

The Phoenix.

BY MRS. LAWSON, HALIFAX, N. S.

YOU have heard the wondrous story
Of the strange and sacred bird,
Who in weird and lonely glory
In the far-off ages stirred?
Hood and feathers green and golden,
Burnished wing and crimson breast,
And by seers and sages holden
Messenger of God's behest.

Through the mystic Eastern ages,
Living fire in haunted air—
Centuries folded up their pages,
Still the wondrous bird was there.
Generations came and ended,
Numberless in multitude,
But the Phoenix lone and splendid
In its changeless beauty stood,

None on earth its secret sharing,
Day of death and hour of doom;
On with stately presence bearing
Ever through the coming gloom
Boughs of frankincense, scent laden,
Gathered where the dew-drops press,
Myrrh, whose twigs like weeping maiden
Hold life's sweet in bitterness.

All the fragrant branches heaping
Into one grand funeral pyre,
While the stars their watch were keeping;
Higher grow the pile and higher,
Until morning's rosy fingers
Rent the curtain night had drawn,
And with touch that faints nor lingers
Flooded all the golden dawn.

To the altar he had moulded
With brave step and fiery eye,
Head erect, and plumage folded,
Went the lonely bird to die.
Ambient smoke the air perfuming
From that slow and sacred fire,
All his glorious life consuming—
Only ashes strew the pyre.

Sage and seer their watch are keeping;
As they gaze with straining eyes,
From the holocaust is leaping
New born bird in glorious guise—
Brighter, statelier than the sire
Who had passed the flame away!
Gem unfolding out of fire
Into full unclouded day,
Still to walk adown the ages,
Or through realms of ether flying,
Folding up the centuries' pages,
Symbol of a life undying.

Country Life in Ireland.

BY D. JANES.

THE farmers in the north of Ireland were about as contented as the Canadian farmers. They—the farmers—are a privileged class, allowed to grumble when it suits their purpose or quiets their mind. The rents of good arable land are from four to six dollars per Irish acre. Courts are held from time to time for their reduction, when the tenant may apply for redress if he deems the rent a burden. Some of the farmers are making money, and are quite contented; others, like people here in York County, are only making a living.

The farmers of the north depend very much upon flax, oats, and potatoes for their profit. The yield of potatoes was very large, and the quality was better than any I ever saw in Canada. I measured vines between five and six feet long, yet the tubers were plentiful, and of good size. Was not aware that the Irish

farmer depended so much upon potatoes as an article for feeding stock and household consumption. In some houses the potato-pot is over the fire from morning to night. Not being able to raise peas, it is fortunate so good a substitute is found in the potato for their stock.

While a great majority of the holdings are small—about twenty acres—yet in some places (east of Dungannon for instance) the farms are from one to two hundred acres, have good out-buildings and fine orchards. The stack-yards are neatly kept, and were well filed.

On the small holdings, the smallness and irregularity of shape of the fields attracts the notice of a Canadian. Yet this is not so much the fault of the people as of the land laws, which are being modified from time to time. Much of the land is naturally wet; and when the tenants reclaimed it from the second growth of trees and shrubs, the small portions reclaimed each year was enclosed by a ditch and fence, answering a double purpose of protecting it from the stook and carrying the water from the cultivated land. Another reason why the fields are so irregular is, that the roads are very crooked—at least they appear so to a stranger, although, perhaps, not to a native.

One day, when out for a drive of some ten or twelve miles, and making enquiry as to the direction to take for a certain place, the reply was to "keep straight on." I thought the answer peculiar; for, during the two weeks I was in the country—with one single exception—I never saw two miles of what we in Canada would call a straight road. The roads keep the valleys as much as possible, making it much easier in the draught of vehicles. But if the roads are crooked, yet the surface of the roadbed is so smooth and nice that I never saw them nearly equalled in Canada. The less travelled roads are in such a high state of repair, that a full load can be drawn at any and all seasons of the year. The drives are most enchanting, having a smooth and hard roadbed, and the easy reclining seat of a jaunting-car.

Nice hedges of various shades of green, the flowers and berries of the shrubs in the rows, the famous holly tree, the spreading beeches and elms, the rich green of hill and field, the well-kept lawns, make quite a contrast to the wooden fences, brown and treeless fields of Canada.

The Advice of Miss Alcott.

ONCE, in the audacity of youth, I wrote to Miss Alcott a letter, the tenor of which is indicated by her prompt, characteristic reply, herewith shown you. It may help some of you young people, as it did me:—

"Concord, October 24th.

"J. P. True: Dear Sir,—I never copy or 'polish,' so I have no old MSS. to send you; and if I had it

would be of little use, for a person's method is no rule for another. Each must work in his own way, and the only drill needed is to keep writing, and profit by criticism. Mind grammar, spelling, and punctuation; use short words; and express as briefly as you can your meaning. Young people use too many adjectives, and try to 'write fine.' The strongest, simplest words are best, and no foreign ones if it can be helped.

"Write, and print if you can; if not, still write—and improve as you go on. Read the best books, and they will improve your style. See and hear good speakers and wise people, and learn of them. Work for twenty years, and then you may some day find that you have a style and place of your own, and can command good pay for the same things no one would take when you were unknown.

"I know little of poetry, as I never read modern attempts; but advise any young person to keep to prose, as only once in a century is there a true poet, and verses are so easy to do that it is not much help to write them.

"I have so many letters like your own that I can say no more, but wish you success; and give you, for a motto, Michael Angelo's wise words: 'Genius is infinite patience.'

"L. M. ALCOTT.

"P.S.—The lines you send are better than many I see; but boys of nineteen cannot know much about hearts, and had better write of things they understand. Sentiment is apt to become sentimentality; and sense is always safer—as well as better—drill for young fancies and feelings. Read Ralph Waldo Emerson, and see what good prose is, and some of the best poetry we have. I much prefer him to Longfellow."—*St. Nicholas*.

A Noble Wife.

DURING the revolution in Poland which followed the revolution of Thaddeus Kosciusko, many of the truest and best of the sons of that ill-fated country were forced to flee for their lives, forsaking home and friends. One of those who had been most eager for the liberty of Poland, and most bitter in the enmity against Russia and Prussia, was Michael Sobieski, whose ancestor had been a king a hundred and fifty years before.

Sobieski had two sons in the patriot ranks; and the father and sons had been of those who persisted in what the Russians pleased to term rebellion, and a price had been set upon their heads.

The Archduke Constantine was eager to apprehend Michael Sobieski, and learned that the wife of the Polish hero was at home in Cracow, and he waited upon her.

"Madam," he said, speaking politely, for the lady was beautiful and queenly, "I think you know where your husband and sons are hiding."

"I know, sir."

"If you will tell me where your husband is your sons shall be pardoned."

"And shall be safe?"

"Yes, Madam. I swear it. Tell me where your husband is concealed, and both you and your sons shall be safe and unharmed."

"Then, sir," answered the noble woman, rising with a dignity sublime, and laying her hand upon her bosom, "he lies concealed here—in the heart of his wife—and you will have to tear this heart out to find him."

Tyrant as he was, the Archduke admired the answer, and the spirit which had inspired it; and deeming the good will of such a woman worth securing, he forthwith published a pardon of the father and sons.

Cigarettes.

THE increase in the use of cigarettes by boys is really alarming. There are over a billion and a half manufactured, and the number has been growing at the rate of about a quarter of a million per year. It is estimated that from one-third to one-half of all the cigarettes consumed are smoked by lads under fourteen years of age. Cigars are harmful enough—to growing lads particularly so—but cigarettes are tenfold worse. Their action is comparatively quick and deadly. Cigarettes make havoc of the nervous system. Not a few cases are being reported of young men who have been unable to rally from the effects of the poison inhaled through them. There should be a law, rigidly enforced, prohibiting their use by persons under sixteen years of age. So long as there is no such law, teachers in the Sunday-schools should wisely counsel the boys in their classes against having anything to do with them. It would be difficult to render them a more important service. Still, it should be borne in mind, that the cigar cannot well lecture a cigarette.

Having Revenge.

PEOPLE sometimes say, "Revenge is sweet." Often it is not—but quite the reverse.

One time a certain little boy was stung by a honey-bee. Of course it hurt, and he determined to have revenge. He got a stick, went to the hive, pushed up among the bees, and commenced punching them. Very soon a lot of them came out to see what was the matter. It took no time to find out, and at the boy they flew. They stung him on his hands and face, and made him yell and run with pain. They left so much poison in him that he was very sick, and his mother had to put him to bed. For a day or two his face was so badly swelled that his eyes were almost closed.

This little boy concluded revenge was not sweet, and he was very careful after that about having revenge.