

Hotel des Invalides, the first stone of which was laid in May, 1837.

PALACES OF ST. PETERSBURGH.

Wealthy nobles residing in St. Petersburg display the extravagance of petty sovereigns. Their palaces are filled with the most costly ornaments and the most luxurious furniture. Jasper and porphyry adorn the walls, columns and pilasters of solid malachite, valued at five and six thousand dollars each, support the sculptured ceiling. Cabinet-makers and upholsterers arrive every year from Paris, and bring all that is necessary to refit with additional magnificence those great abodes.

During the winter a constant succession of festivities reign in the superb palaces. The brilliancy of these festal scenes surpasses all description. A yellow radiance shooting athwart the gloom of the cold, dark night, like the reflection of a vast conflagration, marks the direction of the illuminated palace. Hundreds of four-horse carriages deposit by turns their precious burdens. Carpets are laid from the carriage to the thresh'd, and lead from wintry obscurity and bleakness to halls as lustrous and as warm as a southern climate in summer. Footmen are in waiting to remove the wrappings, and the guests ascend the broad staircase of Carrara marble, lined with lackeys in powdered periwigs and gay liveries, in the style of the old French court. Apartments with fretted roofs, tessellated pavements, hung with cloths of gold and adorned with furniture of *ormolu*, mother-of-pearl and every variety of ornament, open one into the other. Ball-rooms, card-rooms, picture gallery, library, museum, conservatory of exotic plants, alcoves with fountains and statuary, the tea-room fragrant with the aroma of the Chinese flower, the quiet parlor with a carpet and a cosy fire blazing upon the hearth, all have their visitors, and afford each one the enjoyment he prefers.

SPARE THE BIRDS.

The rice birds of Carolina were once considered a great pest by some people. The little creatures gather round the fields in harvest time, and, of course, eat a good deal of grain. Some years ago it was determined to make war on them, and drive them off; and the effort par-

tially succeeded. "What are the birds good for?" The rice planter soon found out, for with the decrease of the birds the worms increased so fast that, instead of a few scattering grains to feed the birds, the whole crop was wanted to fill the hungry maw of the army which came to destroy every young shoot that sprung up. The birds were invited back again with hearty welcome. Rice cannot be cultivated without them. A few years ago the blackbirds of Northern Indiana were considered a great nuisance by the farmers. Whole fields of oats and corn were sometimes destroyed. The farmer sowed and they reaped. He scolded and they twittered. Occasionally a charge killed a score; but it made no more impression upon the great sea of birds than a bucket of water from the ocean. A few years later, everything on the land seemed destined to destruction by the "army worm." Man was powerless—a worm among worms. But the hated blackbirds came to his relief, and proved his best friends. So that God has given us the beautiful birds to be our friends and fellow-workers in the cultivation of the soil.

CHEERFULNESS.

There is no greater every-day virtue than cheerfulness. A cheerful, contented mind is one of the greatest blessings we can enjoy in this life. Although we may be surrounded with all the luxuries wealth can provide; though friends gather around us, and our lot is far preferable to many a wanderer in earth's wilds, still if we lack that cheerful, contented spirit necessary to enjoy it, we are, indeed, most miserable. As the golden sun sheds its genial rays over the earth, dispelling the clouds and darkness and lighting up the face of nature with a bright and gladdening smile, so does the light of a cheerful face diffuse itself and communicate the happy spirit that inspires it to all around.

Care, that hydra-headed monster, which is so seldom appeased until his victim, wayworn and weary, finds repose in the grave, is constantly oppressing us with its galling weight, and scarcely allows us to enjoy the blessed sunshine of cheerfulness. But why should we go through this world sighing and disconsolate, closing our eyes to all earth's beauty, and our ears to the music about us, making this world indeed a "vale of tears?" Everything

in nature wears a bright and cheerful aspect. The golden sunlight is streaming over the earth, imparting life and beauty to everything around. The snows melt from the hill-sides, the valleys are clothed in rich verdure; the beautiful flowers spring up beneath our feet and shed their sweet perfume upon the ambient air: the waving grass and bending corn are smiling in the rosy sunlight; the silvery waves upon the lakelet's bosom dance merrily from shore to shore; the merry songsters fill the woodland and bowers with sweet melody: the laughing streamlets sing a joyous tune, and the zephyrs a never-ending hymn of beauty. Shall man, then, be behind the rest of created things in acknowledging the goodness of God, by lifting up a cheerful countenance and a glad song of praises;

Be cheerful always. There is no path but will be easier travelled, no burden but will be lighter, no dark clouds or dreary shadows but will lift sooner. If we are ill let us be cheered by the thought of coming health and strength. If misfortunes befall us let us be cheered by the hope of a brighter future. If death rob us of our loved ones let it serve as a golden chain to draw us nearer to heaven, where parting shall be no more; and in all things look upon the sunny side and hope for the best.

Genuine cheerfulness is an almost certain index of a happy mind and a pure, noble and generous heart. Let love and truth dwell the sole inmates of our hearts—then will each succeeding day bring with it joys unclouded by dark frowns of anger, envy and mistrust, and the glorious sunlight of affection and cheerfulness around us a bright halo of happiness.

THE BEAUTIES OF NATURE.

The woods! the woods! I love the woods, standing in all their silent majesty, I love to wander in their shady depths in the sultry summer day and breathe the cool, refreshing breeze as it comes whispering through the branches of the old trees, rustling the leaves, and making the merry sunlight glaucé on the bosom of the little brook, which runs gurgling at the roots of the trees, washing them in its course, and watering them with its cool, reviving waters. It is there that I study nature in all its quiet yet sublime beauties; over head is the widespreading