

THE ALPINE CROSS.

BY JAMES T. FIELDS.

Benighted, once, where Alpine storms.
Have buried hosts of martial forms,
Halting with fear, benumbed with cold,
While swift the avalanches rolled—
Shouted our guide, with quivering breath;
'The path is lost!—to move is death!'

The savage snow-cliffs seemed to frown,
The howling winds came fiercer down;
Shrouded in such a dismal scene,
No mortal aid whereon to lean,
Think you what music 'twas to hear—
'I see the Cross!—our way is clear!'

We looked, and there, amid the snows.
A simple cross of wood uprose;
Firm in the tempest's awful wrath
It stood, to guide the traveler's path,
And point to where the valley lies,
Serene beneath the summer skies.

One dear companion of that night,
Has passed away from mortal sight;
He reached his home to droop and fade,
And sleep within his native glade;
But as his fluttering hand I took,
Before he gave his farewell look,
He whispered from his bed of pain—
'The Alpine Cross I see again!'
Then, smiling, sunk to endless rest
Upon his weeping mother's breast.

MR. SURLY HARDBAKE, ON
TIGHT-LACING.

If there is to be another Fire in London, I hope it will break out in a corset manufactory. Now, look here: the inside of a young lady is, at least, as important as that of a bullock. I doubt whether most young ladies ever think that they have insides at all. Is it possible that when nature has given a space of twenty-two inches, say, for certain important functions necessary to life to be performed in, that everything will go on as well when you squeeze the space down to twelve inches? Pooh! Nature hasn't got sufficient elbow room, I tell you! Now, we have been pretty sensible of late years in the matter of dress (barring excessive crinoline,) but don't let us make fools of ourselves again. Wherever you go you see fresh charming young creatures with the natural bloom of health on their faces. I should think never since the primitive

ages of the world were there so many healthy and beautiful girls. I don't think the girls of my youth were half so bewitching as those I meet now, and sigh that I am too old for 'em, or else I should have had a Mrs. Hardbake long ago. Well, what is the reason of this? I believe, loose clothing, fresh air, and exercise. Once begin the cursed tight-lacing again, and you will soon see cheeks like chalk, obliged to be raddled in the middle; noses like Orleans plums, obliged to be coated with pearl powder—you will have wheezy, panting, die-away creatures, painful to look at. Exercise and fresh air can't be taken in sufficient quantities, because the corsets forbid exertion—the want of fresh air and exercise will soon tell on the pinched-up damsels—it would even upon a Hercules—they will pant, and wheeze, and faint through life, instead of freely inhaling the fresh air, and tasting a pleasure in a mere sensation of living; fine mothers of future riflemen they will make, won't they? If it is to come to a tug, other things being even, I'll lay my old hat on the side of the people whose mothers do not wear tight stays. Well, it's an ill wind that blows nobody good—the doctors will flourish, that's certain—perhaps I'd better change my profession, to be ready. But do you think the young fellows like their waists? I don't believe it; if they do, they're fools, that's all; but I think they don't. Every fellow with senses likes an armful, and soft, yielding, not a waist of buckram and jean, as stiff as a lamp-post. Did you ever waltz with a tight-laced young lady; it's like spinning round a clothes-prop, ain't it? As for the statue and garment question, I tell you the only people who thoroughly knew how to dress their women were the Greeks. Look at Parthenia, in 'Ingomar'; what a charming dress! Some pleasure in waltzing with a girl like that.

—*Lady's Newspaper.*