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THE FAVORITE

SATURDAY, MAY 23, 1874.

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LAUGHTER.

It is hard to believe that a good laughter is either cruel or deceitful. A smile, a snuff, a short, and as it were monosyllabic laugh, may all consist with guile. But deep, melodious, rolling laughter that rises and falls like a wave, can that belong to an artful nature? Possibly it may. We have never known but a single instance in which a good sweet, and wholesome laughter was insincere; and in this case it was, we suspect, more a habit contracted in society than a real taint of disposition. There may be silly laughter and much of it, but there is full as much silly sobriety. A boy that laughs at nothing shows a kind of exuberance of nature. But a man who will not laugh upon just cause manifests a lean and barren nature. It is what musicians call ciphering—as when one touches a key on the organ, and the pipe does not sound.

Mirth and merriment have a bad name among sober folks; but so do sober people among the merry. Each pities the other. One because his opposite does, and the other because he does not laugh. We take sides with—well, for the time being, we take sides with the Fraternity of the Laugh. If there be sin, it must inhere in the manner of doing it, and not in the quality of mirth. That it is the inspiration of the mind, and not a mere muscular and animal chuckle, is shown by the fact that animals below man do not laugh. They are not highly enough endowed. They have no soul, no moral sentiment, little complexity of mind, out of which arise those curious junctures, or crossings of ideas, which awaken laughter. An animal is not mortal, and cannot laugh. A man is immortal, and can laugh. As long as the flesh predominates, laughing is impossible; add a soul, and the creature begins to laugh! It is a superior attribute. It comes along with Conscience, Hope, and Faith; and if it will only keep in their company, laughing will always prove a means of grace.

We are displeased with the low and unworthy functions sometimes apologetically assigned to it. It is good for digestion, it is said; it is a moderate exercise,—as if, like a sneeze, it was a purely physical phenomenon. But a laugh is born of a thought; a sneeze, of only a tickle. Sneezing is an affection of the nose and parts adjacent. But laughter is the child of the soul. It springs from the immortal part, and the whole body is but an organ of expression. Every true laughter knows that, when he laughs till he coughs, till tears run down his cheeks, till his sides ache with shaking, till he is deaf—in short,

till the body has exhausted all its means of expressing delight, that the idea, which caused all this tumult, has not exhausted itself, nor has it been satisfied with the inarticulate expression of laughter. It is the soul that laughs first and most, and the body but reverberates the echoes. Laughing is good for digestion. But this is the least and lowest of its good offices.

It is a soul-cleanser. It cannot endure shams. It loves good-humored ways among the thoughts; and when conceits have slowly turned to deceits, and partial and unfair notions are choking up the soul, and unworthy feelings are depositing soot along the soul's passages, a genuine laugh is like a fire in a foul chimney. Certain sorts of shocks, explosions, conflagrations seem to be needed, from time to time, in the mind. The faculties grown numb and become stiff. The soul, like a well, collects mephitic gas, and needs burning straw to be thrown down till it is driven out. The mind needs to be roused and shaken every day, without too severe a blow. Laughter does it. It topples down a man's sham dignity. It makes his foolish pride give way, at least for the moment. It sweeps away all pretences and make-believes, and pitiful social distinctions. In an unexpected uproar of laughter at genuine wit or humor, every man in the room is on a level, and a flush of good fellowship goes round. Even Obstinacy, that old curmudgeon of the soul, yields a little.

TITLE-TATTLE.

The disposition to pry into the privacy of domestic life is, unfortunately, very common, and is always dishonorable. The appetite for such knowledge is to be regarded as morbid, and the indulgence of it disgraceful. A family have a sacred right to privacy. In guarding the delicate relations of the household, secrecy becomes a virtue. Even if by chance the private affairs of a household are laid open to a stranger, honor would require him to turn from them; and, if a knowledge of them were forced upon him, they should be looked in a sacred silence. A double obligation of silence and secrecy rests upon one who is a guest in a family. The turpitude of a betrayal of family history by a visitor is far greater than theft would be. It is a thing so scandalous, that it should degrade a person, and put him out of society. To betray the secrets of the household is not only an odious immorality, but it is a sin and a shame to be on good terms with those who are known to commit such outrages. They put themselves out of the pale of decent society. They should be treated as moral outlaws.

These hungry-eyed wretches who sit in the unsuspicious circle of parents and children, treasuring their words, spying their weaknesses, misinterpreting the innocent liberties of the household, and then run from house to house with their shameless news, are worse than poisoners of wells, or burners of houses. They poison the faith of man in man. Make no terms with such people. Tale-bearers have no rights. They are common enemies of good men. Hunt, harry, and hound them out of society. They are the worst of pests save one, and that is the listener to the tale-bearer. There could be no tattling if there were no one to hear. It takes an ear and a tongue to make a scandal. Greedy listening is as dishonorable as nimble tattling. The ear is the open market where tongue sells its ill-gotten ware. Some there are that will not repeat again what they hear, but they are willing to listen to it. They will not trade in contraband goods, but they will buy enough of the smuggler for family use. These respectable listeners are the patrons of tattlers. It is the ready market that keeps tale-bearing brisk. It is a shame to listen to ill of your neighbor. Christian benevolence demands that you do not love ill news. A clean heart and a true honor rejoice in kindly things. It should be a pain and sorrow to know of anything that degrades your neighbor in your eyes, even if he is your enemy; and how much more if he is your friend?

The Scriptures say, "Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people." "A tale-bearer revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful (honorable) spirit, concealeth the matter." "The words of the tale-bearer are as wounds that go down into the innermost parts of the belly." The Hebrews thought that the affections had their seat in the bowels; and by this phrase, "go down into the innermost parts of the belly," they signify how sharp and exasperating to the deepest feelings of our nature are the cruel offices of a common tattler. "Where no wood is, the fire goeth out; so, where there is no tale-bearing, the strife ceaseth." As if he had said that so much of the strife of society arise from tattling, that, if that were cured, there would hardly be any cause of quarrel left. Commend us to that religion which makes a man humane with his tongue, and honorable with his ear.

OUR ILLUSTRATIONS.**"AN INVALID."**

This drawing is by a very promising young painter—Mr. E. F. Brewtall—and was exhibited at last year's Exhibition of the Royal Academy. A sick and delicate girl, too infirm to walk, is wheeled in an invalid-chair to an opening amongst the fragrant shrubs and climbers and flowers, where she may drink re-

freshment from whatever air is wafted from the calm sea, and where her eye may repose on the placid waters, the softly-gliding boats, and the serene evening sky. The self-effacing consideration and sympathy of true affection are indicated in every position and expression of her attendants. A stalwart young fellow, brother or lover, himself full of robust strength and health, has wheeled her there, and now stands aside not to disturb her enjoyment of the view, yet with an air of anxious solicitude. A sister, gentle and retiring, leans on the back of her chair; an elder female, her mother perhaps, sits behind, pensive yet watchful and alert; and all are hushed in silence. An invalid could have no better conditions for recovery; and should not such loving heedfulness be rewarded?

"BRIGANDS AND CAPTIVES."

This large and striking picture, which formed one of the principal attractions of the French annexe in the London International Exhibition of 1871 has received a variety of interpretations. It is generally supposed to depict an actual event; and the inquiry has been made, we believe in print, why the artist has represented the Marquis of Lorne and Princess Louise as captives to brigands when, happily, no such fate ever befel them! The male captive certainly happens to bear a very considerable resemblance to the noble young Marquis, but the likeness is, of course, purely accidental. The painter chose a handsome, fair-haired northern type for the victims in his picture, as affording the strongest artistic contrast to the swarthy, black-haired, villainous and brutal aspect of their captors. To give an English character to the former was, besides, not inappropriate, many of our travelling countrymen having been similarly seized and maltreated. The "motive" of the picture originated, indeed, as we are informed, from the atrocious assassination of the English captives by the Greek brigands at Marathon. But, as the artist had not the opportunity to represent that horrible scene with local correctness, he has contented himself with an imaginary illustration of the brigandage which, though now fast diminishing, has long disgraced Italy, and which has furnished many a scene similar to that before us. The painter during his studies in Italy—studies he was enabled to prosecute by having won the grand prix de Rome of the French Ecole des Beaux Arts—has, in order to secure fidelity for his work, actually tracked some Italian brigands; yet fortunately he escaped, though narrowly, falling into their power. The picture seems to bear ample witness to the closeness of the painter's observations. If, like Salvator Rosa, Mr. Layraud had lived and painted among banditti, he could hardly have told his story with an air of greater vraisemblance. The scene is laid in a rocky defile, probably of the savage Abruzzi, the desolate haunt only of the vulture and of worse human creatures, who make a prey of the living as well as the dead. With that hideous association of religion with basest villainy and murder which is almost peculiar to Italian brigandage, a cross has been set up in the middle distance, perhaps for devotion (!), more probably to mark the grave of one of the gang who has gone to his account. A couple of mounted travellers have been waylaid and captured, their attendants very likely killed, and here, to this mountain fastness, they are brought, to await the chance of their being ransomed with some heavy payment by relative or friend, or, failing that, to be murdered and possibly mutilated. While a couple of the crew guard their horses and rifle their baggage, the rest gather, threatening and truculent, round the unfortunates, and the chief, with a revolver in one hand and a pen in the other, presents to the male victim a paper with the hard terms of release for him to sign on pain of instant death. Our engraving will sufficiently show that the painter has realised such a piteous incident with as much dramatic force as truth of local color.

NEWS NOTES.

The Dominion Parliament is expected to adjourn about the 20th inst.

A grand banquet was given at Portsmouth to the soldiers of the Ashantee expedition.

Steering passengers are being carried from Liverpool to New York for fifteen dollars.

It is said insurance in New York this year will be three to four times that of last year.

The New Tariff of Mr. Cartwright the Canadian Finance Minister has been remodelled.

It is said that Sir Robert Peel will resign the position of Liberal whip on account of ill health.

General Swieten, commander of the Dutch expedition to Aceh, and his staff have returned to Batavia.

The London Daily News says the lock-out of farm laborers will soon be submitted to arbitration for settlement.

The result of the election in Stroud, Gloucestershire, has been annulled on account of bribery, and a new election ordered.

A body of Carlists, 2,000 strong, is said to have been defeated in the Province of Tarragona, by the National troops.

The British House of Commons take recess during the Whitsuntide holidays, adjourning on the 12th of May until the 1st of June.

A Little Rock despatch says Brooks's party in the State-house have thirty days' provisions, six tons of powder, and large quantities of shot and shell.

A terrible boiler explosion occurred at a mill in Shavangunk, Pa., by which ten people lost their lives. The boiler, weighing five tons, was thrown 600 feet.

The Conference at Liverpool of ocean-steamship owners has been dissolved, and as tariffs will now be made on an independent basis a lively competition may be expected.

The Franco-American Postal Convention was signed on the 20th by the French Government. Duke de Cazex will submit it to the Assembly and request its immediate consideration.

Very little further information have been received from the inundated district in Louisiana, except that the stock are huddled together throughout the district, and what are not starving are being killed by buffalo.

A famine prevails in Asia Minor, and many families are starving. It is stated that in the town of Angora alone 100 deaths occur daily from starvation. The river Tigris is again swelled by heavy rains, and further flood is apprehended.

Spanish Government troops have entered Bilbao. Gen. Concha, with 20,000 men to attack the Carlists in the rear, gained the heights on the left bank of the river Nervion above Sopuerta. The Carlist General, Andshana, was killed in one of the engagements before Bilbao previous to its recapture by Serrano. A church in San Pedro Abanto was nearly demolished by the fire of the Republicans.

HOUSEHOLD RECEIPTS.

EGG TOAST.—Take four eggs well whipped, added to a quarter of a pound of melted butter in a pan, whisk together in the pan over the fire, add a little salt and pepper; five minutes will sufficiently set the ingredients: serve on buttered toast. Anchovy can be added if preferred.

SALAD DRESSING.—Take the yolks of two hard-boiled eggs, reduce them to a paste in a mortar, or in a basin with a spoon, and add a teaspoonful of dry mustard. When these are sufficiently amalgamated, add, drop by drop, two tablespoonfuls of oil. Mix all well together, and then add in the same way a tablespoonful and a half of vinegar. The yolk of a raw egg is also an improvement, especially if a little cream be also added.

FISH SOUP.—All fish soups should be made with milk, (if unskimmed so much the better,) using no water whatever. Cut off their heads, tails, and fins, and remove the skin, and the back-bone, and cut the fish into pieces. To each pound of fish allow a quart of rich milk. Put into the soup-pot some pieces of cold boiled ham. No salt will then be required: but season with cayenne pepper, and a few blades of mace and some grated nutmeg. Add a bunch of sweet marjoram, the leaves stripped from the stalks and chopped. Make some little dumplings of flour and butter, and put them in when the soup is about half done. Half an hour's steady boiling will be sufficient. Serve up in the tureen the pieces of fish and ham. Also some toast cut in dice.

STEWED OYSTERS.—Get some fine large fresh oysters. Drain them from their liquor (saving it in a pitcher), and put them into a stew-pan with a quarter of a pound of fresh butter, and set them over the fire. When they have simmered, and have almost come to a boil, remove them from the fire; and have ready a pan of very cold water. Take out the oysters (one at a time, on a fork) and put them into the cold water. This will plump them, and render them firm. Having saved about half their liquor, put it into the stew-pan, seasoned well with blades of mace, grated nutmeg, whole pepper-corns, and a little cayenne. Stir in half a pint or more of cream; and if you cannot procure cream, an equal quantity of nice fresh butter divided into bits, slightly dredged with a very little flour. Boil the liquor by itself, and when it comes to a boil, take the oysters out of the cold water, and put them into the boiling liquor. In five minutes remove the pan from the fire (the oysters having simmered), and transfer them to a tureen or deep dish, in the bottom of which has been laid a buttered toast, that has previously been dipped a minute in hot water or milk.

LOBSTER SOUP.—Take two or three fine fresh lobsters (the middle size are the best). Heat a large pot of water, throwing in a large handful of salt. When it is boiling hard put in the lobsters, head foremost, that they may die immediately. They will require at least half an hour's fast boiling: if large, three quarters. When done, take them out, wipe off the scum that has collected on the shell, and drain the lobster. First break off the large claws, and crack them, then split the body and extract all the white meat, and the red coral—nothing else—and cut it into small pieces. Mash the coral into smooth bits with the back of a large spoon, mixing with it plenty of sweet oil; and, gradually, adding it to the bits of chopped lobster. Put into a clear soup-pot two quarts, or more, of good milk, and thicken it with half a dozen buttered biscuits, pounded fine; or the grated crumbs of two or three small rolls, and stir in a quarter of a pound of fresh butter made into a paste with two spoonfuls of flour. Put in the chopped lobster, seasoned with nutmeg, a few blades of mace powdered, and a little cayenne. Let all boil together, slowly, for half an hour, keeping it closely covered. Towards the last, stir in two beaten eggs. Lay some very small biscuits in the bottom of a tureen, and pour the soup upon them. Nasturtium flowers strewn at the last thickly over the surface of this soup, when in the tureen, are an improvement both to its appearance and flavor.