

WINTRY RAIN.

BY JAMES F. JETT.

As drives the wintry rain,
Their sad estate how many hearts deplore!
How many, struggling with their lots in vain,
Among the humble poor!

How many strive to fill
Mouths wildly crying for their daily bread!
And struggle on with penury, until
They rest among the dead

Let not the lip be curled;
Let not the eye be turned away in scorn;
Minds which with culture might have graced the world
Dwell with the lowly born:

Dark circumstance has crushed
The germs of genius, which, if early nursed
Had sprung to useful vigorousness and rushed
Onward among the first.

And wisdom often glows
In minds obscure, beneath exterior rude,
As often blooming will be found the rose
In the deep solitude.

Ye who in splendor roll!
As wide to social joy is thrown the door,
O keep one sunny corner of the soul
Still handed for the poor!

(From the New York Freeman's Journal.)

EVIL EFFECTS OF BAD COMPANY.

Of the many dangers to which youth are exposed, there is none, perhaps, greater than that of associating with vicious companions. The pages of revelation repeatedly declare and universal experience abundantly proves this melancholy truth. Holy David, in his first psalm, holds out to him who flies the society of the ungodly and sits not in the chair of pestilence, the cheering promise of unflinching bliss. He shall be, he says, like the tree planted near the running waters which bringeth forth its fruits in due season. His leaf shall not wither and all things whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. St. Paul, writing on the same subject, declares that evil communication corrupts good manners. He who does not perceive that our conduct and principles through life are influenced, to a great extent, by the character and habits of those whose friendship we esteem and whose company we frequent, must be blind to what daily passes before him. Unhappily, this is more especially the case when we associate with those whose morals are tainted, and whose chief delight consists in pleasures of a gross and forbidden kind. He who knows himself will readily admit, that to form and preserve a virtuous disposition of mind is a work of some difficulty. Virtue, we all know, is a tender plant. It requires constant and assiduous cultivation to bring it to maturity. If neglected, it will soon droop and fade away. Vice, on the other hand, needs no such care. It grows spontaneous, and will thrive best

when most neglected. But when to its natural vigor is added the corrupting influence of evil conversation, then does it grow forth in all its rank luxuriance. Then will it, like a noxious weed, soon outtop and choke every tender flower—every pious sentiment and better feeling of the heart.— This is evident from the many sad changes we witness in the lives of those who would once abhor the thought of what was improper, and turn in disgust from aught that was evil. By mingling with dissolute companions, a change of sentiment from good to evil is gradually effected. This, aided or propelled by the powerful impulse of bad example, soon leads to a similar change of conduct. But whether it be owing to these or other causes, certain it is that the twig or chip floating along the surface of the stream is not more liable to be checked in its course, by the drooping boughs that hang before it, or be drawn into the whirlpool it has to pass, than we are to be drawn into the ways of vice and folly, by frequenting the company of the depraved. No matter in what sphere of life or circle of society we move, we have only to observe the scenes that come under our daily notice to feel that on the character, morals, &c., of those we admit to our confidence and regard as our intimate friends, will mainly depend whether our career through life shall be bright and virtuous or marked as gloomy and depraved. As well might we (especially in the days of youth) expect to breathe a wholesome air within the walls of a loathsome dungeon, or to handle pitch without having our hands stained thereby, as to live on terms of close companionship with the vicious and escape the contagion of their impurity. "That he who loves the danger shall perish therein," is a maxim that no Christian can for a moment doubt or deny. Though it holds good in all cases, in none is it more strikingly true than in that of bad company. This is a warfare in which safety can be secured only by flight. It is as the abode of the fabled Syrens. They who would pass it in safety must keep at a distance; or, like the wise Ulysses, must close their ears to its fascinating charms. Instances of the fatal influence of bad company are everywhere felt and acknowledged. In every age and nation, in every town and hamlet it has caused, and still causes, the growth of vice and the decay of virtue. I have myself heard many a criminal, standing on the verge of eternity, thus addressing the assembled multitude: "Fellow-Christians, if you would escape my untimely and disgraceful end, beware of bad company. I was once innocent as any among you, and might have lived and died so, had I not lent a willing ear to the poisoned breath of evil companions." It may be well to observe that while revelation and experience thus admonish us to form no close connection with the