

New Dominion Monthly.

AUGUST, 1875.

VETULIA.

BY W. W. S.

Once in my travels, I visited a country where people did not die when they became old. In fact, they did not die at all, except by those violent accidents and mishaps against which flesh and blood can offer no effectual resistance. Being always of an investigating turn of mind, I resolved to make a lengthened sojourn in such a favored land, and find out how the inhabitants could have arrived at such an unusual exemption from ordinary mortality. Nor did I despair of being able to carry back with me from these less-known regions, the *modus operandi* of bilking the grisly monster, Death. I found, however, unexpected difficulties in the way. In the first place, I had to undergo (when I applied for permission as a foreigner to remain in the country), a strict medical examination. "Ah," thought I, "they want to find out whether I am of a sufficiently good constitution, and in a sufficiently healthy habit of body, to make expedient so great a gift as quasi-citizenship in a country where people never die except they are *kill-ed*!" But I was wrong. Though I took unusual pains to impress the

medical officer that I was, in life assurance phrase, a "first-class life"—that I had had measles, and mumps, and whooping-cough, and had passed through each triumphantly—that I never had been sick, in a general and indefinite sense, but twice, and had then been cured on eclectic principles, and without calomel—and more important than all, had had the small-pox seven years before, which had passed off, leaving only a microscopic mark or two on my nose—and that I was quite pest-proof and rejuvenated—it was all of no use. In fact, I was standing in my own light. The worthy doctor, who was really my friend, and wished me to remain in the country, knew he was serving my interests and gratifying my desires, by making me out as sickly as possible; while I thought the only way of obtaining the right of residence was in proving myself extremely healthy. So he reported me, "In moderate present health; forty years of age—looks more; lungs, not diseased, but weak; general vital force of system, minimum to average; bilious habit." I remembered that this was as near as possible the description given of