

ORIGINAL.

Two persons took up the theme, *Reflections in a Well*, and wrote an article each, which have been handed for publication in the Pearl. The exercise is amusing and instructive, exhibiting the points of similarity and dissimilarity, the different trains of thought and modes of illustration, which two minds will strike into on the same subject. We understand that the articles were written in imitation of Lamb's Essays, although the work was not before the writers, nor recently looked into, by either.

For the Pearl.

REFLECTIONS IN A WELL.

TRIP—scrape—splash! Heavens, where am I? That confounded plank has driven my big toe nail half an inch into my flesh, while those that were upon my fingers have been torn off by the one on the opposite side, against which my nose was broken in the fall, and to which I vainly clung for support. Equally vain were my efforts to uphold myself by the aid of knees and elbows. No diner out ever saw such a spread as I exhibited in coming down—the Black Eagle of Prussia was nothing to me—would that I had had either its wings or its claws. Though never more *in need*, my knees were instinctively extended—had I been two inches longer in the hams, they would have fitted into the two first holes they met—but alas! they got bruised, like Irishmen in a drawn battle, to very little purpose. My elbows were also stretched out, and now I am out at elbows. The water is up to my middle—my pumps are two feet in the mud—would that there had been any other pump in the well, I never could have gone through the nose—my hat, which fell off in the descent, is wet, and my head is nearly as cold as though I had an iron crown upon it.

Hark! the Town Clock is just striking three, nearly four hours yet to daylight, and not a soul stirring in the street. What a situation for a gentleman, heated with dancing, and but half-an-hour ago revelling in the abundance of a good supper. Bathing is injurious to health after eating, and apoplexy is often the result. The wet hat may prevent the rush of blood to the head; where it is going I cannot divine, but it is escaping from below high water mark with great alacrity. What is to become of me, if struck with cramp or paralysis, I am brought upon my marrowbones or haunches, the water will then be over my head, and a bottle of prime Madeira will be spoiled. I have read Exodus often, but never sympathized with the Egyptians till to-night. What a dreadful thing it must be to be drowned in the sea, when even drowning in a well appears so horrible. I have heard of a man who by seizing hold of a bear's tail drew himself out of a hollow tree—what monster is there that I would not grapple with, to get out of this horrid place—I would seize a comet by the tail, or even the great bear himself. "Approach me like the rugged Russian bear," said Macbeth, when he had waded in blood beyond his depth, and the quotation is applicable to a man up to his middle in water. Some people never sleep without a fire escape in their bed rooms—a water escape would seem to be as necessary to foot passengers in this cursed town, where there are always two or three wells uncovered. A patent should be given for the invention, for if it be necessary to descend in a hurry in order to escape one element, to ascend would seem as necessary to avoid another.

By the way, talking of fires—what music the cry of fire would be now. The loss of a square would be nothing to the loss of a life so valuable as mine. Twenty houses could be rebuilt—but who is to rebuild me? The Phoenix that dies by fire comes to life again, but I never heard of the renovation of anything that died by water. A fire would bring people into the street. My cries would then be heard, and who knows but a suction hose might be lowered into this very well? All the silk hose in my wardrobe, including the pair on my feet, should be given for a gripe of that attached to No. 1—if I did not take care of Number One for ever after, then it would be my fault. But even if they did not draw me out, it would be a relief to have the water drawn. I remember to have listened to lectures on Hydrostatics at the Mechanics' Institute some time ago, and admired the great law by which fluids always descend to a level. All laws, human and divine, are broken at times, why should not water commit a similar offence for my benefit? If this water would but flow upwards to the level of the street, I should not mind being washed for half a mile along the dirtiest gutter on the surface. Truth is said to lie at the bottom of a well—I am therefore, for the first time in my life, in a situation to be taken for truth—I, who this very night have told fifty falsehoods to each one of a dozen partners. No doubt they are all thinking upon me at this very moment, but they can have no idea of the *depth* of my affection. Anna B. arrayed in her robe

de chambre and cap de nuit, is just taking a last look at the sweet features that she thinks have done my business. What an eye is sleep about to put a seal upon—what a bosom is there peeping from under that white dress—the very thought would ignite one anywhere where water was less abundant. Now she steps into bed, would that "we were wed," and I were stepping in with her—now a plump round arm is stretched out and the extinguisher descends upon the taper-wick, I should not be much afraid even to be in the dark with her. But "five fathom deep her love doth lie"—it would be bad enough to be buried or drowned, but I am neither—and yet am half under water and wholly under ground. I have always heard that pride would have a fall, but such a fall as this Lucifer could hardly anticipate. There was that horrible old maid, Marian Dubbs, who sat like a wall flower all night. I never danced with her, because she has no money, and is old and ugly to boot—but I wish I was standing opposite to her at the head of the longest contra dance that ever was attempted in Halifax. To get out of this confounded place, I would waltz with her at Government House—aye, even rest my head upon the place where her bosoms were, with the chance of being discovered by Anna B.

But, of what avail is it to recall the forms and the pleasures of society, the circle in which I move at present is not only extremely limited, but the most disagreeable that ever came in my way. A member of the Temperance Society might be quite at home here, but I am a cold water man against my will. Surely all my partners cannot expect to marry me—Emma Bootlace, who lives at the end of the street, has the worst chance, for she is of plebeian origin. If she were to reflect on this, perhaps she might steal out to drown herself in this very well. Should she come down head first, my wet hat might still be of service. But she would desire to die without unnecessary exposure of her person, and would no doubt go, like all decent people, feet foremost to her grave. What an eclaireissement should she find me here. We should have to stow close, for there is hardly room enough for us both. What a place for a flirtation—she would not refuse a few kisses, for no harm could come of it here. There would be no fear of interruption—our hearts, like these waters, could mingle in peace. Still I should be better pleased if she paused upon the platform, and gave me time to call out before she leaped in. If rescued by her aid from this accursed hole, she should be mistress of my person. At least she would be entitled to salvage, for I am waterlogged, and surrounded by rocks. Hark! it is her footstep. No—it is only a couple of cats courting over the way. Emma Bootlace loves me not—or if she has determined on drowning, has gone down to the market wharf.

There is a star right overhead. I know not if it be the one that I was born under, but that I shall die under it seems more than probable. The Egyptians are said to have had deep caves under the pyramids, from which they made observations upon the stars—a well would have done quite as well. Herschell's telescope has not so many glasses in it as mine. Oh! that that were the dog star. It might take the chill off the element. There comes the moon. I cannot see her, but her light streams through the only window there is in my prison house. How provoking, that she should have hidden herself in a cloud until I popped in here, and then smiles at my misfortune. I wish I were the man in the moon—it cannot be so cold there—there must be some fire, and I never heard of there being any water. There comes the cloud again—moon and star are both gone, and even the heavens look black upon me—I should have become an astronomer—a very Chaldean, but for that cloud. How dark it is getting, and the wind begins to howl—it is going to rain—I am a lost man if it does. After such a dry season there will be a desperate flood, and at least ten feet of water in the well before morning. I am but six feet in my pumps, and there will be four more than can be pleasant.

Narcissus died for love of his own image in the fountain—had he plunged in he would have been cured. I am by no means enchanted with my own reflections in the water. Hunger will be my portion before daylight, even if I live; and though it can break through stone walls upon the surface, it is powerless for such a purpose when a man is embowelled. If I had but the remains of that turkey, a side bone of which I nibbled towards the end of the feast, or even that bottle of Port, which almost untouched was smiling at the corner, as decanter after decanter of Madeira disappeared. Even a segar would be a comfort—it is one, happily, within my reach. There are three in my breast pocket, and the lucifers are still dry. Let no man despair. (Lights a match.) Puff—puff—now, fortune, I defy thee; and yet the sight of the general character and dimensions of my prison house, which the match gave me, has by no means increased my affection for it. There seem to be old bones at the bottom. Who knows but some poor wretch may have

perished here the last time the well was uncovered; and I may be standing like a monument upon his grave. If I had a rusty nail I would write his epitaph on one of these smooth rocks by which I am environed. Smooth and slippery and cold are they, like the polished rascals one meets in the world. But those above can be jostled aside, these hold their positions in spite of me. I care not, however, there is great comfort in that segar, at least so far as one half of my body is concerned. My lower extremities I throw out of the question—it is no use wasting a thought on them. If I were a mermaid, it would be all right; my tail would be in its natural element. But

"Come, never seem to mind it, nor count our fate a curse."

How ever bad we find it, there's always some one worse.

Nova Scotia is not Lapland, thank heaven, the night cannot last six months—neither is this well the worst one for a man to fall into—there is one at Carisbrooke Castle, in the Isle of Wight, five hundred feet deep. Think of that, Master Brook—all the king's horses could not draw a man up alive who had had the misfortune to fall into it; but a kitchen wench, with a bucket and ladder line, would serve my turn. "Here's to our good friend Mopsey, wishing she were here." A habit of looking at the bright side even of a well is worth acquiring. How many poor devils are worse off even at this moment than I. A bear in a dead fall, with his back half crushed, and waiting for morning to reveal his misfortunes, and the settler to knock out his brains—a rat caught by the tail, so close that it will not break, and biting it off is impossible—darkness to these is deplorable, and yet daylight must be worse. An hour or two must close my term of solitary confinement, but what if it were to last for seven years. A chamber in Sing Sing is nothing but a dry well, with room to lie down. Then, fancy a poor wretch clinging to a hatch or lashed to a topgallant mast in mid-ocean—fathomless depths beneath him and the boundless sky above—the monsters of the deep plashing past him, with desire in their eyes and matchless energy in their muscular tails, and the only sail in sight two miles off, and going from him with a free sheet and a fair wind. Oh! there are many worse places than a well, and many greater sufferers than myself. I would rather be here at this moment than be a director of the Bank of England—notwithstanding all the rain in Europe it is very low water with that concern. I should have no objection to resemble its gold, because then I should go out faster than I came in. After all, even to die here would not be without its advantages. Instead of becoming "food for dust and worms" in the usual way, I should slowly dissolve in the pellucid spring water, and passing through the noses of innumerable tea pots, not only touch the sweet lips of all the fair ladies in the neighbourhood, but circulate warm and glowing through their frames. But then, what a number of ugly faces and red eyes would be washed in me, and I should be kneaded into bread and boiled into soup, and have to dilute every drop of bad liquor drank within four squares for an entire twelvemonth. By Bacchus, I could not stand that—there is madness in the very thought, every fibre of my frame burnt, glass after glass, in these vile decoctions. Murder! help! ho! a step at last—hurrah! to the rescue. (A drunken loafer looks into the well, and asks "does your mother know you're out?" hiccups, and staggers away.) Know I'm out! I wish she did. Curse that fellow, for a drunken knave. But it is lucky he did not attempt to rescue me—he would have realized Pindar's wish to the angler—the "gentle trout" would have "pulled the rascal in." But there is a light—somebody is astir—hallo! hallo! Ha, Doctor, is it you? Where are you going at this hour? "Mrs. Doldrum has just sent for me—it is near her time." True, Doctor, but my time has almost come. Tie your pocket handkerchief to the head of your cane—Mrs. Doldrum can wait, she is only in the straw, and I am in the water. I must be delivered first. Thanks, gentle Doctor—you draw as surely and as easily as one of your own blisters. I am by no means as tenacious as an old tooth, although I ached a good deal before I was extracted. Thanks, good Doctor, thanks—thou art a skillful operator. May Mrs. Doldrum have as good a time as I have had, and the babe unborn feel as joyful at the success of the accoucheur.

For the Pearl.

REFLECTIONS IN A WELL.

JUPITER, what a fall! Thunder, lightning, and all convulsions of nature, at once. How did I survive the crash? how much of me is yet alive? I fear to move lest I should find myself minus a pin or a fin.—But the truth will out, and the sooner the better.—Now for an overhaul.—It is well, thank heaven; I am left all right, contrary to my fears. It is well, considering all things, although I am in a well,—a leg shattered in two or three pieces, a collar bone