

A HEALTH.

BY EDWARD COATES PINCKNEY.

I fill this cup to one made up
Of loveliness alone,
A woman of her gentle sex
The seeming paragon,
To whom the better elements
And kindly stars have given
A form so fair, that, like the air,
'Tis less of earth than heaven.

Her every tone is magic's own,
Like those of morning birds,
And something more than melody
Dwells ever in her words;
The coinage of her heart are they,
And from her lips each flows,
As one may see the burdened bee
Forth issue from the rose.

Affections are as thoughts to her,
The measures of the hours;
Her feelings have the fragrant,
The freshness of young flowers;
And lovely passions, changing off,
So fill her, she appears
The image of themselves by turns,
The idol of past years.

Of her bright face one glance will trace
A picture on the brain,
And of her voice in echoing hearts
A sound must long remain;
But memory such as mine of her
So very much endears,
When death is nigh, the latest sigh
Will not be life's but hers.

I fill this cup to one made up
Of loveliness alone,
A woman of her gentle sex
The seeming paragon—
Her health! and would on earth there stood
Some more of such a frame,
That life might be all poetry,
And weariness a name.

ORIGINAL FABLES.

BY MRS. PROSSER.

NEVER TRUST THE FOX.

"Daddy, daddy! the fox is asleep; just look at him!" screamed the geese to the old gander, as they were crossing the common.
"Ah! he may be, though probably he has at least one eye open. Keep your distance, I advise you; remember always that a fox asleep is more than a match for a goose wide awake!"

CRUMBS OF CHARITY.

"I can give you but a crumb or two," said the beggar to the hungry dogs; "what good will a few crumbs do you?"
"Good? why you know by experience what it is to be famishing, so you are no stranger to the value of a crumb," answered the dogs.
"Take it; but it grieves me to see you so thin and to give you no more," said the beggar, sorrowfully.
"Grieves you! what, this out of your little you can give but little? Dear kind heart, don't be troubled; the crumbs thus lovingly given are so sweet that they will do us far more good than the finest bone thrown at us grudgingly."

THE POINT AT ISSUE.

"How in the world did we get here?" cried the mice, one to another, as they ran hopelessly round the wire walls of a large trap.
"I think something fell down and shut me in," said one.
"I think I was so taken up with looking at the cheese that I lost sight of the way I came in," said another.
"I can't account for it all," said a third.
"What's the use of wasting time in trying to account for it?" said an old grey-beard; "here we are, and the question to be considered now is, not how we got in, but are we are to get out."

NOT WORTH THE COST.

"By your leave, sir," said the water-rat to the king-fisher, "this is my house," and he sat still in the doorway to prevent his entrance.
"Nay, but I want to come in," said the king-fisher; "I have paid you visits before, and why not now? Think how handsome I am, and how much my family is sought after."
"You have been in before, sir; but, to tell you the truth, that's the very reason I prefer keeping you out now, notwithstanding your high family and fine clothes. You have an awkward habit of eating fish and leaving your bones at my door. Now I don't want anything laid to me that I don't deserve, and as I don't catch and eat fish, I won't have the credit of it; I consider no company worth having that takes away my character, however high in rank or fine in appearance."

EXPERIENCE BETTER THAN ADVICE.

"Just let me put that creature out of the way," cried Young Snap to Old Barker, as they passed a hedgehog lying by the roadside.
"All right!" said Barker, trotting on till he heard Snap behind him.

"Well, finished him?" he asked, trying to catch Snap's eye, which was turned away.

"Why, no," said Snap; "the brute wasn't worth the trouble."

"Ah! how's your nose?" said Barker; "I think by the color of it, if you had made at him much longer, he would have finished you. I had a taste of a cousin of his once, and since then I have kept clear of the race. I dare say for the future you will do the same."

EASY TO BRAG.

"What a poor dull thing!" said some newly-sharpened blades to each other, as they glanced at a scythe somewhat the worse for wear.

"Dull!" cried the scythe, contemptuously, "you've only just come from the grindstone, or you wouldn't be so sharp. Do the work that I have done since I was there, or send me there again, and then see which of us will make the best appearance, and cut the keenest."

KEEP TO YOUR VOCATION.

"Pickle," said Dick, the bull-terrier, to the pretty little Skye, "as long as you keep to your tricks and winning playful ways you are charming; but when you come to the gate after me, putting in your shrill, sharp-pipe, and spoiling my deep hoarse bark, you look positively silly; excuse me, but true friends must be faithful."

"Dick, dear," said Pickle, "that reminds me of something I have often thought of telling you; as long as you keep to guarding the house and frightening the beggars, you are highly respectable; but when you try to come sprawling on my lady's lap, in imitation of me, you have no idea how foolish you look. Excuse me, but one good turn deserves another, and true friends must be faithful."

TRAINING.

"And is this all my mother could do for me?" grumbled the woolly-bear caterpillar, as he crossed the gravel path where the little golden beetles shrank from him in something like disgust. "Frightful, of course frightful; very humiliating!" he exclaimed, as he began to make his dinner of the dead nettle to which he had crawled.

"Patience!" said the dead nettle; "you won't always be a woolly-bear."

A little time and the woolly-bear became a pupa, that is, an insect mummy, or a baby in swaddling clothes.

"Is this change for the better? am I any nearer beauty now?" he asked despairingly of the nettle. "Surely I was better off when I could at least show life and move about, than I am in this living tomb?"

"Patience; when things come to the worst they mend," said the nettle; "you won't always be a mummy."

One morning the sun shone on the glorious wings of a tiger moth, as it balanced itself on the hedge, trembling with delight.

"Ah," cried the nettle, "I told you so, the training wasn't pleasant, but see what has come of it!"

THE BAT WOULD BE A BIRD.

There was a commotion such as has never been known among the beasts and birds. The bat, for reasons of its own, claimed to be a bird, but the birds unanimously voted him a beast, so it was brought to trial. The eagle was judge, the jury were half of them owls, and half of them falcons.

There was very sharp pleading on both sides, and witnesses without end came forward till the owls blinked and the falcons looked bored to death. The eagle, with his grave magnanimity, sat it out in grim patience, but seemed much relieved when he came to sum up.

"Gentlemen of the jury," he said, "you have heard the claim of the bat to be a bird and you have heard the evidence of many inferior beasts to prove him so; you have also heard the counsel and witnesses on the other side. Now, gentlemen, so far as I can see (and every one knows I can see a great way), the bat is indubitably a beast. His habits are those of a beast, his voice is what any bird would be ashamed of, and his form, with the exception of wings, is a beast's without controversy. Those wings, on which his counsel lay such stress, are not like those of any bird we are acquainted with, and such as they are, he uses them only at night; by day he either crawls or clings. As to your verdict, gentlemen, I rely on your wisdom and keenness; but my opinion is, 1st. That the whole affair has been an affront to this honourable court; 2nd. That it matters not at all to any of us whether he is a beast or a bird; 3rd. That it is a scandalous thing our time and trouble should have been spent on such an unworthy inquiry. One thing more—I trust when you have given your verdict that one of you will eat him; that will settle the question for ever, and prevent him from giving the public any more trouble."

THE LAKE AND THE FOUNTAIN.

"Always giving out!" murmured the lake; "that river—that streamlet! am I never to be left free to keep my own?"

"Oh, lake!" cried the fountain-head, "remember you have nothing of your own. I could supply the river and those streamlets without first flowing through you; but I honour you with fulness that you may have the greater honour of dispensing my riches; beware, lest losing sight of this, you make me leave you to dry up, and choose another channel for my bounty."

A TERRIBLE ADVENTURE IN THE TYROL.

Theophilus Lane and Francis Abbot were old college companions and fast friends; but though still young, their paths in life had diverged. Lane had become an ecclesiastic. He was not so broad perhaps in his religious views as his emancipation of them from the pulpit was long, but nevertheless he was an excellent fellow. Abbot was a barrister, eminently respectable in his conduct and behavior, and a regular attendant at his parish church, but not a glutton for sermons. He had a logical mind. But the two men had still one taste left in common—that of mountaineering. They both delighted in the strength of their legs. They did not talk much together—no great pedestrians talk. A few words may be interchanged during the first six miles, but a solemn silence soon intervenes; the distance between them, as they plod on side by side, imperceptibly widens; they are hot they are thirsty, they are each a little bit cross because the other shows no external symptoms of weariness; not until kindly nature drops the veil of evening on the scene does either propose to halt. Then they eat enormously, and fall asleep immediately afterwards like anacondas.

In the part of the Tyrol into which the unreflecting legs of these two men had carried them in August last, there happened to be nothing to eat; there was no meat, no wine, no beer, nothing but a sort of thin meal made of the same bran with which pincushions are stuffed at home, stirred up in milk, and which they described eulogistically as "very filling;" the effect, indeed, was to give them both the appearance of pincushions. The Divine, being used to fasting, suffered no particular inconvenience from this scanty fare, but the Lawyer did: his spirits were greatly subdued—a circumstance which must be the apology for his apparent pusillanimity in the crisis to be presently described. Hunger will tame a lion; and it is probable that a continuous diet of bran and milk would much diminish the spirit of the king of beasts, even if it did not induce him to lie down with the lamb. This was Abbot's case; what he would have given for a lamb, on the sixth day of that involuntary abstinence, would make the high meat prices of our own metropolis seem cheapness. The seventh day (even in the Tyrol) was Sunday, and after their bran breakfast, instead of setting out to walk as usual, the Rev. Lane thus addressed his friend. His voice as the matter was subsequently described to me by an unseen spectator of these proceedings, one whose beard and green spectacles concealed the fact of his British origin, and who kept his mouth shut lest he also should fall a victim to the oppressor, Lane's voice, I say, had an unctuous persuasiveness about it which it did not exhibit upon a week day; and while he spoke he held his doomed companion by his glittering eye, like the Ancient Mariner in the ballad.

"Don't you think, Abbot, it would be very nice if we had a church service this morning?"

"It would be charming," answered the other, confidently; "only unfortunately there is nobody to attend it! There is not a Christian, or at least an Englishman—for I am sure that hairy man with spectacles cannot be one—within a hundred miles of us, so I don't see where you are to get your congregation."

"My dear fellow," answered the Divine, softly laying his hand in an episcopal manner upon the other's knee, "there is you, and there is I."

The earnest gravity of this remark, joined with the contemplation of what it was evidently leading up to, was such as to paralyse poor Abbot's already enfeebled powers; and his grammatical sense, which at home would have been outraged by the expression "There is I," was now only faintly irritated.

"There is I," he repeated mechanically.

"Just so," continued the Divine, with cheerful acquiescence. "I will read the service to you!"

"But there is no room where we can be alone my good soul," pleaded Abbot.

In one part of the rude apartment in which they sat was a party of natives (among whom they included the bearded stranger, carousing over bran and milk, and in another the goat which supplied the milk was being taught a variety of accomplishments by the junior members of their host's family; especially to stand with all four legs upon a penny piece, generously supplied for that purpose by one of the two English visitors.

"Nay, my friend, there is our bed room."

The remark was undeniable; there was their bed-room; accessible, though with difficulty, by a ladder that led out of the common room through a hole in the ceiling. In the early days of Christian persecution, or in Covenanting times in Scotland, such an apartment would, without doubt, have had its advantages as a place of public worship, since nobody would ever have suspected its being used for that purpose even by the most fanatical; but in that year of grace, 1873, it did seem a little—well, incongruous. That two people, and one of them the clergyman, should join in supplications for the Royal Family and for the high court of Parliament was in itself a somewhat astounding proposal, but that they should do so in a rickety chamber, with a roof so sloping that the congregation couldn't stand up even when so commanded by the Rubric, and with a running accompaniment of Tyrolean jargon coming up through the open space where the ladder was, revived in Abbot a transient sense of the ridiculous; but he was gone too far (through bran and milk) to discuss the matter.

They accordingly climbed up the ladder into this wretched apartment, and from the breast-pocket of his coat the Rev. Theophilus Lane produced a pair of snow-white bands, and tied them round his neck. His design, it was therefore evident, had been premeditated, and in his countenance was an expression not only of fixed resolve but of placid triumph.

"Has he brought a surplice with him," thought the unhappy congregation, "or will he put on the counterpane?"

He did not, however, proceed to that extremity, but sat down, with the washing-stand—the only article of furniture in the room—between him and his helpless victim. A spectator who had not overheard their previous conversation would have imagined that they were about to baptize an infant.

The victim had never been so near an officiating clergyman before, and the Divine apparently fascinated him. He could not keep his eyes off those bands, one of which he perceived had a spot of ironmould upon it; would it annoy him (the congregation seemed to be thinking) if he should mention the fact? Not of course now; that was not to be thought of; but when the service was over—if it ever should be over. He was spared nothing, absolutely nothing, except the Prayer for Rain; if a collection should presently be made from the congregation would he have to drop something into the soap dish, he wondered, and found himself reading the directions in the Prayer Book, instead of following his pastor. They were so close together that it was impossible to follow him. "In choirs and places where they sing, here followeth the anthem." Will he propose an anthem? The congregation could not sing; it would do anything to oblige, it had no force of will to resist its minister; bran and milk had sapped its vitals, but it could not sing. The reader was, for the most part, monotonous, but at times his voice gathered strength and volume—it seemed to the unseen spectator (who was now looking through the hole in the floor) at the wrong times; when he was talking about "the sinner," for example, he could not help casting a glance in the direction of his congregation, as much as to say, "You hear that." Abbot's lips were moving all this time—but as my informant imagined, by no means in devotional exercises. "This is hard," he seemed to be muttering to himself; "this is really very hard; he shall never have this chance again, by jingo—never, never! I will take care not to travel with him in future, except on week days; or if I do, I will take a Dis-senter with us; somebody that will protect one from him; who will have something to say on the other side of the question. How monotonous he is getting." Here the victim (as my informant supposes) must have dropped asleep, for the tones of the Divine had a sharpness in them which savoured of reproof. But flesh and blood—or at least flesh and bran and milk, could not indefinitely endure such an infliction. The service had lasted three-quarters of an hour, though the congregation had not dared to look at its watch. However it was over now. The Rev. Lane was about to dismiss his hearer. "Now shall the priest let them depart," says the Rubric. A quaint, but admirable sentence. What was he about now? "This is terrible, this is shameful," thought the spectator (and so do I). He produces a sort of black copy book from the pocket whence he took the bands. He is about to preach a sermon—a sermon, too, of his own composition.

The victim's emotions became obviously almost too much for him. His countenance revealed him to be indignant, irritated, and even revengeful, but he was not strong—the very worm it is said will turn, but not when it has been fed for six days on nothing but bran and milk—besides there was no room to turn. He was obliged to sit and listen. When he heard himself addressed as "my beloved brethren," and even as "my dear brothers and sisters," he did not remonstrate. In spite of those plural expressions, it is my informant's conviction that the discourse had not been delivered before; there were descriptions of Tyrolean scenery in it, allusions to a diet of locusts and honey, and other local colouring that proclaimed it to be a recent effort of its author, yet it was obviously framed for a larger audience. Poor Abbot was the housekeeper to whom this clerical Molière rehearsed his composition before trying it on his congregation at home. Its reception was ensured, even if it should not prove to be an oratorical success. Tied and bound by a delicate sense of the becoming, the unfortunate congregation had to sit it through. If every point did not "tell," at all events it could not be escaped, the missile being cast as it were at such a very short range. When the Divine rose upon the wind of eloquence, my informant described his own sensations as those of one who is blown from a gun. What then must the sensations of the victim have been, who was still nearer to the impassioned preacher?

The victim never revealed his sufferings (though it is highly improbable that he ever forgot them), but my informant adjures me to make them public.

"Not," says he, "that it is possible such a catastrophe can occur in my own case; I will take good care of that. But I hope (in spite of what Lane said in his sermon) that I sometimes think of others; and I adjure you to put the human race upon their guard. Let no one travel alone with an enthusiastic Divine in a district unfrequented by his fellow countrymen, and towards the latter end of the week, lest a worse thing betide him than ever happened to that unhappy and depressed young man."

"Well, upon my life," said I, "I don't see