

or rank in society, that we have thought a few hints in relation to this subject might be productive of beneficial effects.

It is well known to physicians, that nothing more certainly impairs the sense of vision than debauchery and excess of every kind. The individual, therefore, who would preserve his sight unimpaired, must avoid carefully every species of intemperance. This is an all-important rule, a neglect of which will render every other of but little avail.

A long continuance in absolute darkness, or frequent and protracted exposure to a blaze of light, equally injures the sense of vision.

Persons who live almost constantly in dark caverns or chambers, workers in mines, and prisoners who have been long confined in gloomy dungeons, become incapable of seeing objects distinctly excepting in a deep shade, or in the dusk of the evening. While on the other hand, in various parts of the world, in which the light is constantly reflected from a soil of dazzling whiteness, or from mountains and plains covered with almost perpetual snow, the sight of the inhabitants is perfect only in broad day light, or at noon.

Those, also, who are much exposed to *bright fires*, as blacksmiths, glassmen, forgers, and others engaged in similar employments, are considered, by the best authorities, as most subject to loss of sight by cataract.

All brilliantly illuminated apartments have a similar prejudicial effect upon the eyes, though, undoubtedly, not to the same extent. As a general rule, therefore, the eye should never be permitted to dwell on brilliant or glaring objects for any length of time. Hence in our apartments only a moderate degree of light should be admitted; and it would be of considerable advantage, particularly to those whose eyes are already weak, if in place of a pure white or deep red colour for the walls, curtains, and other furniture of our rooms, some shade of green were to be adopted.

Reading or writing in the dusk of the evening, or by candle light, is highly prejudicial. The frivolous attention to a quarter of an hour at the decline of day, has deprived numbers of the perfect and comfortable use of their eyes for many years; the mischief is effected imperceptibly; the consequence often irreparable.

There is nothing which preserves the sight longer, than always using, in reading, writing, sewing, and every other occupation in which the eyes are constantly exercised, that moderate degree of light which is best suited to them; too little strains them, too great a quantity dazzles and confounds them. The eyes are less affected, however, by a deficiency of light than by the excess of it. The former seldom does much if any harm, unless the eyes are strained by efforts to view objects to which the degree of light is inadequate;—but too great a quantity has by its own power, destroyed the sight.

The long-sighted should accustom themselves to read with rather less light, and with the book somewhat nearer to the eye than they ordinarily desire; while those that are short sighted should, on the contrary, use themselves to read with the book as far as possible. By these means both may improve and strengthen their vision, whereas a contrary course will increase its natural imperfections.

Bathing the eyes daily in cold or tepid water, tends to preserve the integrity of their functions; provided, however, the individual does not immediately after such bathing enter a warm room, or unnecessarily exert his sight.—*Cornell's Journal of Health.*

ARE THE PLANETS INHABITED.—Are the planets inhabited? is a question which naturally presents itself to the human mind, and for a solution of which we as naturally look to the science of Astronomy. But when the immense distance which separates us even from the nearest of the planets is remembered, it can scarcely be matter of surprise that the telescope affords no direct evidence on the question, whether the planets, like the earth, are inhabited globes. Yet, though it gives no direct answer to the inquiry, modern astronomy has collected together a mass of facts, connected with the positions and motions, the physical character and conditions, and the parts played in the solar system by the several globes of which that system is composed, which forms a vast body of analogy, leading the intelligent mind to the conclusion that the planets are worlds, fulfilling in the economy of the universe the same functions, and created by the same Divine hand,

for the same moral purposes, and with the same destinies, as the earth. Thus, for example, we find that these orbs, like our own, roll in regulated periods round the sun; that they have nights and days, and successions of seasons; that they are provided with atmospheres, supporting clouds, and agitated by winds; and that thus, also, their climates and seasons are modified by evaporation, and that showers refresh their surfaces. For we know that wherever the existence of clouds is made manifest, there water must exist; there evaporation must go on: there electricity, with its train of phenomena, must reign; there rain must fall; there hail and snow must descend. Notwithstanding the dense atmosphere and thick clouds with which Venus and Mercury are constantly enveloped, the telescope has exhibited to us great irregularities on their surfaces, and thus proved the existence of mountains and valleys. But it is upon the planet Mars, which approaches nearest to the earth, that the greatest advances have been made in this department of inquiry. Under favourable circumstances its disk is seen to be mapped out by a varied outline, some portions being less reflective of light than others, just as water would be less reflective than land. Baer and Maedler, two Prussian Astronomers, have devoted many years labour to the examination of Mars, and the result has put us in possession of a map of the geography of that planet, almost as exact and well defined as that which we possess of our own; in fact, the geographical outlines of land and water have been made apparent upon it. But a still more extraordinary fact, in relation to this planet, remains to be considered. Among the shade markings which have been noted by the telescope upon its disk, a remarkable region of brilliant white light, standing out in boldest relief, has been observed surrounding the visible pole. This highly illuminated spot is to be seen most plainly when it emerges from the long night of the winter season; but when it has passed slowly beneath the heat of the solar beams, it is found to have gradually contracted its dimensions; and at last, before it has plunged into light on the opposite side, to have entirely disappeared. But the opposite pole, then coming into similar relations, is found to be furnished with a like luminous spot, which, in its turn, dissolves as it becomes heated by the summer sun. Now these facts prove to us, incontestibly, that the very geographical regions of Mars are facsimiles of our own. In its long polar winters the snows accumulate in the desolation of its high northern and southern latitudes, until they become visible to us in consequence of their reflective properties; and these are slowly melted as the sun's rays gather power in the advancing season, until they cease to be appreciable to terrestrial eyes. This fact is a most striking one in reference to the present question. If the moon has proved to us, incontrovertibly, that one of the celestial luminaries is a solid sphere, carved into elevations and depressions analogous to those familiar to us as the mountains and valleys of the terrestrial surfaces, Mars teaches us as emphatically that another among them is a world fitted with its rains, and snows, and clouds, and seasons, to the purposes and wants of organic life, which is intimately dependent upon such adaptations for its being.—*Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review.*

THE VALLEY OF THE MISSISSIPPI.—Let us begin with the Mississippi and its great navigable tributaries. So miraculous has been the increase in population, wealth, and improvement of the great valleys drained by these waters that, to quote the language of Mr. Calhoun, in the report made by him in the Senate, on the memorial of the Memphis Convention—"What 60 years ago was one vast region, with little exception, of forest and prairies, over which a few hundred thousand savages wandered, has now a population but little less than nine millions, with great and flourishing cities, abounding in opulence, refined in manners, and possessed of all the comforts and even elegance of old and polished communities." But great as this increase is, it is nothing, according to Mr. Calhoun's calculations, to what may be anticipated in the next 60 years. According to the first census in 1790, the population of the whole region drained by the Mississippi did not exceed 200,000. In 1840 it exceeded 6,300,000, and at this moment, taking the same ratio of increase as that between 1830 and 1840, it falls little short of nine millions of people. In sixty years hence, unless some shock should occur, which should convulse or overthrow our institutions," Mr. Calhoun estimates that the population of the valley will reach *sixty millions*. Its commerce has increased even more rapidly than its population. According to a memorial presented to Congress by the citizens