

ASTRONOMY.

“WHAT are the bright stars telling,
As they sweep through the azure skies
With their soft, sweet light that is welling
Like love from a maiden's eyes?
What are those dear stars saying—
Are they whispering to us to-night
As alone through the green glades we're straying
Beneath their soft silvery light?”

“How brightly they twinkle and shimmer,
How pure is their silvery sheen,
Set in glory, they glint and they glimmer
Like gems in the crown of a queen!
How humble are earth's things—how lowly,
Compared with those beacons afar!
What of earth is so stainless and holy,
As the light of the evening star?”

“Are they whispering of sadness and sorrow,
Presaging us weakness and woe?
Or, oh, do they say our to-morrow
With joy and with gladness will glow?
What are the bright stars singing,
Sweet, Love, oh, unfold to me
As they go with their bright looks winging,
Their flight through immensity?”

“They are whispering, my own heart's darling,
To the big tom-cat on the range;
They are watching the nigger go crawling
To the melon-patch close to the grange.
They are eyeing the policeman sparking
The fat girl in the aréa,
And dear little sweetheart, I'll whisper
They are winking to you and to me.”

Carleton Place.

J. W.

THE JUNIOR PICKWICKIANS;

AND THEIR MEMORABLE TRIP TO NORTH AMERICA.

CHAPTER XX.



O say that Mr. Crinkle's countenance expressed surprise would be but to give a faint idea of the emotion visible on that gentleman's face: he seemed perfectly aghast, and his companions little less so. They all four stood as if transfixed, as the raft slowly drifted past and far down the river, till the last strains of the beautiful ditty had died away,

and then Mr. Crinkle broke the painful silence.

“Bramley, we have been deceived: Thomas, to think that we have travelled thousands of miles to have our most sacred beliefs shattered in this manner. It is too much,” and his voice broke down and he sobbed audibly.

“Yes,” said Mr. Yubbitts, “I think it is too much. I don't want any more of it. My gracious! what a voice that big fellow in the red shirt had, and I could see half way down his throat when he went into the chorus, why—but what's the matter, Bramley?”

“Yubbitts,” replied that gentleman, in tones rendered doubly impressive by the appearance of his nose, which had by this time assumed a most angry and inflammatory aspect, “this unseemly levity on your part is not only ill-timed but unfeeling—look at our friend Crinkle,” and he pointed towards him.

That gentleman was indeed an object for commiseration and pity. Unable to bear the blow to his feelings in a standing position, he had seated himself on the turf (having first assured himself that there was no wasp's nest to receive his person), and burying his face in his

handkerchief, wept with such force that his sobs convulsed his whole frame. Coddleby stood over him endeavoring to soothe and console him, whilst Bramley, standing close to the water's edge, folded his arms, bent forward his head, and looked very Napoleonic indeed. Mr. Yubbitts appeared scarcely to know what to do with himself, and had just drawn forth a silver-mounted flask from his breast pocket with the evident intention of, in some measure, soothing his own feelings, at all events, when, just as he had unscrewed the top and was in the act of raising the vessel to his lips, he suddenly abandoned the idea, and shouted out frantically, “For heaven's sake, Bramley, look out!” But he was too



late. A billy-goat, which had approached all unobserved by our preoccupied heroes, doubtless attracted by the scarlet handkerchief which happened to be hanging from Mr. Bramley's coat-tail pocket, suddenly, and before the victim of the assault had time to pay any heed to Mr. Yubbitts' warning, sprang full butt at the abnoxious signal, and both Mr. Bramley and Capricornus himself went with an immense splash into the river, Mr. Yubbitts being the only one who fully realized what had happened.

In a very few seconds Mr. Bramley's head appeared above the surface, and a merely casual observer could not fail to see that he wore an astonished expression; moreover, he was indignant, and, not seeing what had been the dynamic impulse before which he had been so unceremoniously precipitated into the river, immediately came to the conclusion that Mr. Yubbitts, in a spirit of levity, had shoved him in, for he had distinctly heard that gentleman call to him to look out. Even in this emer-



gency Mr. Bramley's coolness and presence of mind did not desert him—he could swim; and as the water was chilly, and he desired to get out of it without delay, but, with characteristic coolness he commenced to address Mr. Yubbitts, who, with the other two, had rushed to the water's edge, in his own peculiar and measured tones:

“Yubbitts; I did not think you would have done this, at such a time of all others, but—hallo! what's this?” as the goat's head and horns appeared at his side: