

THE VERIEST BLACKLEG.

The end of his talk is mischievous madness.—ECCLES. x. 13.

With men of Mr. Alderman Blank's type, the association of gentleness with manliness is an impossible conception. His ideas of a manly (!) youth were of the old game sort—a tooth for a tooth, a blow for a blow.

"Rather than that—Young Men's Christian Association, indeed—rather than that, I would see one of my sons the veriest blackleg on Epsom Downs, or the lowest sharper that ever poised a cue on the green cloth of a billiard table! None of your mild young men for me!"

And the Alderman brought his hand down upon the profusely and extravagantly spread dessert table, till the walnuts rattled again and the wine glasses jingled.

A lapse of years. His sons *did* despise Christian Associations, general as well as particular, and now we glance at a home—a *home* can we say?—an abode of another sort.

A dormer window looks out upon a mews, an uninviting prospect, but even that was more cheerful than the scene afforded by the interior. Leech, in the most bitter and also pitiful of his sketches, represented one woman in garish attire, a dragged unfortunate seeking protection from the cold and soaking rain of a November night under the shelter of a shop doorway, asking another how long she had been "gay." The irony of words! Such a one, a wreck of loveliness, stands against the worm-eaten post of a bed, in the handsome but bold attitude of a tigress at bay; her nostrils dilated, her eyes flashing and her figure rigid and upright as the deal chair back which she grasps, with nervous energy, with both her hands.

"You, You!" she gasped to her companion, a man with blackleg and sot written indelibly upon his face, but with the bearing and costume, though seedy, of one who "had seen better days," and who, man as he was, was cowed before the Amazon he had provoked.

"You to taunt me! Whatever I may have been, I have been true to you. Be I what I may, your rich father trusted me—your wife, and at this moment I might have had a good home over your head if you had but had the decency to stop your drunken howling and swearing when you reached home, and if you had but pawned your soul instead of the furniture"—even she shuddered in spite of her rage at her own awful words—"the furniture which your father gave me, gave me for my sake, mind you! for mine! mine!" She screamed in this remnant of her self-respect, "and you, poor pitiful hound, you would be rid of me!" She reared herself with dignity, and with outstretched arm pointing to the door, said:—"Go! and cross my shadow again, if you dare, coward and gambler that you are!"

He went; the last cable that attached affection to him was severed, and at this moment, the youth, whose father dreamed for him the blessed influence of a Young Men's Christian Association raves in a Lunatic Asylum.

"Ten to one, bar one! Now Captain the odds against the Field. Ten to one, bar one!" and anon he mutters with the doleful monotony of a billiard marker—"red on white, yellow your player," and the whole usual jargon of Pool. Of all the madmen there be is "THE VERIEST BLACKLEG."

SYDNEY ROBBOINS.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MR. EDITOR,—A very interesting paper appeared in the SPECTATOR recently on "Flowers in Dwellings." The advantages of air, of summer moisture in our houses for the health of plants and people I can well understand, particularly for children.

There is one point on which I wish for information, and it is this: Will the heat required to produce the evaporation requisite for proper moisture of the air necessitate extra expense of fuel? and how are we to ascertain the proper degree of moisture for a healthy atmosphere? Your plan seems good but expensive.

May I suggest, Mr. Editor, that you give us a few more articles on "every day subjects," such as pertain to our domestic comfort and welfare, and less on knotty theological points.

A CONSTANT READER.

Montreal, April 5th.

Answer.—There need not be any extra expenditure of fuel with proper care. The body of water in the tank would retain the heat, and thus economize it. As to the degree of moisture, when frost is deposited on the cold glass of the window is one indication, but a hygrometer is the most accurate test. The immediate change in the health of window plants and children is another good test of the proper degree of moisture.

SIR,—On reading an excellent article in the SPECTATOR a short time ago,—"A Social Problem,"—I did hope that some of our clever experienced men would attempt a solution or advise a remedy. True, there have been some excellent letters in our daily papers, but most of these merely referred to a certain class,—strong, experienced farmers, men ready to rough it, or to boys of fourteen with a plain education, knowing but little of city life, and having a speciality for farming; healthy, energetic boys, not afraid of wetting hands or feet, willing to clean a horse or milk a cow, or with a yoke of oxen, off to work, rain or shine. These would make the men we want as pioneers to our new lands,—men like our frontier farmers, who have raised homesteads and cleared farms, with a rifle or bowie-knife ever at hand. No danger of these men "returning to their friends more dispirited than ever."

However, we cannot make farmers of all our sons, and it is a serious mistake to push a boy into anything merely for the sake of making a living, or oblige him to follow his father's profession, like it or not. Every boy has a speciality, and parents should carefully study what that speciality is; be it profession, business or trade, by all means educate him for it, and make him stick to it. Those are the young men who should follow our hardy pioneer

farmer to the land of plenty, and give their brains and education in exchange for the other's toil and endurance. Even the poor clerk would find his vocation there; but he must not go with the idea that money grows on bushes, or that he is going to make a fortune. There is too great a rush to be rich among the young of the present day, and because Mr. Somebody cleared \$50,000 in two years, they must do the same. This building castles in the air is too often, I fear, the cause of "many disappointed lives and drunkards' deaths."

There are certainly many men who have made large fortunes, seemingly with but little trouble, and in a very short time; but we must remember these are clever, clear-headed men, quick and shrewd, able to grasp great ideas and make them meet at fortune's door; they double their ten talents. As there is a certain amount of labour to be done in this world, some one must do it,—the man with \$50,000 will not; so our young men of *smaller ability* must not fret and fume if they have to help; work they must in some shape,—earn their living by the sweat of their brow, the most happy and most healthy of all earnings. Above all, let them strive to be content with the station Providence has placed them in. I do hope that the young men who are going to emigrate this Spring will begin in their new homes with the sternest economy, ever remembering "one penny saved is two-pence gained."

They must live without fine clothes, rings, lockets, or kid gloves. I would rather see the hard, horny hands of our honest backwoodsman than these effeminacy's on a man. The young of both sexes are too much the slaves of fashion and show; many, very many living far beyond their means, and I do fear that our city and our sons are suffering more than any other from this fast extravagance, and foolish display.

I could say something to my own sex, the ladies, on this question, but will only add that *more than one-half* of home happiness and home prosperity rests with the woman. I will close this too long epistle with a short account of 35 years' experience in home-life. Began, I was going to say, with nothing. Thanks to our Heavenly Father we had health and determination to form a life and *have* it; annual income \$800; first twenty years enjoyed all the comforts of life and many of its luxuries; mixed in good society and educated a large family; had not much time for gadding about. Not having many pounds to save *we* saved the pennies and bought a house. By one stroke of misfortune lost ten years' earnings; buried two children.

Still kept up heart and worked on; by the way, this working *put the doctor in the distance*; another stroke of misfortune, we had to leave a home enjoyed for twenty years to come to this unhealthy, expensive city, Montreal. Came in fear and trembling, but with energy to do and dare. Now, my dear Mr. Editor, I have been in many large cities in England, Ireland, Wales and Scotland, also some in the Dominion, and can say there is no place to me like Montreal. Providence has favoured our city in many ways; on coming to it we marked our path and determined not to be drawn into the extravagance and show surrounding us, and succeeded, so that we can prove that a family can live as cheaply here as in any city, and as for health, we speak as we find it, and can vouch for the health of our own family and many friends. I should like to transport some of our grumblers to homes I have seen in Liverpool and Manchester, and heard no grumbling. The last fifteen years our annual income has increased, not a great deal, but *we* began to save *dollars* and built ourselves a home in this city, and if our experience will only cheer some of the families in Montreal with small salaries to live within their means and *work* for a fortune, I shall be proud to subscribe myself.

Yours, &c.,

A MOTHER.

SIR,—In the Agricultural Column of your issue of the 27th instant there is an article upon the "Constitutional Elements of the Food of Animals," and the "Aquarium." There are statements therein made which convey a wrong idea regarding the elements of carbon and carbo-hydrates. As your journal deservedly holds a high place in scientific literature, you will, I trust, pardon me for correcting the slight mistakes.

First. A table is given as to the amount of albuminoids and carbo-hydrates in different kinds of food. In the line preceding this table it is stated that "the albuminoids produce flesh, and the carbo-hydrates produce fats or *milk*." That is *pseudo* science, because it is a fact well known to organic chemists that milk is composed of all the elements of blood especially suited for the growth of all the tissues of young (or even of old) animals. Blood or milk constituents are water, fibrin, albumen, chlorides of sodium and potassium, carbonates, phosphates and sulphates of potass and soda, carbonates of lime and magnesia, phosphates of lime, magnesia and iron. Carbo-hydrates, or simply carbon and hydrogen and oxygen, can never produce the nitrogenous and other compounds of blood or milk therein enumerated, viz., salts of iron, soda, magnesia, iron and lime, &c. The statement is preposterous. The carbon and hydrogen and oxygen do not contain them, and the old saw is applicable, "Ex nihilo, nihil fit."

Second. In the paragraph "The Aquarium," it is stated that "the fish give out carbon, which the plants by their growth convert into oxygen, which sustains the life of the fish."

As far as chemical science knows at present, there are about sixty-four elements which do not admit of analysis. Carbon and oxygen belong to that category. Carbon cannot be metamorphosed into oxygen or arsenic or any other element, by any kind of process, living or dead.

According to the paragraph "How to Treat Fish," these animals require to be fed in the aquarium by rice, bread or beef, any of which when eaten and digested will impart to the blood carbon in solution.

The fish for a special object inspire oxygen from the water in the aquarium. This oxygen is absorbed, mixes with the blood of the fish in the act of inspiration, meets with the dissolved carbon in its circulation, and while uniting evolves heat to the animal; and when the union has taken place, a chemical compound has been formed, having properties different altogether from either of its constituent elements. This compound substance is called in chemical language "carbonic acid." God has been there, too, in supervision of the union, and man has found out that that union has taken place (according to the laws of combining proportion) having for its symbol C. O.₂, or one equivalent of carbon to two equivalents of oxygen.

The production of heat to the animal during the affinity being accomplished,