

your crooked furrows, young man, if you waste your master's time and let the horses work the land in hills and vales while you are muddling your head after such nonsense ; I hope you don't mean to send that to the girl ; she won't know what to make of it." "Oh, won't she?" cried Peter ; "come, get your slate, and scratch away, or we shan't get it written down o' this side midnight." With a very ill grace Nehemiah complied, and it was only through the prevailing rhetoric of a third sixpence that Peter at length had the satisfaction of seeing his valentine completed, sealed, and indorsed as follows :—"For Miss Dorcas Mayflower, dairy-maid, at the Squire's great white house, in haste."

Dorcas was made happy by the receipt of the welcome missive that very night, and slept with it under her pillow. The following evening, after milking, she paid another stolen visit to the parish clerk, to be enlightened as to the nature of its contents ; and as she left Nehemiah's cottage with a joyous heart and bounding step, she encountered the author of the precious rhymes lingering among the ruins of St. Edmund's Abbey. All differences were made up between the lately estranged lovers during their walk home. Peter stood the storm of Hannah's wrath and disappointment with the firmness of a stoic all the time the banns of matrimony between him and Dorcas Mayflower were in progress of publication in our parish church ; and in spite of all the *high-sterricks* she could get up on the occasion, the nuptials were duly solemnised between the village valentines at the earliest possible day.

PASSAGE IN HUMAN LIFE.

BY WILLIAM HOWITT.

In my daily walks into the country, I was accustomed to pass a certain cottage. It was no cottage orne ; it was no cottage of romance. It had nothing particularly picturesque about it. It had its little garden, and its vine spreading over its front ; but beyond these it possessed no feature like to fix it in the mind of the poet or a novel writer, and which might induce him to people it with beings of his own fancy. In fact it appeared to be inhabited by persons as little extraordinary as itself. A good man of the house it might possess, but he was never visible. The only inmates that I ever saw, were a young woman, another female in the wane of life, no doubt the mother.

The damsel was a comely, fresh, mild looking cottage girl enough ; always seated in one spot : near the window, intent on her needle. The old dame was as regularly, busied, to and fro in household affairs. She appeared one of those good housewives, who never dream of rest except in sleep. The cottage stood so near the road, that the fire at the farther end of the room, showed you, without being truly inquisitive, the whole interior, in the single moment of passing. A clean hearth and a cheerful fire, shining upon homely but neat and orderly furniture, spoke of comfort ; but whether the dame enjoyed, or merely diffused that comfort was a problem.

I passed the house many successive days. It was always alike, the fire shining brightly and peacefully ; the girl seated at her post by the window ; the housewife going to and fro, contriving, dusting, and managing. One morning as I went by there was a change, the dame was seated near her daughter, her arms laid upon the table, and her head upon her arms. I was sure that it was sickness which had compelled her to that attitude of repose ; nothing less could have done it. I felt that I knew exactly the poor woman's feelings. She had felt a warmth stealing upon her ; she had wondered at it, and struggled against it, and bore up hoping it would pass by ; till both as she was to yield, it had forced submission.

The next day, when I passed, the room appeared as usual ; the fire burning pleasantly, the girl at her needle, but her mother was not to be seen ; and glancing my eye upward, I perceived the blind closed drawn in the window above. It is so, I said to myself, disease in its progress. Perhaps it occasions no gloomy fear of consequences, no extreme concern : and yet who knows how it may end ? It is thus that begin those changes, that draw out the central bolt which holds together families : which steal away our fireside faces and lay waste our affections.

I passed by, day after day. The scene was the same. The fire burning ; the hearth beaming clean and cheerful ; but the mother was not to be seen ;—the blind was still drawn above. At length I missed the girl : and in her place appeared another woman, bearing resemblance to the mother, but of a quieter habit. It was easy to interpret THIS change. Disease had assumed an alarming aspect ; the daughter was occupied in intense watchings, and caring for the suffering mother ; and the good woman's sister had been summoned to her bedside perhaps from a distant spot, and perhaps from her family cares ; which no less important even could have induced her to elude.

Thus appearances continued some days. There was a silence around the house, and an air of neglect within it ; till, one morning, I beheld the blind drawn in the room BELOW, and the window thrown open ABOVE. The scene was over ; the mother was removed from her family, and one of those great changes effected in human life, which commence with so little observation, but leave behind such lasting effects.

THE following is one of the prettiest pieces in the language, and written by an author who has probably been as violently abused, considering his deserts as any writer of the day. It is by Leigh Hunt.

ON HEARING A LITTLE MUSCAL-BOX.

HALLO !—what ?—where ?—what can it be
That strikes up so deliciously ?
I never in my life—what no !
That little tin-box playing so ?
It really seemed as if a sprite
Had struck among us, swift and light,
And come from some minuter star
To treat us with his pearl guitar.
Hark ! it scarcely ends that strain,
But it gives it o'er again,
Lovely thing !—and runs along,
Just as if it knew the song,
Touching out, smooth, clear, and small,
Harmony, and shake, and all,
Now upon the treble lingering,
Dancing now as if 'twere fingering.
And at last, upon the close.
Coming with genteel repose.

O full of sweetness, crispness, ease,
Compound of lovely smallnesses,
Accomplished trifle—tell us what
To call thee, and disgrace thee not.
Worlds of fancies come about us,
Thrill within, and glance without us.
Now we think that there must be
In thee some humanity,
Such a taste composed and fine
Smiles along that touch of thine.
Now we call thee heavenly rain,
For thy fresh, continued strain ;
Now a hail, that on the ground
Splits into light leaps of sound ;
Now the concert, neat, and nice,
Of a pigmy paradise ;
Sprinkles then from singing fountains ;
Fairies heard on top of mountains ;
Nightingales endued with art,
Caught in listening to Mozart ;
Stars that make a distant tinkling,
While their happy eyes are twinkling,
Sounds for scattered rills to flow to ;
Music, for the flowers to grow to.

O thou sweet and sudden pleasure,
Dropping in the lap of leisure,
Essence of harmonious joy,
Epithet-exhausting toy,
Well may lovely hands and eyes
Start at thee in sweet surprise ;
Nor will we consent to see
In thee mere machinery ;
But recur to the great springs
Of divine and human things,
And acknowledge thee a lesson
For despondence to lay stress on,
Waiting with a placid sorrow
What may come from heaven to-morrow,
And the music hoped at last,
When this jarring life is past.

Come, then, for another strain :
We must have thee o'er again.

GOOD-LIVING.—A DOMESTIC SCENE.

Gent. I wish, my dear, you would not keep the carriage an hour always at the door, when we go to a party.

Lady. Surely, my dear, it could not have waited half so long ; and that was owing to the unusual length of our rubber.

Gent. I feel exceedingly unwell this evening ; my head aches confoundedly, and my stomach is very uneasy.

Lady. You know, my dear, Mr. Abernethy told you, that after such a severe fit you ought to be very careful and moderate in your living.

Gent. Mr. Abernethy is a fool. Can anybody be more moderate than I am ? You would have me live upon water-gruel, I suppose. The rich pudding, indeed, that Mrs. Belcour made me eat, might possibly not have sat quite easy on the soup, and the salmon, and the chicken and ham, and haricots, and the turkey and sausages ; or, it is possible, the patties I eat before dinner might not perfectly agree with me, for I had by no means a good appetite when I sat down to dinner.

Lady. And then, you know, you eat so many cakes, and such a quantity of almonds, and raisins, and oranges, after dinner.

Gent. How could I have got down Belcour's insufferable wine, that tasted of the cork, like the fag-bottle at a tavern dinner, without eating something ?

Lady. And I am sure you drank a glass of Madeira with every mouthful, almost, at dinner ; for I observed you.

Gent. Why how could one swallow such ill-dressed things, half cold too, without drinking ? I can't conceive what makes me feel so unwell this evening ; these flatulencies will certainly kill me. It must be the easterly wind that we have had for these three days, that affects me ; indeed most of my acquaintances are complaining, and the doctors say, disorders are very prevalent now.—What can I have ? John, make me a tumbler of brandy and water—make it strong and put ginger enough in it. I have not the least appetite—what can I have ?

Lady. There is ham, and, I believe, some chicken—

Gent. Why, do you think I have the stomach of a ploughman, that I can eat such insipid things ! Is there nothing else ?

Lady. There is a loin of pork—perhaps you could relish a chop, nicely done ?

Gent. Why, if it was nicely done, very nicely, perhaps I could ; I'll try—but remember it must be done to a moment, or I shan't be able to touch it—and made hot—and some nice gravy. Confound these parties !—could anything be more stupid ? While Martin was sleeping on one side of me, there was Bernard

on the other, who did nothing but bore me about his horses, and his wines, and his pictures, till I wished them all at old Harry—I think I shall have done with parties.

Lady. I am sure, my dear, they are no pleasure to me ; and, if they were, I pay dear enough for it ; for you generally come home in an ill humour—and your health and your pocket too suffer for it. Your last bill came to more than ninety pounds, besides your expences at Cheltenham—and the next thing, I suppose, will be a voyage to Madeira, or Lisbon—and then what will become of us ?

Gent. What, do you grudge me the necessaries of life ? It is I that am the sufferer—

Lady. Not entirely so : I am sure I feel the effects of it, and so do the servants. Your temper is so entirely changed, that the poor children are afraid to go near you. You make everybody about you miserable, and you know Smith lost his cause from your not being able to attend at the last assizes, which will be nearly the ruin of him and his family. Two days before you were tolerably well, but after you had dined at —'s, you were laid up.

Gent. Nay, I was as much concerned at it as anybody could be ; and I think I had reason to be so, for I lost three hundred pounds myself—but who can help illness ? Is it not a visitation of Providence ? I am sure nobody can live more temperately than I do—do you ever see me drunk ? Aint I as regular as clock-work ? Indeed, my dear, if you cannot talk more rationally, you had better go to bed. John ! why don't you bring the brandy and water ?—and see if the chop is ready. If I am not better in the morning, I am sure I shall not be able to attend my appointment in the city.

There will always be a few ready to receive the hints of experience, and to them only can this scene be useful.—*Bentley.*

CASE OF SOMNAMBULISM.—A woman was much addicted to talking in her sleep, and, after some observation, it was discovered that, in doing so, she went over all the transactions of the preceding day ; everything, especially, that she had herself said, was distinctly repeated in the order in which she had spoken it. In general she commenced immediately after she had fallen asleep, and began by repeating the first words she had spoken in the morning, and then went through the other conversation of the day, adapting her tone of manner to the real occurrences. Thus, whether she had called aloud to a person at a distance, or whispered something which she did not wish to be overheard,—whether she had laughed or sung, everything was repeated in the order, and in the tone of voice, in which it had actually occurred. In repeating conversations with others, she regularly left intervals in her discourse corresponding to the period when the other party was supposed to be replying ; and she also left intervals between different conversations, shorter in reality, but corresponding in relative length to the intervals which had in fact taken place. Thus, if she had been for two hours without conversing with any other person, the interval in her nocturnal conversation was about ten minutes. In this manner she generally required about two hours to rehearse the occurrences of the day. She was scarcely ever known to repeat anything she had read, but she occasionally repeated psalms, as if she had been teaching them to a child, and she repeated them more correctly than she could do when awake.

She exhibited also the more common characters of somnambulism, frequently rising in her sleep, pursuing her ordinary occupations in the kitchen, and even out of doors. On one occasion she awoke in the act of mounting a horse at the stable-door, and at another time was roused by spraining her ankle, while cutting grass in a ditch at some distance from the house. These occupations were observed to have a relation to her engagements during the day, being either a repetition of something she had done, or the accomplishment of what she had intended to do, but had been prevented from performing ; and sometimes it appeared to be something which she meant to do at the earliest hour on the following day.

These peculiarities had been matter of interesting observation, for a considerable time, when she at length fell into a state of continued unconsciousness to external things, which went on for three days, during which time she attended to all her usual occupations. This began on a Sunday, and continued to the Wednesday. On that day her master met her returning from an outhouse carrying a number of eggs, when he determined to attempt rousing her by shouting loudly in her ear. On his doing so she awoke as from a sleep, and spoke to him sensibly, but could give no account of the eggs, and could scarcely be persuaded that the day was not Sunday. In an hour she relapsed into the unconscious state, and was again roused in the same manner ; but, after some further experiments, this expedient failed, in consequence of which she was taken to her parents, and did not recover entirely for several weeks ; after this her former peculiarities became less remarkable and gradually ceased.—*Abercrombie on the Intellectual Powers.*