

VERNAL FAITH.

When heaven was stormy, earth was cold,  
And sunlight shined the world and wave,  
Thought burrowed in the church-yard mould,  
And fed on dreams that haunt the grave.

But now that heaven is freed from strife,  
And earth's full heart with rapture swells,  
Thought soars through fields of endless life  
Above the shining asphodels.

What flower that drinks the south wind's breath,  
What sparkling leaf, what Hebe morn,  
But flouts the sullen gray-beard Death,  
And laughs our arctic doubts to scorn?

Pale scientist, scent of healthful blood,  
Your ghastly tones one moment close:  
Pluck freshness from a spring time bud,  
Find wisdom in the opening rose.

Mark the white lily, whose sweet core  
Hath many a wild-bee swarm enticed,  
And draw therefrom a honeyed lore  
Pure as the tender creed of Christ!

Yes, even the weed, which upward holds  
Its tiny ear past bower and lawn,  
A lovelier faith than yours unfolds,  
Caught from the far faint winds of dawn.

PAUL H. HAYNE, in Harper's Magazine for April.

OUR ILLUSTRATIONS.

OUR frontispiece this week has displaced the ordinary cartoon by the right of the courtesy extended to the fair sex the world over. *Place aux dames*. Even Mr. Blake himself could not refuse to concede the place he occasionally occupies to so fair a beauty as this. We wish we were going to meet her at the ball for which she has attained herself so carefully.

We give a charming fancy sketch this week by Giacomello, the great inimitable delineator of the feathered tribes, emblematic of the month of April.

We had hoped with the illustration of the old barracks, now in course of demolition, to have been able to present a chapter of French Canadian history, to which they should serve as a motive, but we have been disappointed in the arrival of the G.M.S. in time, and must consequently refer our readers to the next number of the NEWS for a full account of the barracks, and the reminiscences which cluster around their antiquity, leaving the illustrations for this number at least to make out their own case.

THE expedition of General Skobeleff against the Turcomans—or Turcomen, as the proof-reader insists it ought to be spelt—will gain an additional interest in our readers' eye from the clever sketches by the celebrated Dick, which we reproduce here from *Weker Land und Meer*. A full description of each subject will be found at the foot of the page, and the story of the campaign itself is too stale now for repetition.

THE INNER LIFE OF MEXICO AND THE MEXICANS.—One of the sights of the capital is the street letter-writer. He is to be found in a shaded nook in close proximity to a piazza, or place of public resort, the *portales mercaderes* being his happiest hunting ground. Attired in *sombbrero* and *zarape*, he awaits his customers, while he munches a *tortilla* or indulges in the dearer luxury of *pambazo*. His clients are chiefly composed of young Indian girls, with copper coloured skins, blue-black hair and eyes black as sloes. The master passion urges them to commit their feelings to paper through the medium of the letter-writer, and as he clumsily performs his task, droning the "gush" while he reduces it to writing, the absorbed and eager expression of his client is a wondrous study. Young fellows, in from the neighbouring ranches, also come to him in their distress, and no matter how knotted the complication, how delicate the situation, he is equal to the emergency, preserving a stolidity of face that would reflect credit on one of Montezuma's stone idols. The sidewalks of the principal thoroughfares are striped with bars of gold. These bars are rays of sunlight coming from out the tenement courts. The court is usually an oblong square surrounded by galleries, the keen full blue sky serving for a canopy. The Mexicans are passionately fond of flowers, and the inhabitants of these courts vie the one with the other in having the most gorgeous and deliciously perfumed flowers all the year round. Yellows and crimsons and purples, fit to set the teeth of an enthusiastic horticulturist a-watering, absolutely dazzle, while orchards worth thrice their weight in gold, and ferns of luminous green, hang in festoons, the molten sunshine actually illuminating them. Water is scarce in the capital, and the appearance of an *aguador*, or water-carrier, never fails to bring the inhabitants of a court out to their respective balconies.

A PAGE of domestic life will be welcome to many of our readers, amongst whom the children are never forgotten. The story of the monkey, who made the cat's paw take the place of his own in helping himself to hot chestnuts off the hob, has added a word to our language and will serve as a good story for the youngsters, and many a mother wishes for as quiet a *menage* as seems promised by the other picture of "Harmony."

PROTESTING AGAINST THE CHANGE IN THE SCOTCH TARTAN.—There has been great excitement throughout Scotland and the Scotch circles of London over the proposed changes in the tartans of the Highland regiments, and an enthusiastic meeting to protest against the contemplated action, held in the hall of Stafford House, London, is the subject of our illustration. The particular moment chosen by the artist was

when Lord Archibald Campbell, son of the Duke of Argyll, and brother of the Marquis of Lorne, with earnest action and voice quivering with emotion, swore upon his drawn dirk to preserve the tartan. As the weapon was passed round to be kissed by the MacIntosh, who occupied the chair, the Duke of Sutherland, the Duke of Athole, Lord Elcho, Donald Currie, and others, the audience, who had watched the action of Lord Archibald silently, and with keen, wistful looks, burst into an irrepressible shout of heartiest approbation. A petition was drawn up for presentation to Her Majesty, praying that the change be not made, and, after receiving upwards of sixteen thousand signatures, was delivered at the War Office.

OUR illustrations of the electric light in Berlin, and the snow-plough in Thuringia will be found alluded to in the editorial columns, and scarcely need any further remarks. The usefulness of the snow-plough in clearing the gullies through which the mountain roads of Thuringia run is out of comparison even with the service which it does us here in Canada.

AMUSEMENTS.

Last week the frequenters of the Theatre Royal had an unusual treat in the production of the "Banker's Daughter," by the Union Square Company of New York. The play itself abounds in strong situations and good dialogue, and the acting was far better than we have been accustomed to see here. Where the special excellence was shown, to my mind at least, was in the superiority of the all-round acting, to which the Star system has rendered us unaccustomed, it becomes very difficult to pick out individuals for special notice. The story is based upon the marriage of Lilian the banker's daughter to a rich cousin, who has long loved her, but whom she has looked upon only as a friend, to save her father's house from bankruptcy; she stipulates that her future husband should be told of her love for another, but the father suppresses this and under such a mistake the marriage takes place. So far the story is old. The novelty in the plot consists in the discovery of the truth by the husband, who at once leaves his wife, who did not know how she had learned to love him until departed from his side, and their ultimate reconciliation, (after the old lover has been conveniently killed in a duel) by the good offices of their child. Mr. Bangs as John Strebellow, the husband, made an excellent type of the best kind of American gentleman, a type by no means common, while Lilian fell to the lot of Miss Anna Boyle, whose acting on the whole was very creditable though a little overstrained at times and wanting in tenderness, a greater show of which might have often taken the place of melodramatic passion with advantage. The necessary foils to the serious cast of the piece are found in Mrs. Brown the typical American girl who marries an aged millionaire and gets rid of him in time to marry the early object of her liking in the person of George Washington Phipps the equally typical American tourist, who does Paris in three days, and London in four, and who proposes to his lady love in the intervals of checking his pocket order-book. Both these characters were capably represented by Mr. and Mrs. Walcott who were a host in themselves. The Count de Carojac a French nobleman whose chief utility appears to be to polish off the troublesome early lover, fell to the lot of Sig. Majeroni who played in a natural and unaffected manner which won him many friends. I did not think a great deal of the "Petite Edna Bankson" as the bills call her, who moreover is surprisingly well developed as the result of a six year marriage only—I nearly forgot Mr. Forberg's old man which should not be forgotten as a finished piece of character acting. I hope Mr. Sparrow will give us many melodramatic treats as this. I am sure he only needs a little encouragement to do so, and the good houses of last week should prove such.

Mrs. Otis Rockwood announces a series of 4 Chamber Recitals at 959 Dorchester street on April 4th and following Mondays. The subscription list I am glad to see is filling up rapidly at DeZouche's, and I trust they will have the support of all music loving people. Mrs. Rockwood's own merits as a musician are well known, and she will be well supported by professional talent.

MUSICUS.

VARIETIES.

SUCH is fame. Only a few days ago, Congress was crowded to hear eloquently told the old and ever new story of the privateer General Armstrong. The sword presented to her heroic commander, Samuel Chester Reid, was recently, and probably still is, for sale at a second-hand store on the Bowery, in New York.

GENERAL NOYES, our Minister at Paris, said a very neat thing the other day when a host of people pestered him to obtain invitations for them to Mrs. Mackay's grand entertainment. "Ladies," said the Minister, firmly, "Mr. Mackay is an American citizen, and it is my duty to protect him."

THE Hugo celebration had, inevitably, its ludicrous features. Probably the funniest thing connected with it was the poem presented by the students of Albi, who alluded gracefully to the "mystery" of his initials—"Victor like Virgil and Hugo like Homer." This reminds one irresistibly of the toast offered by a much impressed admirer of the bard, "I drink to Victor Hugo, so worthy of that great name!"

CHRONIC CACHINNATION.

A correspondent of the Philadelphia Times writes the following stupendous story from Frenchtown, New Jersey:—

Straight across the Delaware from here and back among the hills which run parallel with the river for many miles lives a family concerning whom the strangest stories are told. The father and son are farmers, and all live in a large, substantial house, a few yards from the road to Doylestown. They are all chronic laughers, having an affliction of the muscles of the mouth and throat which compels them to give vent to apparent merriment at stated intervals. The malady first appeared in the father about ten years ago. He was usually a very quiet man, enjoying fun, but manifesting his enjoyment without much noise. He was seated at the dinner table one day in the spring of the year, eating steadily and not engaging in any of the conversation which the other members of the family were carrying on. Suddenly, without any cause, he burst into a loud fit of laughter, so extremely different from his accustomed laugh that all were attracted by it at once. When asked what was the reason for his sudden outburst he made no reply, but continued his merriment. Some of the boys thought he had hysterics and pounded him on the back, but it did no good. After a few moments he made motions for pencil and paper and wrote that he was unable to control his risibles, and asked them to send for a doctor. The rural physician came, but could give no remedy that stopped the laughter. Peal after peal of what sounded like the heartiest kind of fun came from him, and nothing would avail to prevent it. The doctor finally came to the conclusion that he was the victim of a nervous attack, and, leaving a nerve, departed. The father continued laughing until about sundown, when he suddenly stopped and fell on the floor, completely prostrated. He soon grew better, however, ate a hearty supper, and spent the evening much as usual. No signs of a return of the old trouble appearing he went to bed and was soon fast asleep. About 2 o'clock in the morning, however, his wife was awakened by his laughter, and the same symptoms manifested themselves as on the afternoon previous. He kept it up until 7 o'clock, laughing loud and long. At 7 o'clock the noise suddenly ceased and did not return again until dinner time. Thus it continued, recurring each day shortly after noon and in the night about 2 o'clock, and has ever since. As the weeks passed he grew so accustomed to the disease that he was caused very little inconvenience by it. He did not get tired out, as at first, and soon was able to go about his work—sowing seed and planting corn, digging vegetables and watering the cattle—while laughing immoderately. He could not talk while under one of the spells, but carried a slate and pencil about with him, after the fashion of a deaf and dumb person. The trouble was very regular in its coming and going, and only occasionally broke forth at unlooked-for seasons. Once the old man was taken in church, just when the minister was exhorting his hearers in the most solemn strains, and spoiled the effect of the discourse, besides disturbing the equilibrium of the clergyman. Another time he was found by one of his neighbours along the road, lying beneath a bag of flour, laughing at a terrific rate. He has been taken while driving home from the mill, and the suddenness of the sounds frightened the horse, causing it to run away and dump the man and part of his load out in the road. For eighteen months the father was the only one of the household afflicted with the malady. Several of them had complained from time to time of an inclination to join the father in the laugh, but none of them did so until nearly two years after he was taken, when Susie, the youngest child, suddenly burst into a similar fit during one of her father's attacks. From this time on she has laughed at about the same hours as her father does. One by one the remaining members fell victims to the strange complaint, until about three years ago there was but one left free, and that was Charles, the eldest son. His long exemption led him to believe he would escape the contagion. But he was mistaken, and it is said he had his first attack while petitioning for the hand of a Harrisburg damsel. So frightened was the lady by the queer behaviour of her suitor that she ran from the room, and it was weeks before the proper explanations could induce her to see him again. She is now one of the family here, and, escaping the malady, never minds the hideous chorus of laughter which twice a day resounds through the house or grounds. It is regarded as rather strange that none of the neighbours should have caught the infection, but such is the case, although many of them mingle constantly with the family. Everything possible has been done to alleviate or remove the malady, but without perceptible effect. Several eminent physicians from the leading cities have visited the home and grown exceedingly interested in the case. They all confess themselves baffled by the malady, and want one or two of the family to go to the city, where they can receive constant treatment. This they steadily refuse to do. Their peculiar trouble, so noticeable and odd, has made them very sensitive, and they will not travel where they will be subjected to public scrutiny and remark. They go to church or the store in the village close by, and attend social gatherings occasionally in the neighbourhood in the evenings, but only among life-long friends. People within a radius of a few miles are so accustomed to the thing that they never

mind it or mention it. Consequently very few people outside of the immediate vicinity and the physicians who have attended them are cognizant of the circumstances. People passing the house, especially in the summer time, have been filled with curiosity by what they saw and heard and have carried accounts to distant places. These reports are very vague, for the passers-by have no definite idea of the matter. They only know that it looked remarkably strange to see a father and his sons out in a field ploughing and sowing many rods apart, yet each one laughing as though he had heard the best joke in the world.

Curious stories are told of the travellers who went that way. Several years ago two young men came from Doylestown to attend a party at Erwinna, a summer resort on the Pennsylvania side a few miles below here. It was a warm night, and they did not start back until late. They drove past the house of the laughing family soon after the regular attack had begun. The windows were all open, and every sound could be clearly heard. As the young men approached they heard the most unearthly noise their ears ever received. It seemed like a perfect pandemonium, and they felt sure they must have struck the entrance to the lower regions. The horse took fright and nearly ran away with them. Coming to the conclusion that, at the least, the place was haunted, they hurried home, and the next morning, spread the news. Parties were formed to investigate the matter, but none of them solved the problem till informed by a man in the village near at hand as to the nature of the case. We were urged to remain reticent about the matter and have done so. The years of incessant laughter have told somewhat on the faces of the family, but not so as to be very noticeable. There are scores of lines under the eyes and above the cheeks, caused by the drawing up of the skin. Then their mouths have become wider and they keep them closed with difficulty. The most marked result of the disease, however, is in the voice. The entire family talk in the same tone, resembling as nearly as anything the voice of an alto-singer. Males and females have the same inflection and intonation. Most of them have more or less trouble with their eyes, several having become near-sighted. The pupils have contracted and the entire eyeball is diminished in size. This is accounted for by the contraction of the eyes in laughing and the effort required in working or reading while undergoing an attack. Very little physical annoyance is caused the laughers. They read and write, sleep and work without any trouble. The only thing they seem unable to do, while attacked, is to eat, and that can be readily understood. Several grandchildren have been born, and in all but one instance they were taken, soon after birth, with stated attacks at the same hours as their parents. Of course they do not laugh as the older ones do, but they crow and express all the signs of baby glee twice a day and never cry while in that state.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

PEACE has been finally declared with the Boers.

NAVIGATION on the Hudson river opened last week.

THE public debt statement of Mexico shows a deficit of \$142,000,000.

AT a land meeting at Woodford, County Galway, on Sunday, Dillon made a strong attack on the Irish judges. The matter is to be brought before Parliament.

THE prisoners in Kilmainham jail have formed themselves into a branch of the Land League.

A proclamation of the late Czar's marriage with the Princess Dolgorouki will be issued by the new Czar.

A GREAT international conspiracy has been discovered by the St. Petersburg police, which has led to numerous arrests.

A Constantinople despatch says anarchy prevails on the Armenian frontier, the Kurds openly defy the Turks, and a general outbreak is feared.

MR. Gladstone proposes to announce in his coming budget a reduction of 1d in the £ of the income tax.

A CHICAGO despatch says a large excursion party from Ottawa to Manitoba had been snow-bound near the former city for several days.

TOURISTS, commercial men and others will do well, when in Toronto, to visit the Walker House, one of the best appointed hotels in the Dominion, having ample accommodation for 200 guests. This hotel overlooks bay and lake and stands in its own block, thus giving light and air to each room. Visitors will find all the comforts of a home at moderate rates. The Walker House has been supplied with all the most modern improvements, and every new feature which can tend to enhance the comfort of its guests has been introduced. The Walker House is within three minutes' walk of the principal steambout wharves and railway stations, where omnibus and porters are in constant attendance.

Mr. J. H. Gould is at present on a tour through Ontario in the interests of the NEWS, and is now in Toronto, where we trust that he will meet with a good reception from our friends that are and those that are to be.