

in taking aim, to make the proper allowance for it. The mason is almost always a silent man: the strain on his respiration is too great, when he is actively employed, to leave the necessary freedom to the organs of speech; and so at least the provincial builder or stone-cutter rarely or never becomes a democratic orator. I have met with exceptional cases in the larger towns; but they were the result of an individual idiosyncrasy, developed in clubs and taverns, and were not professional."

The great lesson which Mr. Miller learned in his summer experiences as a mason, seems to have been to endure hardship. He has often known mason-parties reduced to spend a rainy day in an outhouse without fire, and only meal slaked in cold water to eat. Nevertheless, their spirits are always higher in such circumstances, than when in a more comfortable situation at home. "My experience," he says, "of barrack-life has enabled me to receive, without hesitation, what has been said of the occasional merriment of slaves in America and elsewhere, and fully to credit the often-repeated statement, that the abject serfs of despotic governments laugh more than the subjects of a free country. Poor fellows! If the British people were as unhappy as slaves or serfs, they would, I dare say, learn in time to be quite as merry. There are, however, two circumstances that serve to prevent the bothy-life of the north country mason from essentially injuring his character in the way it almost never fails to injure that of the farm-servant. As he has to calculate on being part of every winter, and almost every spring, unemployed, he is compelled to practice a self-denying economy, the effect of which, when not carried to the extreme of a miserly narrowness, is always good."

He says elsewhere that he enjoyed in his fifteen years of laborious life "fully the average amount of happiness. Let me add—for it seems to be very much the fashion of the time to draw dolorous pictures of the condition of the labouring-classes—that from the close of the first year in which I wrought as a journeyman, up till I took final leave of the mallet and chisel, I never knew what it was to want a shilling; that my two uncles, my grandfather, and the mason with whom I served my apprenticeship—all working-men—had had a similar experience; and that it was the experience of my father also. I cannot doubt that deserving mechanics may, in exceptional cases, be exposed to want; but I can as little doubt that the cases are exceptional, and that much of the suffering of the class is a consequence either of improvidence on the part of the competently skilled, or of a course of trifling during the term of apprenticeship—quite as common as trifling at school—that always lands those who indulge in it in the hapless position of the inferior workman."

Mr. Miller's first step out of the life of a mechanic was into that of an accountant in a bank. He here found himself less able and willing to pursue study than he had been in his former situation. "The unintellectual toils of the labouring-man have been occasionally represented as less favourable to mental cultivation than the semi-intellectual employments of that class immediately above him, to which our clerks, shopmen, and humbler accountants belong; but it will be found that exactly the reverse is the case, and that, though a certain conventional gentility of manner and appearance on the side of the somewhat higher class may serve to conceal the fact, it is on the part of the labouring-man that the real advantage lies. The mercantile accountant or law-clerk, bent over his desk, his faculties concentrated on his columns of figures, or on the pages which he has been carefully engrossing, and unable to proceed one step in his work without devoting to it all his attention, is in greatly less favourable circumstances than the ploughman or operative mechanic, whose mind is free though his body labours, and who thus finds, in the very rudeness of his employments, a compensation for their humble and laborious character. And it will be found that the humbler of the two classes is much more largely represented in our literature than the class by one degree less humble. Ranged against the poor clerk of Nottingham, Henry Kirk White, and the still more hapless Edinburgh engrossing clerk, Robert Ferguson, with a very few others, we find in our literature a numerous and vigorous phalanx, composed of men such as the Ayrshire Ploughman, the Ettrick Shepherd,

the Eifeshire Foresters, the sailors Dampier and Falconer—Bunyan, Bloomfield, Ramsay, Tannahill, Alexander Wilson, John Clare, Allan Cunningham, and Ebenezer Elliot."

The opinion of such a shrewd observer as Mr. Miller regarding any point in the social condition of the class of operatives may well be listened to, with whatever caution it may be accepted. While working in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh in 1825, a great strike took place among the stone-masons, who, under a building mania, were already realizing unusually high wages.—Miller knew that nearly all the men, by reason of improvidence, were unprepared to hold out a single fortnight, and he refused to take any part in the movement. He goes on to remark, "there is a want of true leadership among our operatives in these combinations. It is the wilder spirits that dictate the conditions; and, pitching their demands high, they begin usually by enforcing acquiescence in them on the quieter and more moderate among their companions. They are tyrants to their fellows ere they come into collision with their masters, and have thus an enemy in the camp, not unwilling to take advantage of their seasons of weakness, and prepared to rejoice, though secretly may hap, in their defeats and reverses." He had himself experienced persecution from his fellow-workmen, because he would not join in their debauches, and maintained the religious feelings which had been awakened in his youth. He proceeds to explain how it is that true leadership is wanting in the class. "Combination is first brought to bear among them against the men, their fellows, who have vigour enough of intellect to think and act for themselves; and such always is the character of the born leader: their true leaders are almost always forced into the opposition: and thus separating between themselves and the men fitted by nature to render them formidable, they fall under the direction of mere chatterers and stump-orators, which is, in reality, no direction at all. The author of the *Working-man's Way in the World*—evidently a very superior man—had, he tells us, to quit at one time his employment, overborne by the senseless ridicule of his brother workmen. Somerville states in his *Autobiography*, that, both as a labouring-man and a soldier, it was from the hands of his comrades that—save in one memorable instance—he had experienced all the tyranny and oppression of which he had been the victim. Nay, Benjamin Franklin himself was deemed a much more ordinary man in the printing-house in Bartholomew Close, where he was teased and laughed at as the *Water-American*, than in the House of Representatives, the Royal Society, or the court of France. The great printer, though recognized by accomplished politicians as a profound statesman, and by men of solid science as "the most rational of the philosophers," was regarded by his poor brother compositors as merely an odd fellow, who did not conform to their drinking usages, and whom it was therefore fair to tease and annoy.

We have confined our extracts chiefly to these abstract observations of our author, because of finding that the narrative portion of the book depends for its effect more upon the general strain of its extended descriptions, than upon any isolated part possessing a special interest of its own. Our readers must, therefore, understand, that they have only here seen some samples of the observing faculty of our author, and must resort to the volume itself if they would wish to enjoy the profoundly interesting spectacle which it presents of the rise of a brave thinking man out of the plays and gauds of childhood, and the slough of circumstances fitted for and honourable to many, but not fitted for him.

EVENTS.—RECENT, CURRENT AND APPROACHING.

CHRISTIANIZING.—The Rev. Dr. Duff is now on a tour through North America, diffusing widely, the heavenly spirit that has nerved his soul to noble deeds, during the twenty-five years of his valuable Missionary life.

"THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS" OF