

rambles, for all who desire to feel the pleasures of a thankful heart, and to participate in the happiness of the simple and the lowly, now is the time to stroll abroad. They will find beauty and enjoyment spread abundantly before them. They will find the mowers sweeping down the crops of pale barley, every spiked ear of which, so lately looked up bravely at the sun, is now bent downwards in a modest and graceful curve, as if abashed at his ardent and incessant gaze. They will find them cutting down the nestling oats, each followed by an attendant rustic who gathers the swath into sheaves from the tender green of the young clover, which commonly sown with oats to constitute the future crop, is now showing itself luxuriantly. But it is in the wheat field that all the joy and gladness, and picturesqueness of harvest is concentrated. Wheat is more particularly the food of man. Barley affords him a wholesome but much abused potation; the oat is welcome to the homely board of the hardy mountaineers, but wheat is especially, and everywhere the "*staff of life*." To reap and gather it in, every creature of the hamlet is assembled. The farmer is in the field, like a rural king amid his people—the laborer, old or young, is there to collect what he has sown with toil, and watched in its growth with pride; the dame has left her wheel and her shady cottage, and, with sleeve-defended arms, scorns to do less than the best of them; the blooming damsel is there adding her sunny beauty to that of universal nature, the boy cuts down the stalk which overtops his head; children gleam among the shocks; and even the unwalkable infant, sits propt with sheaves, and plays with the stubble, and

With all its twined flowers,

Such groups are often seen in the wheat field as deserve the immortality of the pencil. There is something too about wheat-harvest which carries back the mind, and feasts it with the pleasures of antiquity. The sickle is almost the only implement which has descended from the olden time in its pristine simplicity—to the present hour neither altering its form nor becoming obsolete amid all the fashions and improvements of the world. It is the same now as it was in those scenes of much beauty which the scripture history without any labored description, often by a single stroke, presents so livingly to the imagination, as it was when tender thoughts passed

Through the sad heart of Ruth, when sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;

When the minstrel king wandered through the solitudes of Paran, or fields reposing at the feet of Carmel; or as it fell on a day, that the child of the good Shunamite went out to his father to the reapers. "And he said unto his father, My head! my head! And he said to a lad, carry him to his mother. And

when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died." 2 Kings iv. 18-20,

Let no one say it is not a season of happiness to the toiling peasantry: I know that it is. In the days of my boyhood I have partaken of their harvest labors, and listened to the overflowings of their hearts as they sat amid the sheaves beneath the fine blue sky, or among the rich herbage of some green headland beneath the shade of trees, while the cool keg plentifully replenished the horn, and sweet after exertion were the contents of the harvest-field basket. I know that the poor harvesters are amongst the most thankful contemplaters of the bounty of Providence, though so little of it falls to their share. To them harvest comes as an annual festivity. To their healthful frames, the heat of the open fields, which would oppress the languid and relaxed, is but an exhilarating and pleasant glow. The inspiration of the clear sky above, and of scenes of plenty around them of the very circumstance of their being drawn from several dwellings at this bright season, open their hearts and give a lip to their memories and many an anecdote and history from "the simple annals of the poor" are there related, which need only to pass through the mind of a Woodsworth or a Crabbe, to become immortal in their mirth or woe.

The description of harvest work given as above by Mr. Howitt requires considerable modification in reference to the conducting of such matters on this continent. The "cradle" has for a long time almost wholly displaced the sickle, and such of late years has been the progress of agricultural mechanics that the reaping machine is rapidly superseding the former in many districts. In this country it is of the utmost importance to gather the harvest quickly and cheaply; an object which improved machinery only can facilitate. Even in Britain within the last three or four years the Reaping Machine has been not only introduced, but successfully and extensively employed in several counties; and it is every year making progress. It is a curious fact that we owe the invention of this valuable implement to a Scotch clergyman, now living; and it is generally conceded by the farmer at home that Bell's Improved Reaper is upon the whole the best Machine yet introduced, although most or all of the more celebrated American machines have had their comparative merits tested by repeated trials. It must certainly be confessed that these modern changes which must be after all regarded as great improvements, have to some extent interfered with our early and poetical associations in connection with the season and work of Harvest. Like the modern Railway, mowing, reaping and thrashing machines are great innovators on old and often pleasing associations and customs, which are destined to yield to the progress of improvement.