

SIGHTS FROM A STEEPLE.

By Nathaniel Hawthorne.

"So! I have climbed high, and my reward is small. Here I stand, with wearied knees, earth, indeed, at a dizzy depth below, but heaven far, far beyond me still. O that I could soar up into the very zenith, where man never breathed, nor eagle ever flew, and where the ethereal azure melts away from the eye, and appears only a deepened shade of nothingness! And yet I shiver at that cold and solitary thought. What clouds are gathering in the golden west, with direful intent against the brightness and the warmth of this summer afternoon! They are ponderous air-ships, black as death, and freighted with the tempest; and at intervals their thunder, the signal guns of that unearthly squadron, rolls distant along the deep of heaven. These nearer heaps of fleecy vapor—methinks I could roll and toss upon them the whole day long!—seem scattered here and there, for the repose of tired pilgrims through the sky. Perhaps—for who can tell?—beautiful spirits are disporting themselves there, and will bless my mortal eye with the brief appearance of their curly locks of golden light, and laughing faces, fair and faint as the people of a rosy dream. Or, where the floating mass so imperfectly abstracts the color of the firmament, a slender foot and fairy limb, resting too heavily upon the frail support, may be thrust through, and suddenly withdrawn, while longing fancy follows them in vain. Yonder again is an airy archipelago, where the sunbeams love to linger in their journeyings through space. Every one of those little clouds has been dipped and steeped in radiance, which the slightest pressure might disengage in silvery profusion, like water wrung from a sea-maid's hair. Bright they are as a young man's visions, and like them, would be realized in skillness, obscurity and tears. I will look on them no more.

"In three parts of the visible circle, whose centre is this spire, I discern cultivated fields, villages, white country-seats, the waving lines of rivulets, little placid lakes, and here and there a rising ground, that would fain be termed a hill. On the fourth side is the sea, stretching away towards a viewless boundary, blue and calm, except where the passing anger of a shadow flits across its surface, and is gone. Hitherward, a broad inlet penetrates far into the land; on the verge of the harbor, formed by its extremity, is a town; and over it am I, a watchman, all heeding and unheeded.

In two streets, converging at right angles toward my watch tower, I distinguish three different processions. One is a proud array of voluntary soldiers in bright uniform, resembling, from the height whence I look down, the painted veterans that garrison the windows of a toy shop. And yet, it stirs my heart; their regular advance, their nodding plumes, the sun-flash on their bayonets and musket-barrels, the roll of their drums ascending past me, and the life ever and anon piercing through—these things have awakened a warlike fire, peaceful though I be. Close to their rear marches a battalion of school-boys, ranged in crooked and irregular platoons, shouldering sticks, thumping a harsh and unripe clatter from an instrument of tin, and ridiculously aping the intricate manoeuvres of the foremost band. Nevertheless, as slight differences are scarcely perceptible from a church spire, one might be tempted to ask, "Which are the boys?"—or rather "Which the men?" But, leaving these, let us now turn to the third procession, which, though sadder in outward show, may excite identical reflections in the thoughtful mind. It is a funeral. A hearse, drawn by a black and bony steed, and covered by a dusty pall, two or three coaches rumbering over the stones, their drivers half asleep; a dozen couple of careless mourners in their every-day attire; such was not the fashion of our fathers, when they carried a friend to his grave. There is now no doleful clang of the bell, to proclaim sorrow to the town. Was the King of Terrors more awful in those days than in our own, that wisdom and philosophy have been able to produce this change? Not so. Here is a proof that he retains his proper majesty. The hearse, then, and the military boys, are wheeling round the corner, and meet the funeral full in the face.

diately the drum is silent, all but the tap that regulates each simultaneous foot-fall. The soldiers yield the path to the dusty hearse, and unpretending train, and the children quit their ranks, and cluster on the side walks, with timorous and instinctive curiosity. The mourners enter the church-yard at the base of the steeple, and pause by an open grave among the burial stones; the lightning glimmers on them as they lower down the coffin, and the thunder rattles heavily while they throw the earth upon its lid. Verily, the shower is near."

"Lo! the rain drops are descending and now the storm lets loose its fury. In every dwelling I perceive the faces of the chambermaids as they shut down the windows, excluding the impetuous shower, and shrinking away from the quick fiery glare. The large drops descend with force upon the slated roofs, and rise again in smoke. There is a rush and roar, as of a river through the air, and muddy streams bubble majestically along the pavement, whirl their dusky foam into the keuel, and disappear beneath iron grates. Thus did Arethusa sink. I love not my station here aloft, in the midst of the tumult which I am powerless to direct or quell, with the deep blue lightning wrinkling on my brow, and the dread thunder muttering its first awful syllables in my ear. I will descend. Yet let me give another glance to the sea, where the foam breaks out in long white lines upon a broad expanse of blackness, or boils up in far distant points, like snowy mountain-tops in the eddies of a flood; and let me look once more at the green plain, and little hills of the country, over which the giant of the storm is striding in robes of mist, and at the town, whose obscured and desolate streets might beseech a city of the dead; and turning a single moment to the sky, I prepare to resume my station on lower earth. But stay! A little speck of azure has widened in the western heavens; the sunbeams find a passage, and go rejoicing through the tempest; and on yonder darkest cloud, born, like hallowed hopes, of the glory of another world, and the trouble and tears of this, brightens forth the rainbow!"

MUSIC.

The peculiar benefits which flow from the cultivation of music, have long been acknowledged to be great. The principles of patriotism, morality, and religion, are each infixed most deeply, when whispered to the soul in the moving melody of song. How is the love of country kindled by a national ode! Moral truth sinks deep into the heart, and is never forgotten, when conveyed there in the accents of music. The plaintive strain can melt the heart to tenderness and compassion, and the breathings of soft melody calm and cheer the troubled and sorrowing bosom. And who that has heard the chanting of solemn praise, in the worship of God, but has been carried upward in thought, and filled with reverence and holy emotion?

It is the office of music to heighten enjoyment; and such is the organization of man, that he feels impelled by the necessity of his nature, even in his rudest state, to seek for it in some form or other. Civilized and refined, if deprived of all music, he would feel life to be little less than miserable. It is because music is thus valuable to man, that science has lent her aid, and art her skill, to render it as perfect in theory and practice as is possible. On a few simple elements is based an extensive and profound theory, demonstrated by mathematical calculation and nice philosophical experiment; and to such perfection has the practice of each department of the art at length been brought, that an industrious application, for years, is required, before any one can claim the distinction of a master. Happily, however, the gratifications which flow from music are not necessarily dependent upon such high scientific attainments; and the song of the untutored peasant often carries to the refined and cultivated mind a thrill of delight. And thus does nature sometimes mock at human effort in other arts—and the poet, the painter, the orator, and the beautiful sculptor of the schools, turns back to study and admire the productions of some disciple of nature. How beautiful and yet how simple! Take the first compositions of the child Mozart, untaught in every rule, yet

violating none. Handel and Haydn, too, though late and common attainments, and standing in their maturity on an eminence beyond the reach of their contemporaries and successors. The efforts of the great masters in all the arts, destined to survive the longest, are those which present to the mind the most beautiful pictures, in a certain near conformity with the truth of nature. These remain as models for future generations, and all others are comparatively ephemeral.

Music is natural to man. The mother has scarcely presented the breast to her infant, before she warbles music in its ear, and it listens with pleasure, and is quiet. Thus pillowed, it drinks in melody, as the food of the mind; and when it hungers for that nutriment, it often attempts to gratify the desire, even in its tenderest age: its little song brings to itself the desired pleasure, and to the ears of its fond parent untold delight. Surely, it is no marvel that we love music, and well might the great master-poet denounce him who hath none in his soul.—*Katck-erbocker.*

FEMALE FLORISTS.

By Mrs. Sigourney.

Among the pleasant employments which seem peculiarly congenial to the feelings of our sex, the culture of flowers stands conspicuous. The general superintendence of a garden has been repeatedly found favorable to health, by leading to frequent exercise in the open air, and that communing with nature which is equally refreshing to the heart. It was laboring with her own hands in her garden, that the mother of Washington was found by the youthful Marquis de la Fayette, when he sought her blessing, as he was about to commit himself to the ocean and return to his native clime. Milton, who you recollect was a great advocate that woman should "study household good," has few more eloquent descriptions, than those which represent our first mother at her floral toil amid the sinless shades of Paradise.

The tending of flowers has ever appeared to me a fitting care for the young and beautiful. They then dwell as it were, among their own emblems, and many a voice of wisdom breathes on their ear from those brief blossoms, to which they apportion the dew and the sun-beam. While they eradicate the weeds that deform, or the excrescences that endanger them, is there not a perpetual admonition uttered, of the work to be done in their own heart? From the admiration of these ever-varying charms, how naturally is the tender spirit led upward in devotion to Him, "whose hand perfumes them, and whose pencil paints." Connected with the nurture of flowers, is the delightful study of botany, which imparts new attractions to the summer sylvan walk, and prompts both to salubrious exercise and scientific research. A knowledge of the physiology of plants, is not only interesting in itself, but of practical import. The brilliant coloring matter which they sometimes yield, and the healthful influences which they possess, impart value to many an unsightly shrub, or secluded plant, which might otherwise have been suffered to blossom and to die without a thought.

It is cheering, amid our solitary rambles, to view the objects that surround us, as friends, to call to recollection their distinctive lineaments of character, to array them with something of intelligence or utility, and to enjoy an intimate companionship with nature. The female aborigines of our country were distinguished by an extensive acquaintance with the medicinal properties of plants and roots, which enabled them, both in peace and war, to be the healers of their tribes. I would not counsel you to invade the province of the physician. In our state of society, it would be preposterous and arrogant. But sometimes, to alleviate the slight indispositions of those you love, a simple infusion of the herbs which you have reared and gathered, is a legitimate branch of that nursing-kindness which seems interwoven with woman's nature.

Why are your teeth like verbs?—Because they are regular, irregular and defective.