

WINTER.

THE flowers and fruits have long been dead,
And not even the daisy is seen. [Elizabeth Cook.]

'Tis winter, yet there is no sound
Along the air
Of winds along their battle ground;
But gently there
The snow is falling—all around
How fair, how fair!

[Ralph Hoyt.]

See, winter comes, to rule the varied year,
Sullen and sad with all his rising train—
Vapours, and clouds, and storms.

[Thompson.]

St r'n winter loves a dirge-like sound.

[Wardsworth.]

Lastly came winter, clothed all in frize,
Chattering his teeth for cold that did him chill,
Whist on his hoary beard his breath did freeze,
And the dull drops, that from his purple bill
As from a lumbek did adown distill:
In his right hand a tipped staff he held,
With which his feeble steps he staved still;
For he was faint with cold, and weak with col,
That scarce his loosed lumbes he habel was to wold.

[Spencer.]

Oh poverty is disconsolate.
Its pains are many, its foes are strong;
The rich man in his joyful cheer,
Wishes 'twas winter through the year;
The poor man 'mid his wants profound,
With all his little children round,
Prays God that winter be not long.

[Mary Howitt.]

Blow, blow, thou wintry winds!
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingrat tude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.

[Shakspeare.]

Chill airs and wintry winds' my ear
Has grown familiar with your song;
I hear it in the opening year,
I listen, and it cheers me long.

[Lonsfellow.]

Yet one smile more, departing, distant sun'
One mellow smile through the soft, vapoury air.

Ere o'er the frozen earth the loud winds run,
Or snows are sifted o'er the meadows bare.
One smile on the brown hills and naked trees,
And the dark rocks whose summer wreaths
are cast,

And the blue gentian flower that, in the
breere,

Nods lonely, of her beauteous race the last.
Yet a few sunny days in which the bee
Shall murmur by the hedge that skirts the
way,

The cricket chirp upon its russet lea,
And man delights to linger in thy ray;
Yet one rich smile and we will try to bear
The piercing winter frost and winds and
darkening air.

[William Cullen Bryant.]

FOES OF THE TELEGRAPH.

IF you will kick or pound on a telegraph-pole or place your ear against one on a windy day, what will the noise remind you of? A hive of bees? Precisely. So it does the bears in Norway. Bears are passionately fond of honey; and when in one of the wild districts Bruin hears the humming of the wires he follows the sound to the post where it is loudest, and begins to tear away the stones heaped around the poles in rocky soil to steady them, in order to get at the hive he imagines to be there. In his disappointment and disgust he usually leaves savage marks of his claws in the wood. Nor is he the only victim of the wires. In the Electric Exhibition at Paris they show the top of a thick pine telegraph-post through which a woodpecker has drilled a hole several inches in diameter. The bird had apparently perched on the pole and taken the humming of the wires for the buzzing of a nest of insects in the wood, and set himself manfully—or

birdfully—to dig them out. Wolves will not stay in Norway where a telegraph-line has been built. It was formerly the custom to protect farms by planting poles around them strung with cards, something like rabbit-snare; and gradually the wolves came to respect these precautions, so that a line stretched across the neck of a peninsula would protect a whole district. The wolves take the telegraph for a new and improved snare and promptly leave the country where a new line is built. On our own tree-less plains the buffalo hails the telegraph as an ingenious contrivance for his own benefit. Like all cattle, he delights in scratching himself, and he goes through the performance so energetically that he knocks down the post. An early builder of telegraph-lines undertook to protect the posts by inserting brad awls into the wood; but the thick-skinned buffalo found the brad-awl an improvement, as affording him a new sensation, and scratched down more poles than ever. In Sumatra the elephants are systematically opposed to telegraph-lines, and at least twenty times a year make raids on them. In May, 1876, the elephants tore down the poles for a distance of several furlongs, and hid the wires and insulators in the cane jungle; and for three nights in succession they repeated the performance as regularly as the repairers rebuilt the line during the day. The monkeys and apes are about as formidable enemies, as they use the wires for swings and trapezes, and carry off the glass insulators as valuable prizes; then when the repairer goes to correct the mischief, he may be pounced upon by a tiger or driven up the post by a mad buffalo. In Japan the special enemies of the telegraph are the spiders, which grow to an immense size. They avail themselves of the wires as excellent frameworks for their webs. So thick are the cords the Japanese spiders spin that often, especially when they are covered with dew, they serve to connect the wires with each other or the ground, and so to stop them from working. In the sea the wire is not any safer, as a small worm has developed itself since cables came into fashion which bores its way through iron wire and gutta-percha, lets in the water and so destroys a line worth millions of dollars. When a great storm comes in the centre of the ocean, and the cable breaks while it is being on, or threatens to break, no one is alarmed. They fasten the cable to a buoy, and come back afterward and pick it up; or if it is at the bottom of the sea they drop a dredge, with a mile or so of rope, and fish out the precious thread, as large as one of your fingers, almost as easy as you would fish up a penny from the bottom of a tub of water with the tongs. But the little worm no bigger than a needle is more formidable than the elephant on shore or the hurricane at sea.—*Youth and Pleasure.*

THE path of duty in this world is not all gloom or sadness or darkness. Like the roads of the South, it is hedged with ever-bloom, pure and white as snow. It is only when we turn to the right hand or the left that we are lacerated by piercing thorns and concealed dangers.—*Jas. D. Kerr.*

HIS Honour: "Are you guilty or not guilty?" Prisoner: "Specks I so guilty, sah; but I'd like to be tried all do same."

THE VICTORIA CROSS.

IF all prizes that men in the army and navy covet there is none more eagerly sought, more jealously guarded, or more dearly loved than the simple cross in gun metal, bearing the inscription, "For valor." The Victoria Cross was instituted by royal warrant on the 19th of January, 1856, as a reward for individual instances of merit and valor in the army and navy. Although many acts of heroism had been performed in both services in the earlier part of our gracious Majesty's reign, it was not deemed advisable to make the action of the warrant retrospective, and the heroes of the Crimea were therefore the first who received the much-coveted decoration. The cross itself is a simple piece of gun metal, bronze coloured, with a royal crest in the middle, and below, the words, "For valor;" in the centre of the reverse the date of the act of heroism is inscribed, and on the bar to which the ribbon is attached, the name of the individual and of the corps to which he belongs. On this bar also is engraved a sprig of laurel, and the bar is attached to the cross by the letter V. on a red or blue ribbon, according to the service in the army or navy of the recipient. It is not to soldiers and sailors only, however, that the Victoria Cross is awarded, and many civilians who have distinguished themselves by acts of conspicuous bravery have been enrolled among the hero band. The actual money value of the cross is only a few shillings; but the laurel crown of the Roman cost even less, and decorations are, of course, altogether valueless from that point of view. Many a brave knight has gone into the clash of arms and has fought bloody battles for the sake of a flower from the hair of his mistress, or a scarf which has encircled her fair neck; and in these latter times, many a man has gone into the deadly breach, and through tempests of fiery missiles, for the love of country and honor, sustained in the midst of dangers by the hope that some day that simple Maltese cross devised by the Queen, and always, when practicable, contered by her own hand, may rest upon his breast. The Victoria Cross carries with it £10 a year pension for each non-commissioned officer and private, with an additional annuity of £5 for every additional bar, such bar being added upon each fresh act of bravery equal to the first.

THE DOG WHICH BITES.

I read not long ago, in an English paper, of a man who saw, as he walked along the road, two men supporting a third, who appeared unable to walk. "What is the matter?" he inquired. The reply was, "Why, that poor man has been sadly bitten by the brewer's dog." "Indeed," the gentleman said, feeling rather concerned at the disaster. "Yes, sir, and he is not the first by a good many that he has done a mischief to." The man said, "Why is the dog not made away with?" "Ah sir, he ought to be made away with long ago, but it wants resolution to do it. It is the strong drink, sir, that's the brewer's dog."

Some years ago, when a small boy at school, we heard of a mad dog that had passed through the neighbourhood the night before, entering the yard and

biting the cattle and hogs, and in every case they went mad and had to be destroyed. Such a thing was sufficient to arouse the neighborhood. Two of the older boys at school secured a gun and started after the destroyer. About four miles distant they overtook him and discharged the contents of their gun, which effectually prevented his doing any further damage. It required "resolution" to do that also, but life and property were in peril and no effort was thought to be too great, so that the destroyer might be put out of existence.

The brewer's dog keeps on biting people, and some get very mad too, and the wonder is that so many submit to have his ravages go on in their midst, lest some may be bitten who are very dear to them. Sometimes a muzzle is applied to animals, but that will not do in this case. It has been tried and failed. Nothing short of extermination will be of any practical service.

SCHOOL LIFE.

SAT in the School of Sorrow,
The Master was teaching there;
But my eyes were dim with weeping,
And my heart was full of care.
Instead of looking upwards,
And seeing his face divine,
So full of the tenderest pity
For weary hearts like mine,

I only thought of the burden,
The cross that before me lay,
So hard and heavy to carry,
That it darkened the light of day.
So I could not learn my lesson,
And say, "Thy will be done,"
And the Master came not near me
As the weary hours went on.

At last in my heavy sorrow,
I looked from the cross above,
And I saw the Master watching,
With a glance of tender love;
He turned to the cross before me,
And I thought I heard him say—
My child thou must bear thy burden
And learn thy task to day.

I may not tell the reason,
Its enough for thee to know
That I, the Master, am teaching
And give this cup of woe.
So I stooped to that weary sorrow,
One look at that face divine
Had given me power to trust him,
And say "Thy will, not mine."

And thus I learned my lesson,
Taught by the Master alone;
He only knows the tears I shed,
For he has wept his own;
But from them came a brightness
Straight from the home above,
Where the school-life will be ended
And the cross will show the love.

WHICH SIDE.

ON this subject of the liquor traffic, which side do you suppose the devil is on?

Can anybody for an instant suppose that the Lord is in favour of the side of the whiskey seller?

Can anybody doubt for a moment that the devil is in favour of free whiskey?

The cause of temperance is the cause of morality and religion.

The cause of the whiskey seller is the cause of the Evil One.

Who can doubt on this subject?

Which side, dear reader, are you on? Are you for order, temperance, morality and religion?

Can it be possible that any one not now degraded and besotted until all human hopes and instincts are blotted out from his soul, can be in favour of the body and soul-destroying rum traffic?