

LAMENT FOR SUMMER.

BY THE EDITOR.

How I loathe this sad autumn weather!
Clouds that lower and winds that wail;
The rain and the leaves come down together,
And tell to each other a sorrowful tale.

The beauty of Summer alas! has perished,
The ghosts of the flowers stand out in the rain—
The fairy flowers that we fondly cherished,
But cherished, alas, in vain, in vain!

The wind it wails, it wails forever,
Like a soul in pain and in dread remorse;
Like a murderer vile, whose pain can never
Cease, as he thinks of his victim's course.

For the Summer now on her bier is lying,
Lying silent and cold and dead;
And the sad rains weep and bewail her dying,
Over her drear and lowly bed.

Pallid and wan she grew; yet fairer
Than in richest wreaths of leafy green;
The hectic flush on her cheek was rarer
Than ever is seen in health, I ween.

Thus all things fair, as they fade, grow dearer,
Dearer and fairer till hope has fled;
We closer clasp, as the hour draws nearer,
That bears them forever away to the dead.

Through the grand old woods, a cathedral hoary,
The organ chant of the winds doth roll,
As bearing aloft to the realms of glory
On its billows of sound her weary soul.

Through the long-drawn aisles the dirge is swelling,
Orate pro Anima—pray for her soul;
Now *Gloria in excelsis*, swelling
In fountains of music its sound waves roll.

The clouds like funeral curtains lower
Darkly and heavily round her grave,
And the trailing vines of the summer bower
Like the plumes of a gloomy catafalque wave.

The fair young spruce, like a beautiful maiden
Heavily draped in weeds of woe—
A sorrowing soul—a nun, grief-laden,
Bears a dead weight at her heart, I know.

The dark-robed cypress, a gloomy friar,
Patters his prayers and count his beads;
The sorrowful cedar, a saintly prior,
Folds around him his mourning weeds.

The lofty pines toss their plumes so sadly,
And chant aloud their dirge of woe;
Now high and wild rise the notes, and madly
They wail—and now they are moaning low.

All nature grieves and weeps, bemoaning
The fair, fond Summer, forever fled;
And bends, in her sorrowfully groaning,
Over the bier of the early dead!

A MOONLIGHT RIDE ON A BOTTOMLESS RIVER.

[Joaquin Miller, the "Poet of the Sierras," thus describes his sail on our grand river, Saguenay.—Ed.]

THIS river of death, or Saguenay, is bottomless. You might, if possible, drain the St. Lawrence river dry, says M. LeMoine, the Canadian authority, and yet this dark still river would be able to float the Great Eastern and all Her Majesty's ships of the line. "A bottomless river," sounds strangely new; indeed were it not so I should not trouble you or myself to mention it. But this river is thus far unfathomed. It is full of counter-currents, swift, perilous in the extreme. As the vast red moon came shouldering up out of the St. Lawrence away above towards the sea and stood there, a glowing period to a great day, we drew back from Tadoussac, where the ancient church sits in the tawny sand and scattering grass, and rounding a granite headland we slowly steamed up the silent river of death. It widened a little as we went forward, but even its

mile of water looked narrow enough as we crept up between the great naked walls of slate and granite that shut out these dark waters from every living thing. On the right hand great naked and monotonous capes of slate and toppling granite. On the left hand granite and slate and granite, and silent, all new and nude, as if just fallen half finished from God's hand. One mile, two miles, twenty miles, and only the weary wall of granite and slate; and only the great massive monotony of nude and uncompleted earth. Now the walls would seem to close in before us and bar all possible advance. Then as we rounded another weary and eternal cape of overhanging granite, with its few frightened and torn trees, the dark way would open before us. And then ten, twenty, thirty miles more of silence, gloom, river of death. No sound. No sign of life is here. Summer or winter, springtime or Autumn, all seasons alike, no bird, no beast, not even the smallest insect, save only a possible housefly that may harbor in the steamboat and so be brought with you, is ever seen here. This is literally the river of death. I know no spot like it on the face of this earth. Our deserts with their owls, horn-toads, prairie dogs, and rattlesnakes are populous with life in comparison. And yet this awful absence of all kinds of life cannot be due to the waters. They are famous for fish of the best kind. The air is certainly delicious. But all this vast river's shore is as empty of life as when "darkness was upon the face of the deep."

And no man has settled here. For nearly one hundred miles not a sign of man is seen. You seem to be a sort of Columbus, as if no man had ever been here before you. At every turn of a great granite cape these lines rhymed incessantly in my ears:

"We were the first that ever burst
Upon that silent sea."

An hour past midnight and we neared the central object of the journey. Cape Trinity, a granite wall of about two thousand feet, which in places literally overhangs the ship. Our captain laid the vessel closely against the monolith, and for a moment rested there. We seemed so small. The great steamer was as a little toy, held out there in God's hand.

No sound anywhere. No sign of life, or light, save the moon that filled the canon with her silver, and lit the amber river of death with a tender and an alluring light. No lighthouse, no light from the habitations of man far away on the mountains; only the stars that hung above us, locked in the stony helmets of these everlasting hills.

BREAK IT GENTLY.

IT is often wise not to tell bad news all at once. Patrick applied the rule to good news, though for a different reason:

A gentleman was recently asked by one of his newly-imported farm hands to write a letter for him. The substance of it was advice to his friend, Tim O'Brien, to come out to America.

"Tell him, your honor," said Patrick, "that we have meat twice a week here."

"You know very well that you get it every day," I interrupted.
"Troth, an' i do; but he would think I was foolin' him. Sure, he'd not believe me."

LUTHER'S LETTER TO HIS SON.*

GRACE and peace in Christ, my dear little son. I hear with great pleasure that you are learning your lessons so well, and praying so diligently. Continue to do so, my son, and cease not; when I come home I will bring you a nice present from the fair. I know a beautiful garden where there are a great many children in fine little coats, and they go under the trees and gather beautiful apples and pears, cherries and plums; they sing and run about, and are as happy as they can be. Sometimes they ride on nice little ponies, with golden bridles and silver saddles. I asked the man whose garden it is: "What little children are these?" and he told me, "They are little children who love to pray and learn and are good." When I said, "My dear sir, I have a little boy at home; his name is little Hans Luther; would you let him come into the garden, too, to eat some of these nice apples and pears, and ride on these fine little ponies, and play with these children?" The man said, "If he loves to say his prayers and learn his lessons, and is a good boy, he may come, Lippus and Jost also, and when they are all together they can play upon the fife and drum and lute and all kinds of instruments, and skip about and play with little cross-bows." He then showed me a beautiful mossy place in the middle of the garden for them to skip about in, with a great many golden fifes and drums and silver cross-bows. The children had not yet had their dinner, and I could not wait to see them play, but I said to the man: "My dear sir, I will go away and write all about it to my little son John, and tell him to be fond of saying his prayers, and learn well and be good, so that he may come into this garden; but he has a grand-aunt named Lehne, whom he must bring along with him." The man said, "Very well, go write to him." Now, my dear little son, love your lessons and your prayers and tell Philip and Jodocus to do so, too, that you may all come to the garden. May God bless you. Give Aunt Lehne my love, and kiss her for me. Your dear father, Martinus Luther. In the year 1530.

OUR BOYS.

WE are always being told what we should do for our boys, but it strikes us that boys, to become the sort of men that are wanted in these times, must do a good deal for themselves. We may train them in good principles, but there is one thing they must do for themselves which no one else can do for them, and that is to stand fast. Boys who seemed to be true, and manly, and honourable, have often made sad shipwrecks, just because they had not firmness enough to stand fast in what they knew was right. The Bible says, "Cleave to that which is good." The very expression "cleave" shows that it is sometimes pretty hard work to stick to the right. We must, as it were, hold on with all our might. Now, boys, that is exactly what you will have to do. Many of you have to

*We wished to quote the quaint and beautiful letter in our special Luther number of PLEASANT HOURS, but could not find it. We have since come across it in Koestlin's new Life of Luther.

go out into the world exposed to all sorts of evil and all sorts of temptations. Keep out of their way, if you can; but if your path lies among them, keep your eyes open to your danger, and quietly but determinedly resist them. And that your brain and judgment may be clear, and that you may have the full benefit of the reason God has given you, never let a drop of stimulants pass your lips. Sign the pledge, and stand fast by that, and you will have good safe standing ground for your own feet, and may be able to hold out a helping and upholding hand to some companion just beginning to tread the slippery, downward path. It will be safety and security for yourselves, and besides you know—who knows better than the boys—the strong can always help the weak. It will be easier for somebody else to stand fast just because you do.—Ex.

THE CLOSE OF AUTUMN

THE melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year,
Of wailing winds and naked woods, and meadows brown and sere
Heaped in the hollows of the grove, the withered leaves lie dead,
They rustle to the eddying gust and to the rabbit's tread.
The robin and the wren are flown, and from the shrub the jay,
And from the woodtop calls the crow, through all the gloomy day.

Where are the flowers, the fair young flowers, that lately sprung and stood,
In brighter light and softer airs, a beautiful sisterhood?
Alas! they all are in their graves the gentle race of flowers
Are lying in their lowly beds, with the fair and good of ours:
The rain is falling where they lie—but the cold November rain
Calls not from out the gloomy earth, the lovely ones again
—Bryant.

THE SPARE BED.

THE "spare bed" of many country homes is the dread of the visitor who is honoured with its occupancy. A good story is told of an eminent Bishop, who was quartered at the house of the wealthiest resident of a certain village, while the wife was away. The Bishop, with grim humor, sometimes complains of spare rooms that are opened especially for him and for the encouragement of rheumatism. He is withal a slim man. On this occasion, when his host inquired in the morning how he had slept, and hoped he had passed an agreeable night, he answered with some vehemence, "No, I did not; I passed a very disagreeable night indeed!"

The Bishop departed, and when the wife of his host returned, she naturally inquired who had been in the house in her absence.

"Bishop P—," said her husband.
"Bishop P—! Where did you put him to sleep?"

"In the spare bed," of course.
"In the spare bed!" shrieked the horrified matron. "Why, I put all the silver-ware under the mattress before I went away."

Then he understood why the Bishop passed a disagreeable night.

ERROR is worse than ignorance, for ignorance is a blank sheet on which we may write, but error is a sheet scribbled on, from which we must first erase. The Africans say, "Error is truth led astray."