

was not without cause. An old unoccupied shed, adjoining the unoccupied premises known as the March Street Brewery, the property of H. J. Boulton, Esq., had been set fire to by some malicious hand, and burned for some time without any opposing force. It communicated with the Brewery, which was speedily consumed, and the flames spread to a row of five fine new tough cast houses on the south side of Richmond Street, belonging to Mr. Andrews, and in less than half an hour the whole were destroyed. The flames then extended to the outbuildings in the rear of Mr. Cotton's house on Church Street, and consumed the whole of them, but a plentiful supply of water was turned on the back of the house, and it was very little injured. One frame house in the rear of Stanley Street was partly damaged. About four o'clock the violence of the fire was eventually subdued, although the engines played upon the embers for hours afterwards. The tenants saved the most of their effects, and no accident occurred in the bustle of the scene.

'Tis long since Solomon said, Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is the reproach of any people; and this fire,—as well as many others that have occurred in this city, forms a severe experimental attestation of the truth of the statement. This old shed in which the fire originated, has for some time past been the rendezvous of a party of vagrant, disorderly characters, well known to the police authorities, and no doubt well known to those of our citizens,—whose money supports them in their dissolute courses—who for a momentary gratification barter away the nobleness and independence of manhood, whatever a depraved morality may say to the contrary. No corrective is applied to this party with a view to lead them back in a reasonable way from their sinful life; but all of a sudden on the Sunday morning previous to the fire they are turned out of their hovel to find a shelter where they may, and the result of this summary ejectment recoils with awful vengeance on the innocent and unoffending sufferer. Mr. Andrews' new row of houses had no connexion with the affair, but still they are doomed to suffer. Fires do sometimes arise by accident; but four-fifths of the fires that occur in Toronto bear upon their appearance the stamp of incendiarism. There is an utter inability to account for them upon any reasonable principles of calculation, without including that great element of destruction—incendiarism. It is unwise then that such characters should be allowed to herd together, when it is known that the only income they have is the wages of infamy, and it is equally unwise that they be told in a peremptory way to move off, for although it may seem the easiest way of getting rid of a nuisance, experience shows us,—in this instance at least,—that it is not the cheapest, and one such occurrence may be only a trifling episode in the life of such miscreants. No evidence can be produced against them, and they pass unscathed only to renew their wicked course and give vent to the malicious principles of their depraved natures on the earliest fitting opportunity. Possibly our civic authorities may think that too many duties are already imposed upon them, without their being required to interfere in a matter which in a great measure becomes one of private affairs; but it is the duty of some party to look after that dissolute class, and also to see that some means are adopted to keep them in check. Conciliatory measures are decidedly what should be adopted; but if there is no one with sufficient vigour of mind and freedom from bias to undertake so great a work of reformation, then, society calls aloud to the authorities for protection from the recurrence of such desolating proceedings.

STAR LIGHT.

From the wild disorder of scattered stars which the first picture of the heavens presented, science has enabled us to grope our way through the dark labyrinth of chaos, guided only by the

soft lustre of those winning stars, till we have been enabled to see the whole, grasped together in one great and complete system, of a magnitude which makes arithmetic ridiculous, yet simple in arrangement as the conceptions of a child. Man has no part in all these sublime galaxies but to stand a silent spectator of their overwhelming beauty. Compared with the awful periods which compose the years and ages here, what is this momentary life-time of man? Nature works complete at every step, from the whirling bubble on the brook to the congeries of a million stars. The fall of dynasties, the growth of new peoples, antiquities, and traditions, vanish before this severe face of marble solemnity. The petty cares, jealousies, and passions of men fade away in the contemplation of these awful cycles; and startling is the contrast, after traversing such realms of majesty, to wonder, where worlds whirl without jar, and orbs rush without concussion, to turn back to man, and see him struggling on the surface of a flood and buffeting with its boiling waves. "One might think the atmosphere was made transparent with this design, to give man in the heavenly bodies the perpetual presence of the sublime; seen in the streets of cities, how great they are. If the stars should appear but one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore; yet every night come out these preachers of beauty, and light the universe with their admonishing smile."

This great double convex lens-shaped system, of which the Milky-Way is the outer extremity or ring, is not the universe, but a trival part of it. Wherever the telescope has penetrated, it has brought to light other great systems of starry dust, whence the star-light comes in softened clouds, indefinite and vague. These are composed of myriads of separate stars, each one a sun, revolving with its attendant planets around the centre of the whole. In these we see the circular outline repeated in obedience to the law of gravitation,—the law which alike controls the form of dewdrop or a tear, and a congress of a thousand stars. Beyond these are others more distant still; and thus down far, far into that soundless sea, the starry systems float and sing; and the telescope, but now a thing of marvel and triumph, is at last a toy and contemptible, for it reaches the cloudy masses no more. The star-light comes, but it will tell no story; it brings pictures, but they are pictures of mystery. And thus, from the spectacle of starry worlds revolving in our sky, we are carried up to the idea that those masses of nebulous light are astral systems also; and come at last to the conjecture, that, as the lesser worlds revolve around the sun, and that sun, in his own system around a greater sun, the star-systems themselves, which we see floating away in the abyss yonder, may all be traversing a pathway around the feet of Deity, receiving from that Central Sun of all things a glory and a light Divine. Let us bow our heads, for surely God is in the midst, controlling, watching, judging, but loving all the while!

But even here let us retrace our steps, for the star-light can yet tell us something which shall make manifest the omnipotence of Deity, as an attribute in harmony with that same star-light, and as a necessary consequence of its own physical law.

Light is not instantaneous in its passage; it requires time to travel. It moves at the rate of 2,000,000 of miles in a minute. Hence it is eight minutes reaching us from the Sun; or the Sun has really risen eight minutes before we see him; and it now eight minutes in advance in his path of the spot which he appears to occupy. Hence, again, the bright star in Centaur, which is eighteen billions of miles distant, is seen by us, not as it now is, or where it now is, but where it was, and as it was, three years ago; and if it were now to explode into fragments, and vanish from the sky, it would be three years before we should lose its picture in the heavens. This will be easier understood, if it be remembered that the ray of light leaves the star, and passes through space quite unconnected with its origin; and, when it

falls on the optic nerve, it will give the eye a picture of the star, whether the star be there or not. Thus, we see the star Vega, as it was five years ago, and a star of the twelfth magnitude as it was four thousand years ago. In the same way, if we reverse the phenomena, the inhabitants of the sun see the earth not as it is now, but as it was eight minutes before, and a spectator in Vega, as it was twelve years before; and, in like manner, to the deepest recesses of the universe. What is the result of this?—namely, that the universe contains not only the whole of space, but also the whole of time! Every event, as well as every existence, is treasured there; and empty space becomes a microcosm of the ages. Everything on which the light falls reflects back a picture of itself.

The stars send forth complete pictures of all the scenery and appearances of their respective surface; and although, from our limited power of vision, we are unable to perceive anything more than a point of light; nevertheless that point of light, could we dissect it, would reveal the landscapes, seas, and cities, as they were when the light came away, as plainly as we can behold the scenery of our own hills and valleys! What then! Why, from some part of space, the eye of Omnipotence can behold whatever has taken place here, or in any other world. There is some spot where the picture embalmed in a ray of light, is speeding on its way through infinitude; and from thence we can behold it. At the Centaur in 1851, the picture of London in 1851, with its Palace of Glass and gathering of the Nations, will be visible; and upon a star of the twelfth magnitude may now be seen the founding of Memphis, and the wanderings of Abraham; while pictures of the dim geological ages of the earth are now speeding past the regions of distant nebulae, to travel on and on in a journey which can never be completed. Heed your ways, therefore; for the eye of God watches over us physically as well as spiritually, the deed of to-day is to become part of the universe, and to be kept speeding on through starry spaces and silvery galaxies for an eternity to come!

Possibly the spirit of man may hereafter be permitted to read these revelations of the star-light, when, separated from earthly scenes, he soars upward amid the stars, and looks upon the picture of his own life treasured up there in the blue expanse, and wringing its flight from world to world upon the pinions of the lovely star-light. What, then, will be his emotion as the scene wherever he played the coward or the tyrant comes before him, and in pain and shame he feels impelled onward as the picture speeds,—watching its progress through all the starry cluster, crying as it goes, "Stars, stars! behold the story of a man!" Will he dwell in those stars hereafter, and join in the melodies which they sing while hurrying in majestic sweep around the throne of the Father? Who knows but such may be?

"If you bright orbs which gem the night
Be each a blissful dwelling sphere,
Where kindred spirits reunite
Whom death has torn asunder here;—
How sweet it were at once to die,
And leave this weary world afar,
Mid soul in soul to clear the sky,
And soar away from star to star."

Well, as the holy star-light stoops down to bless the eye with its lustre and the mind with its revelations, may it come even into our hearts as a ray from the Divinity, teaching us to love while we live; and, like the stars, to sing and circulate without jar serenely together.—*Familiar Things.*

* In proof of this witness the geographical features which may be seen of the moon, the planets, Mars and Venus, by the aid of the telescope. Jupiter, further distant still, yields something regarding his aspect, and Saturn, more distant still, a few features of his physical condition.

† Simple possibility to all the writer deems necessary in the explanation of this law, which is well-rooted in the laws of physics. Such exceptions may occur in regard to events which take place in houses and places which impede the freedom of light, or of some moment in the statement of a general truth. For the thought itself, the writer is indebted to a little word guide; in the "Laws of the Earth" or, "Thoughts Upon Space, Time, and Infinity," Spiller, New York.