

Vanishings.

The dark has passed, and the chill Autumn morn
Unrolls her faded glories in the fields ;
Dead are the gilded air-hosts newly-born ;
The fallen verdure heavy incense yields,
Sad odor of decay ; for Summer, gay,
Voluptuous goddess, loaded with delight,
Grown wantonly unconstant, fled away
Under a hoar-frost mantle yesternight.
In one brief hour, the warm and flashing skies
Pale in the marble dawn ; we cannot choose,
But marvel, that hearts turn to stone, and eyes
Brimful of passion all their lustre lose.
Drear is the morning ; love is gone for aye,
Love done to death in one bright peerless day.

WILLIAM T. ALLISON.

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A Reminiscence.

IN the "fifties," when the fame of Jenny Lind was world-wide, a singular thing happened to a Canadian in London, England, a period when but few, compared with the present time, from the Colonies found their way to the Old Country. Strange as it may seem, and a most improbable thing, I, this Canadian, a stranger in the metropolis of the world, had the honour of sharing the applause of the audience gathered together in Exeter Hall to listen to the queen of song, Jenny Lind. It happened in this way. It was in August, 1856, on a sultry evening, with little if any stirring of the air. The ticket I held for the concert took me to a seat at the rear of the hall underneath a gallery in a row immediately in front of the passage along the rear wall. Every place was occupied ; in fact, the hall was crowded. The heat was extreme, and the faces around were red and perspiring, while a few were almost gasping for breath. A few seats removed from the passage sat two females, both of uncertain age, but certainly not in the first blush of womanhood. A young man sat beside them. There was a window just behind where I sat which some one had opened at an early period of the entertainment, and I was congratulating myself at feeling a little relief from the very gentle current of air through the open window. But, to my dismay and the seeming horror of all around, the aforesaid young man, after repeated nervous backward looks by aforesaid uncertain aged females, calmly arose, walked to the window, and deliberately closed down the raised sash. There was a general murmur of dissatisfaction and scowls and indignation rested on almost every face. The concert proceeded. The gifted songstress had warbled as no one else could, "Coming Through the Rye ;" but the pleasure of it was lost by the increased and almost unbearable heat. Faces were constantly turning to that closed window, and eyes flashed at that young man. As for myself, I had about made up my mind to leave the hall. I had been hoping that some one would reopen the window, as it was so evident that all except the three mentioned desired the window to be open. But I did not like to lose the treat I had anticipated. I cannot tell what made me resolve not to go away, but to open that window. It was true I was a stranger there and knew not what law I might be violating by running counter to the deliberate act of that young man who sat so composed beside his female companions, and I had a horror of anything like a conflict with a young man who had charge of, or was in charge of, two women so fond of torrid heat, or afraid of a summer zephyr. But I felt I must do something, and I did it ; as soon as an intermission in the concert came, I got up and calmly opened the window. Talk of becoming suddenly famous, of being a public idol, I know all about it. As soon as it was discovered what I was doing those sitting near began to cheer and before I could regain my seat it seemed as if one-half the audience were engaged in doing me honour. I hung my blushing face in confusion, then glanced to see what the young man would do ; but he manifestly thought it wise to do nothing and did so. But the gentle Jenny, now reappearing, gave us in her tender melody, which absorbed the attention of all, "Home, Sweet Home," which carried me across the broad Atlantic to my own dear home.

W. C.

On the Formation of Reading Circles in Canada.*

A RECOMMENDATION FROM THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF CANADA.

ACTING upon the seventh resolution moved at the late Annual Meeting of the National Council of Women, the Toronto Local Council takes the first opportunity of bringing before its members and friends the subject matter of the resolution for consideration, and such action as may be deemed best. The resolution reads as follows (see page 48 of National Council Report, 1896,) :—

"That a branch of the National Home Reading Union be formed for the Dominion of Canada, and that all Local Councils be recommended to form Reading Circles in their own district."

This was moved by Mrs. Drummond, the President of the Montreal Local Council, from which the resolution emanated ; and seconded by Miss Skelton, the energetic Secretary of a Canadian Branch of the National Home Reading Union which has been at work in Montreal and elsewhere in Canada for some little time.

It will be explanatory to note that the word "National" in the above connection refers to England.

Miss Skelton has kindly furnished this Council with the circulars of the English organization which relate to its objects, rewards, fees and other particulars, and a schedule of the sections under which members may enter according to the branches of study they wish to undertake ; also of the courses of reading, with the books required in each. To this schedule is appended the form of application for membership, and the scale of fees and subscriptions to the English Society, revised into Canadian currency by Miss Skelton herself, for the guidance of Canadian members. The fees are very low, and differ in the three sections. The circular issued by the Canadian Branch, which has its headquarters at 183 Mansfield St., Montreal, accompanies the others.

That the National Council has in all it does the best interests of our beloved country at heart, I am sure all who have taken the pains to acquaint themselves with its work will agree, and therefore it is with some confidence that I call the attention of this meeting to the formulary used by the National Council in the report for this year, and beg to observe a point of difference between it and the wording of the resolution. The formulary reads :—"A National Home Reading Union for the Dominion," but the resolution proposes "That a Branch of the National Home Reading Union be formed for the Dominion of Canada." You will agree with me, I think, that there is all the difference in the world between "A National Union" and a "Branch" of a Union, and I think that the first, a National Union—a Union for the Dominion—for Canada is the one that commends itself best to our judgment. In saying this I pray you acquit me of any prejudice, any narrowness, any *insularity*. I am an Englishwoman, and I know how exceedingly valuable is the guidance that can be received in all matters of literature and education from the learned men of my own country ; but I have been here many years, I know the resources of Canada both in men and methods pretty well, and I confess I think we need not become a "branch" even of an English Society, in order to carry out the excellent idea of a National Home Reading Circle.

There is another consideration also which appears important in the matter, and that is our own knowledge of our own needs. Our educational systems are different, not superior—they could scarcely be so—but they are *different* to those of other lands, and consequently the results, or perhaps I should more clearly say, the points at which we stop—our conditions of life being not the same—are different.

Such being the case, the courses of reading that would be advantageous to ourselves could not be identical with those well adapted to the people of other countries ; and the consideration and preparation of them might most properly be placed in the hands of the ablest minds among us for that careful adjustment which they deserve, and would most certainly receive.

* A paper read at an open meeting of the Toronto Local Council of Women held in the theatre of the Normal School, Monday, the 5th October, 1896.