placed in close connection with each other and with the surface of the body by means of an immense network of minute nerves, some of which bring messages from the skin and the organs of special sense, while others carry messages or impulses of action to the apparatus of motion. It is with the former we are at the moment concerned. What we call sensibility is a refined and acute perception of external impressions by the centres of consciousness; and this depends on the efficiency—we might say, the excitability—of that portion of the nervous system which receives and communicates impressions to the spinal cord and the brain. It matters not what the impression may be; if it be quickly and clearly received—or, more accurately, formed—and communicated, this is because the organism is "sensitive." The nerves terminate in delicate loops or plates immediately underneath the skin, and cold, heat, pressure, or electrical influences powerfully affect them. If the air be chilled, the skin contracts, and, in so doing, irritates the nerves underlying it in such a way that they transmit a sensation recognised as "cold" to the centres of feeling and consciousness. Heat and other states or influences produce their special physical effects. Light affects us directly through the organ of vision, the eye, and it exerts an indirect influence through the skin. Light and darkness act on the human organism, particularly when young and growing, precisely as they act on the organisms of plants. Children reared in dark houses are pallid and sickly, just as vegetables purposely covered so that the light cannot act upon them are pale and delicate. Delicacy really means weakness, whether it be "delicacy of feeling" or delicacy of health and constitution. In our refinement we have learned to admire the sickly and depressed in nature, and we appreciate as beautiful the evidences of an infirm organism. Aestheticism means intensity of feeling, and the major part of the feeling thus cultivated is morbid. Aesthetic forms and attitudes are indicative of disease and debility. The type of figure which has been much extolled of late, and which is affected by the artistic, is the consumptive. It is curious to stand by and note

this vagary of the cultured taste. It is not in the least degree surprising, because it is, as we have said, by developing the sensibilities to an abnormal pitch that "intense feeling," whether in art or in any other province of mental and nervous function or consciousness, is attained. This is a digression; the point we desire to make clear is that increased susceptibility to the influence of external objects and energies fully accounts for what we call sympathy, and it entails greater delicacy or susceptibility of the organism, rendering it more easily impressionable by everything, and, of course, the weather.

There is therefore, we see, a physical and natural cause for the prominence which this subject-matter of conversation maintains. Our susceptibility keeps pace with, if it does not outrun, the ingenuity we show in devising means to protect ourselves from the vicissitudes of climate. Our organisms are now so highly developed that we are affected by the most trifling changes of temperature or tension. One of the most remarkable indications of progress in this direction is to be found in the extraordinary sensibility which the majority of adults of both sexes now show to alterations in atmospheric pressure. Within our recollection the thermometer would suffice to register the variations of weather likely to influence healthy folk. Now the barometer is anticipated by the "feelings" of the multitude. An oppressive day no longer implies rise of temperature; a very little increase in the weight of the atmosphere is felt to depress. On the other hand, though not so quickly perhaps, relief in the pressure almost immediately makes itself felt by a sense of expansion, and what is termed buoyancy. These are, as we have seen, purely physical changes produced by the operation of the atmosphere on the surface of the body affecting the nerves underlying the skin in a manner which is purely and simply mechanical. If we desire to be less easily affected by the weather, there is only one way to emancipate the body from its subjection to the influences, and that is to clothe it less completely and to brace it with cold water. Cold-bathing will not suffice without exposure, and particularly exposure of the extremities. We must fly directly in the face of all the doctors tell us about keeping the extremities warm and the head cool if we would be really strong and unaffected by the weather. Of course the process of living naturally should be commenced in early youth. Those who have pampered their organisms and rendered them so delicate that they are practically useless must put up with the inconvenience in adult life; but, for the sake of those who come after them, their children should be trained to a healthier and more robust life.

The weather is the common topic of remark because it is the subject which most personally interests us. In spite of our vaunted independence, we are more than ever subject to the influence of changes in the weather; and such changes affect us with especial force. Frequent reference to the weather will alone explain the rapidly changing moods of the cultured organism. The hand is drawn across the forehead, the eyes are closed for a moment, the whole body is thrown into an attitude of rest-seeking with a frequency which, if the unconscious language of the lower "feelings" and "emotions" were more generally understood than it is, would be deemed of the highest possible significance. It follows from what we have said that the fact that men and women think and speak much of the weather is not altogether a good sign of the times. It is as a bad and warning sign that we are inclined to regard it. The frequency of the allusion is a small but significant token of that over-development which is beginning, to make itself felt in a thousand and one ways, and which must sooner or later stand confessed as the reverse of a blessing to humanity. Happiness does not depend upon "culture." It is possible to be too highly cultivated in feeling and fact. There may be an increase of theoretical regard for right principles without any corresponding capacity for their adoption. Mind and body are inseparable; and it is no gain to know what is right unless we can also do it. That keen appreciation of the slighter shades of difference between good and evil which may undoubtedly be gained by culture is worth nothing as a mental quality if it be acquired by the sacrifice of physical vigour and earnestness. The best and truest form of development is that which brings the greatest number of qualities and faculties to perfection. A really good man, in a spiritual as well as a natural sense, is a healthy man. It is a fallacy to suppose that religion, or any other form of excellence, is to be attained by "mortification of the flesh." When this phrase occurs in Scripture, it has a specific meaning and relates to the subjugation of one part of the nature to the rest. It has been taken out of its context and entirely misused in the writings of divines and theologians, particularly in those of the so-called "saints" and their imitators. Except for special purposes, it is wrong and, in a sense, impious to maltreat and starve the body. Nothing that was lame or sickly was permitted to approach the altar in the old Jewish system of worship. Perfection means pure development, harmony, and health of body and mind. Too great sensibility amounting to delicacy is not to be desired. All our feelings and susceptibilities ought to be honest and true faculties and qualities, neither exaggerated nor disturbed. We ought not to be the creatures of circumstances, but their masters. The weather should not affect us over-much, and we should be so far independent of its influences as to be able to live happily in spite of them.

"MAN OF THE WORLD."

It is not only the "man of the world" who can offer an exquisite compliment. Witness the following:—

Not long ago, a lady was doing the honors of her flower garden to a shy, reserved, stolid-seeming country lad, in whom she had taken an interest. He came of good, old Quaker stock, "poor and proud" in the best sense of both words: that is *poor* only in money and lands; *proud* only of their good name and their independence. He had fine abilities, and had cultivated them, through terrible hardships and cruel self-denial, until they had brought him to the shore of the wide sea of a profession. He was good to look upon, too, and he had a deep and pleasant voice. But his utter ignorance of society, and his want of polish (of which he was painfully aware, and vainly tried to conceal under a veil of almost total silence) threatened to bar the path to honors he richly deserved. The lady was several years older than he, and had enjoyed all the advantages he lacked. She saw his deficiencies and quietly had striven to amend them, and to aid him, as far as she could. He admired her in his grave, practical way, but seemed unable to respond to her efforts. She was almost in despair. That day she had her reward. As they passed from bed to bed, she pointed out now here, now there, her favorite flowers, until they paused, at last, "beside a great bell of June lilies, and, gently touching one, she said 'but these of all flowers, I love.' He bent over them, examined them, asked one or two questions as to their growth, and as they turned away, remarked quite easily and incidentally: 'I have noticed as you named your favorite flowers, that they are all pure white.' Then with a slight pause, and a beautiful modulation of his voice, he added, 'That is exactly what I should have expected.'

"My dear," said the lady in telling it, "I have not one fear remaining. That boy is a success! And I only hope and pray, I may be as pure a woman, from the soul out, as his eye, his tone, his whole manner showed that he thinks me!"

That broke the icy chains of cold reality too early bound upon youthful imagination, and care free, innocent ease. He had courage to use all he had mutely gained from the intercourse with her life. He is a success, but he cannot surpass his first delicate and beautiful tribute to a good woman.

HEART AND HOME.

THE well-regulated life must be its own judge of what pleasures and amusements are proper and best. One inflexible rule should be to engage in nothing that is in itself wrong. That must rule out gambling from every game; it must rule out everything that violates or tends to violate the law of purity. Another rule is that of moderation, or not to allow any form of pleasure to become such a ruling passion as to interfere with the serious work of life.

ABOUT CHOOSING A BUSINESS.—Every man who produces something—something that the world needs—is a public benefactor. So every man who does something that the world needs to have done is a public benefactor. But any whose business makes the world any worse than it was before cannot be such a business-man as he ought to be. The first thing then is to choose a business that shall make the world better, not worse. Perhaps you may not thus choose the business which will make you rich the quickest; but nevertheless you will have chosen as you ought to choose.

UNDYING LOVE.—The love that survives the tomb is one of the noblest attributes of the soul. If it has its woes, it has likewise its delights; and, when the overwhelming flow of grief is calmed into the gentle tear of recollection, when the sudden anguish and convulsed agony are over, the present ruins of that we most loved are softened away into pensive meditation on all that it was in the day of its loveliness. Who would root sorrow from the heart, though it may sometimes throw a passing cloud over the bright hour of gaiety or spread a deeper sadness over the hour of gloom? Yet who would exchange it for the song of pleasure or the burst of revelry? No; there is a voice from the tomb sweeter than song; there is a remembrance of the dead to which we turn even from the charm of the living.

WILBERFORCE AND CLARKSON.—Did you ever meet with those anecdotes of Wilberforce and Clarkson, which, put together, make one of the most instructive stories I know? They give us the characters of the two friends, and offer us very much more. Some one was one day praising Wilberforce to his face for his toils and sacrifices on behalf of the slave. "Oh! you know I must," said the good man, who was quite unconscious how much better he was than the doctrine he professed. "You know I must do this work, for the sake of my salvation. I must save my immortal soul." At another time and place, a pious friend admonished Clarkson to attend to his religious duties, inquiring whether he had not been neglecting the safety of his immortal soul. "My soul!" said the simple old man, as he sat rubbing his knees, with his earnest, business-like look; "why, I don't know. I have been so busy about these poor negroes, that I don't think I have thought at all about my own soul." Who would have not been the Clarkson here? though we all know that Wilberforce was far above being benevolent from selfishness, however he thought it his duty to persuade himself that such were his reasons.—*Man's Nature and Development.*