

they were of industrious, steady habits, and youths of promise.

At his home Mr. Beverly had among his children a daughter—Florence by name—who often came to the store, and whom the clerks had met at her father's house. These clerks could be gay and gallant on occasion, but never toward Florence Beverly. The feeling they entertained toward her was one akin to worship. In their hearts they adored her afar off, giving her respectful attention, and prizing her smile of recognition as a priceless boon.

So far as the family connections of these three young men were concerned, they were all honorable, respected people, but none of them wealthy. Mr. Beverly was not wont to seek his trusted servants among those who had been reared in ease and luxury.

On a certain occasion Mr. Beverly was heard to remark, that he would rather give his daughter in marriage to a man poor in purse, who could bring the wealth of a pure and upright heart, than the possessor of millions whose manhood was tainted in the least degree.

This remark came to the knowledge of the clerks, and it is not surprising that they thereupon experienced wild and brilliant day-dreams, in which most stupendous and dazzling castles were constructed in the air.

As time rolled on they became more and more familiar with Florence's sweet smile, and were admitted to a degree of friendship which proved, at least, that she did not despise them.

At length came the devastating fire of the ninth of November. Upon viewing the scene of desolation, and calculating the chances and the necessities of business, Mr. Beverly resolved that he would not immediately seek new quarters for the continuance of his trade. He had no need, and he did not care to do it; so he secured an office where he could meet and consult with his correspondents, and settle outstanding accounts, in pursuance of which only the services of his private secretary and two book-keepers were required.

The three clerks were summoned to the merchant's presence. He told them what he concluded to do, and why he had so concluded, and he advised them to seek some other employment until he was ready to start again.

"I shall rebuild as soon as possible," he said, "and then your old places will be open for you. In the meantime, if you are hard pushed, do not hesitate to come to me for assistance."

Within two weeks from that time both Philip Lewis and Clarence Bugbee called upon Mr. Beverly, and asked for the loan of a hundred dollars each. They had been unable to find employment, and were in arrears for board. The merchant kindly gave them the money, and with it a little fatherly advice touching care and economy.

One day, after this, as Philip and Clarence were walking down the blackened track which had once been Franklin street, they saw a young man, in a guernsey frock, working at the windlass of a derrick amid the ruins of the old store, whom they thought they recognized. They crossed over, and found it to be their fellow-clerk, George Acton. They were astonished and scandalized.

"In mercy's name, George, what does this mean? Is it only an escapade of yours?"

"No," answered Acton, wiping the sweat from his brow, "I am fairly and honestly at work, and I earn two dollars a day. That's better than loafing."

"Heavens!" cried Philip Lewis, with a start, "here come Mr. Beverly and Florence. Go and hide yourself, Acton, before they see you."

But the young laborer did not budge an inch. Just then the boss called out to "hoist away!" and George applied himself to the work.

Meantime Mr. Beverly and his daughter had come upon the scene, once more to look upon the ruins of the grand store-house. Lewis and Bugbee bowed respectfully and then drew aside in mortification that one of their fraternity should be found in so menial a position for, it was evident that both father and daughter had recognized the youth in the garb and grime of toil, as the former clerk.

"Halloo!" cried Mr. Beverly, as soon as he was sure that his eyes had not deceived him. "Is this you, George Acton?"

"Yes, sir," replied our hero. His face was flushed, but it was with healthful labor, and not with shame,—the steady brightness of his eyes showed that.

"Are you regularly hired here?"

"Yes, sir. The contractor gave me this berth until we can find one better."

"What does he pay you?"

"Just the same as he pays others—two dollars a day; but I earn a dollar extra in the evening by keeping his accounts. It's better than nothing, sir. I tried to find a clerkship; but there were at least a dozen applicants for every vacant place. Of course I couldn't starve; and while I have health and strength I will neither beg nor run in debt. I was brought up to work, you know; and, thank Heaven, I'm neither afraid of it, nor do I feel above it."

"Hoist away!" shouted the master; and George Acton applied himself again to his work.

Mr. Beverly went over and talked with the contractor, and from the fact that they looked several times towards the windlass where the young clerk was at work, it was reasonable to suppose that they were speaking of him.

And during this time Miss Florence spoke with Philip and Clarence, and a delicious fluttering seized them as they met her welcoming smile. They expected that she would speak of the sad and humiliating spectacle exposed before them, and they were prepared to tell her

how mortified they felt; but she made no allusion to the circumstance. She did not even intimate to them that she had recognized the young man at the windlass.

By and by Mr. Beverly came out from amid the ruins, and having drawn the arm of his daughter within his own, and bowed to his former clerk, he departed. He did not bow an adieu to young Acton, for just then the laborer was busy at his work.

And Philip Lewis and Clarence Bugbee walked away talking of their pity for poor Acton.

"Mercy!" cried the former. "I wouldn't have been in his place when Florence Beverly came upon the scene for all the money in Boston."

"It was certainly humiliating," asserted the other. "But," he added reflectively, "Acton never was really high-toned. I guess his family is rather low-bred, any way."

And in this conclusion both young men fully agreed; and they further agreed that they should not in the future recognize George Acton as an acquaintance.

A week later Lewis and Bugbee had occasion to call at the office where Mr. Beverly had established his business headquarters, and they were not a little surprised at beholding George Acton seated at the desk of the confidential clerk and correspondent. It was a private room, with a glass door, which George occupied, and they did not go in there; but they ventured to ask one of the book-keepers if Acton had been permanently employed.

"I don't know about that," replied the book-keeper. "I only know that Mr. Beverly seems to have taken a sudden and strong liking for the young man,—that he entrusts him with his private correspondence, and has given him a home beneath his own roof."

Another day came—a day when the sleighing was excellent, and when the merry bells were jingling far and near. Through the kindness of a friend Lewis and Bugbee had managed to secure a team for the afternoon, and they drove out upon one of the Brighton roads. Out in the country they met the superb double cutter of Mr. Beverly, drawn by a pair of rattling bays.

Upon the front seat sat the merchant and his wife, and upon the back seat, smiling and chatting with all the grace and charm of friends who had given to each other the truest trust and confidence, sat George Acton and Florence Beverly!

What did it mean? If Philip Lewis and Clarence Bugbee are not stupid beyond belief, they must see this have solved the problem; and may the solution give them new and enlarged views of life and its duties.

FASHIONS IN CRITICISM.

There are certain fashions in letters as there are fashions in dress. The wit and wisdom of one period is cloaked in a different garb from that of another, and it is necessary even for a popular writer to be acquainted and furnished with the most recent affections of style which happen to be in vogue. And as we occasionally see women returning with the milliners to the discarded hoops and powder, so we have our poets decking themselves in the braveries and peculiarities of bygone days. This imitation of antiquity gives to the fresh product an air at least of Wardour-street reliquary interest. It answers the purpose of inferior verifiers admirably. They can hide their want of originality, invention, correct drawing, as it were, behind the coffee-coloured pigments and the ancient varnish. They may have the luck to find eloquent interpreters whose business and pleasure it is to discover rarities as Mr. Roade discovers the beauties of Cromwell fiddles. The ingenuity of the most profound critics of our time is best displayed and exercised upon difficult and puzzling work. It is their function to describe the method involved in the madness of the raving ode and the mazy sonnet, which to the common understanding, seems to be an inextricable conundrum. There are surely writers amongst us who have gained reputations by being uniformly unintelligible. These oracles uttered the most mysterious things, and at length it came to pass that poets who positively seemed to be as incoherent as the dog baying the moon, were regarded as inspired, and as sacred from satire, comment, or incredulity as the fools were in Greece who were supposed to have gone mad after seeing a deity. And in the midst of our culture of the obscure and of our admiration for the turgid, we have also set up for admiring a kind of simplicity to which the occasional baby-babble of Wordsworth might be considered masculine and robust in expression and in thought. Mr. Tennyson has to a great extent been blamed for the development of these follies, but it is scarce fair to charge him with the perpetual offences of the mimicking mob. The real criminals in the matter are the critics. And we are inclined to think that they have been moved to lenity more through pride or indolence than a good nature. A critic now strives to prove that he could be a poet as well as a critic if he would. He has been losing temper of late under the outbreaks of the ungrateful authors whom he has so fastened upon butter and rose leaves that the slightest deviation from an attitude of devotion brings upon him the most desperate abuse of his craft by the pampered "child of genius," who can be a very fishwife in the command of vituperative terminology. In a whole twelvemonth, you will not perceive a single literary or illiterate pretender nailed on the barn-door, or hung upon that "keeper's

tree" which every appointed judge of books ought to have for exhibition to his patrons. The justice performed in dances in the old days of the Edinburgh Review is sadly required just at present. It should be wholesomely and vigorously exercised to discourage the crowds of the incapable and the ignorant who deluge the world and the circulating libraries with books every month. It is the function and the duty of the critic to show no unkind mercy to those who furnish him with undeniable evidence of incapacity. He is cruel to stay his hand, and is disloyal to his craft besides. The effect of the feeble and uncertain tone of the so-called book notices of the day has been the growth amongst us of crops of authors who furnish nothing but thistle-fodder for suitable readers.

We are not proposing that a class of critics such as that of which Gifford was a representative should now come forward to do battle with the purveyors for the libraries, although we are not so sure that the pen of a Gifford would not be more productive of good than of harm at this crisis. Many living poets richly deserve the treatment which Montgomery received at the hands of Macaulay, and shoals of contemporary novelists might with benefit to the public meet from reviewers the same sort of genial recognition which the sea fisherman accords to the worthless dog-fish. But we have become fastidious and almost apologetic in dealing with the very filthiest trash which has the luck to be presented in print. We detect the subtle humor in the innocent antics of American Jack Puddings who in their own country are valued at the same rate in *belles lettres* as we estimate nigger songsters in music. Our own accepted authors are the breathless manufacturers of two romances at once, sometimes even of three. That these productions should be slipped in style, vague in plot, and distractingly weak and diffusive altogether, little matters. The accepted author has by prescriptive right, as it were, a claim on his critics to say the same things of him whatever he turns out. If by any chance a reviewer breaks through the custom nothing can equal the astonishment and the rage of the accepted author. One would think it was his person rather than his book that was assaulted. He endeavors to shirk the point of a charge brought against his wooden story by explosions of abuse which few people indeed can imagine to proceed from a real sense of wrong inflicted on him. The critic is a sour, disappointed personage, who still writes upon gin-and-water in a gutter. He is vengeful and spiteful, or ignorant, and without a shred of literary conscience. Now, we believe, the critics have themselves to blame for language of this kind addressed to them. They have surrendered the position they ought to have upheld by discretion as well as by ability. They have constituted themselves the very humble servants of writers whom they should have tested and analyzed fearlessly, rather than nervously, in performing their office.—*Globe*.

GOOD-NATURED PEOPLE.

There are a certain number of people in the world who enjoy the reputation of being "so very good-natured." Now, real practical good nature—the good-nature that is slow to take offense or to see evil, and quick to do a kindness or to help a friend, or one who cannot help himself, whether in small things or great—is one of the most charming of human qualities, to say the least of it. Perhaps we might rather call it one of the high developments of the Christian spirit. But of this, as of other pure gold, there are many base imitations often palmed off upon us, in this world of shame, as the genuine article. Among these may be classed a certain "rough and ready" geniality, a noisy hilarity, a confident manner, as of who should say, "I am sure of my welcome; I would not think so badly of you as to suppose you did not like me," together with great care in asking favours, which often gets called "good nature." This sort of person goes easily and pleasantly through life; nothing troubles him long; he generally has a laugh ready, and is blessed with a strong physique and armed with so sensitive a sense of mind or body.

He is not at all quick at taking a hint; and if you try to give him one, the chances are he will stare full in your face, and say in a loud cheerful voice, "What do you mean?" and after that you are obliged to tell him (for he has a good deal of curiosity); and thus the whole room is rapidly made aware of the *mot d'énigme*, for your "good-natured" friend cannot conceive why there should be any mystery. He never has any concealments, not he; he hates mysteries, and the whole world is welcome to know his affairs! But somehow the world does not always find them very interesting, as they chiefly consist of how he has bought and sold his horses or his poultry; what he pays for house-rent, for his butcher's meat, and the like; while in exchange for this touching confidence he quite expects to know all your little ins and outs, from your tailor's or milliner's speciality to your love affairs, if you have any! He will "drop in" at all sorts of hours, call everybody he possibly can by their Christian names, and, in short, "makes himself quite at home." You get rather tired of it; but then he is such a cheery sort of creature that you feel a brute for complaining; and if you even begin to do so, to one somebody says, "Oh! don't you like So-and-so?" He is such a good-natured fellow! If, however, you in your turn ever think that you will ask this "good-natured" fellow to do anything for you—say to give a message, or do some little commission—you

will probably find that, somehow or other, it is a failure; either he forgets it and is "awfully sorry," or "he has 'really can't possibly manage it'; nothing I would have delighted him so much, but it is quite out of the question, because —" &c., &c.

People who really do kind and good things for their fellow-creatures seldom have this popular easy-going sort of character; experience has taught them that, though they would not for the world miss doing a kindness, yet it is rather hard work to be always doing it; and they are perpetually shedding so much sympathy out of their natures that they are apt to suffer from a state of chronic fatigue, and often are rather melancholy, except when roused by some demand on the cheerful side of their being.

Sometimes, unfortunately, they allow themselves to get into a depressed and injured sort of manner, as of habitual victims; and this cannot be too greatly deplored, as, in spite of their real goodness, such persons can never be appreciated; and are, in fact, far less agreeable than the more selfish easy-going persons who are called "good-natured."

Manner is a more important thing than is generally thought; the best and kindest people destroy their own influence, and what is worse, often create a prejudice against goodness, by a hard, dry, discouraging manner; more especially as, after all, manner is generally on the whole a tolerably fair index of the mind. Those who are courteous and genial probably feel kindly towards us at the moment, even though they may forget us directly after; and certainly such people are infinitely preferable to those who are equally careless of us, and are rude into the bargain. There is no reason why people should seek our society if they would rather not (indeed no one would wish it, we hope), but everybody has a right to expect courteous recognition and due civility at such times as they are thrown into the society of the "fellow-creatures."

What we protest against is the misapplication of the term "good-nature," when it is used only to cover the absence of anything better, and to excuse the aggressiveness, thoughtlessness, or want of refinement which are so peculiarly annoying to more sensitive persons. The good-nature which takes and does not give; which accepts and does not confer; which asks and does not grant; and which enjoys life loudly, regardless of other people's trials, is a quality which certainly gets its full share of appreciation.

We are often reminded of the sad and bitter words of the Psalmist, "So long as thou dost well unto thyself, men will speak good of thee." Yes; so long as you can "play your cards" with success, you will be popular as a partner: even there, though, there is a reverse to the picture, and your adversaries may perhaps like you better if you do not win quite so much! Still, their comments must be made "under the rose;" no one can well run down a very successful man—still less a very successful woman—for fear of the imputation of envy and jealousy, and indeed it is well to look closely into one's own heart, and make sure that there is not really some taint of these unamiable qualities in such cases.

Anyhow, it is better to keep silence and let the successful enjoy their success; only let us never lose a chance of speaking a good word, or holding out a hand in aid of the unsuccessful. They may have "had their day," or their "day" may never be destined to dawn on this side the grave; but their more triumphant brethren and sisters are pretty sure of their vicissitudes before the game is played out, and then we shall see which are the real gems and which the imitation. Many are "good-natured" enough while all goes well with them, who, nevertheless, cannot stand the test of adversity, cannot pass through the crucible of suffering.—*John Bull*.

KATE STANTON, in her lecture on "The Loves of Great Men," asserts that planets revolve around the sun by the influence of love, like a child revolves about its parent. When the writer was a boy he used to revolve around his parents a good deal, and may have been inclined thereto by love, but to an unprejudiced observer it looked powerfully like a trunk-strap.—*Daily News*.

WAVING TO UMBRELLA CARRIER.—The man who walks the streets, carrying an umbrella under his arm, was at the corner of Fourth and Vine this morning. He stopped suddenly to speak with a friend, and a man behind him nearly broke the point of the umbrella off by running his eye against it. The man swore and the umbrella chap wheeled suddenly, tearing off a young lady's back hair. He turned to apologize, and jabbed the end of his umbrella into a very tall policeman's stomach. Policeman administered a jerk and the umbrella point tore off a portion of a small boy's ear, and immediately after carried, the starboard corner of a man's mouth up into his front hair. Stepping back in dismay at what he had done, he rammed the umbrella down a bystander's throat, and at the same time he fastened the hooked handle (the probabilities are that the handle was not only hooked but that he hooked the entire umbrella) into a colored citizen's wool. In his efforts to get his umbrella loose, the unfortunate owner of it upset a fruit and candy stand and plunged head foremost into one of Snare's plate-glass windows. In the excitement and confusion that ensued the umbrella was put in a hack and driven to the hospital, and the man was taken to an umbrella store to undergo repairs.