

LAMP MUSINGS.

Silence! not a leaf is stirred, not a brook moves. Nature is taking a rest, a quiet repose; and so the earth floats softly through space in the gentlest of all moods, with her great pulse beating slowly and her thousand voices hushed and stilled. There is something expressive in silence. Speak the word and your voice falls to a whisper; think of it, and your mind will run back along the path of years to the first great Silence. In a book published along time ago and not read as much as it should be, there is a passage which describes the place in which it dwelt; here it is:—"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." In that darkness and over the dreary waste of those waters black, there reigned a solemn silence.—Even the attendants of old chaos moved about in shadowy forms that made no noise, and the King himself spoke not, for no "palpitating air" could tremble with a sound. Within those realms no whisper rose. Black gates that turned on vapor hinges, shut in those silent lands of moving mist, all tenantless of speech or echoing sound. No voices of birds—no rush of cooling streams—no gentle murmurs of a summer breeze—no grating voice of tempest hoarse—no whispered waving of the golden grain—no clashing of embattled trees—no music from the voice of man—no deep-toned thunder from the hand of God; one deep mysterious silence reigned o'er all. Can mind conceive the nature of that silence? Can the deepest reasoning fathom it?—In the music of nature, as well as in that which springs from the heart of man, there are sympathetic chords that oft-times mingle into one deep strain. So there are, also, periods of rest, that fold each in a calm repose; and how impressive is that repose! Here, far away from the "busy haunts of men," I may and do notice it in a striking manner. Above, the moon in silence takes her evening walk; not a cloud moves—not a star stings, all is quiet there. Here around my western home there is the same stillness. I do not hear the whip-poor-will's voice—nor the cricket's hum—nor the beetle's droning notes—nor the katy-did's contradiction—nor the owl's cry—nor the watch-dog's bark—nor any of the "voices of the night."

The fact (in spite of all my wondering) still remains. Nature is resting in silence. Well, if her mighty energies need recuperation, those of man certainly do. It is a great thought, and I would that I could do it justice. From God to man two principles ever typify the nature of mind and intelligence—labor and rest. We may conceive, but we never can realize either the giant toil, or the mighty effort that in six days made Heaven and Earth, or the significant rest that followed the completion of the work; but the thought, deep and startling, remains, that even God rested. It is a natural sequence of a first cause. Think of it, children of earth, men of business, when ye turn night into day and toil incessant on the ledger's page. Student of the midnight, damp and dim, whose soul, laudable in effort, but untempered with prudence, hithereth long within the "still small hours," and

drinketh seeds of death in waters of knowledge—votary of science, training a nice result, or searching for another precedent to form the wondrous law of fact. And ye, citizens of a great metropolis, when ye seek pleasure in the theatre or the concert room, and inhale the tainted air of closely fitting walls, remember that through the day, ye labored, and your system needeth rest. Remember that rest is a law of your nature, and it cannot be broken with impunity. O! how many energies have been wasted—how many bright eyes dimmed—how many burning lights extinguished in the fields of science—how many hearts beating strong with the highest impulses of an exalted humanity, and full of generous love and sympathy for the beautiful and true of life, have been stilled forever by the iron hand of endless labor. Let us go lovingly to rest, nor aim to emulate the ridiculous industry of some, who shut one eye in sleep and keep the other open in business.

Would you count the evils of an infringement of nature's rights, read the ages of the sleeping ones who lie within the cities of the dead! Not in a country burying-place, but where the remains of the denizens of a crowded city are placed. There are seen mournful epitaphs of men and women who have destroyed themselves, who have gone to their long rest before their appointed time, by striving to interrupt the natural course of nature's laws, and by endeavoring to place in the balance sheet of their lives a greater amount of credit on the side of labor.—When, O, man, wilt thou "know thyself?"

Poor Charles Lamb, how fond thou wast of silence, and how kindly didst thou look upon thy thought, which it gavest. Thou couldst ever love the quiet Quaker meeting houses, for an atmosphere of heavenly stillness surrounded those places, and may in quietude worshiped his Creator. Truly, when thy speech grew faint, and thy thoughts went seeking for oral vehicles in which to visit men, thou couldst think and write great thoughts in silence. And thou, too, dear Thomas Gray, singing thy immortal eley in the "solemn stillness" of a "country churchyard," with the "glimmering landscape" fading on the sight, and the air lulled with "drowsy tinklings" thou knewest the claims of silence, for then thou couldst write in heavenly numbers that shall never die. O, silence! most favorable to contemplation; most favorable to those severer thoughts that rise, with alacrity, to heaven, and most favorable to those just reflections which the great mystery of our lives present. Most favorable to the whisperings of that "soft still music of humanity" which strikes impromptu chords with that of a better land. Let others seek the "maddening crowd's ignoble strife"—let them learn to love the excitement of a city life; but oh, give to me the "stilly" night and quiet days of a country life where silence sometimes reigns. There I may call in the transient memories, and look with profit on my faithful pictures which the artist hand of time has painted on the glowing past. There I may learn how great secrets we perpetrate in our minds and bodies, each day of our lives—there I may

administer to one the food of knowledge, and warm the other by the fires of exercise. But, if ambition calls me to the marts and trading places of the world, if within red walls I shall work out the sum of my destiny, let me have some seasons of silence such as this in which to grow better and wiser.

WORK AND STUDY.

EDS. REVIEW.—In a late issue, Vinton asks if a person can follow farming and a course of studies at the same time. I would ask Vinton, can you follow farming constantly, and pleasantly, without permitting a single thought or care, not directly relating thereto, to enter your mind? Then, in our natures, you and I differ most materially.—In these long days, after the sun has gone to seek a different scene in the farther west, don't you feel a little lonesome and much wearied, after having applied yourself, both physically and mentally, within the limits of your own farm? Then seek relief in the studies you love! Study is a very essential ingredient in the composition of a useful life, though it is of little value unless accompanied by physical exercise and a searching mind.

Six or eight hours is enough to sleep. Then you have several spare hours, morning and evening. Through the whole season, you can do as much work from six to eight, including an hour's nooning, as from daylight till dark each day; and in that hour after dinner, you might learn much from reading some light study that will not require deep thought.

Experience tells me that neither labor nor study, alone, is at all pleasant, but with both, all glides smoothly and swiftly on. As the Editor tells us, we need mental discipline to teach us to turn our attention from one thing to another; and to take hold of the different ones with that will that shows that the mind and hands are both at work.

Most certainly, one thing at a time is enough. But it does not follow that that thing need last forever. For, at day-time we can work upon the farm, and at night, forget the day, turn our attention towards some other object of a different nature.—Then, Vinton, you can go to town return without forgetting your errand there, and to your labor with your mind refreshed by what you have seen. Try it.

WISCONSIN, JUNE, 1859.

EUGENE

The city of London contains a population of nearly three millions of people, and it increases at the rate of 25,000 per annum. It extends eighteen miles in one direction and ten in another, and it goes on devouring up fields and gardens like a great monster.

Wisdom is the olive which springs from the heart, blooms on the tongue, and bears fruit by the actions.