

General Miscellany.

The Battle of Life.

Our life, from the cradle to the grave, is a series of antagonisms. Sickness, sorrow, temptation, sin, remorse, poverty, fatigue, hunger—these are the enemies that wage a continual fight against us. Within and without, the foes of the flesh and foes of the spirit, generally acting in concert, make our life one long and earnest battle. And in this strife how many fall, wounded and faint, and yield to the enemy, fierce or subtle, which is fighting against the soul. How different the circumstances and the inherent powers of those who are carrying on this conflict.—Some are left from the first to contend single-handed and unaided, while others are surrounded by a friendly band who encourage, by cheering words, valuable advice and efficient aid, him who, if left to himself, would fall. Some have an innate strength and energy of spirit which knows no defeat, while others yield ingloriously to the most insignificant foes.

There is no spectacle more interesting, more sublime, than a young man going out alone in the world to fight the battle of life. There are thousands every year leaving their homes to enter the arena of conflict and contend as they best may with the adverse influences which beset their path. And how often do we observe that those who seemed weakest and least furnished for the contest, are most triumphant. It is in his own soul that the young man finds his most efficient armory. If he can draw weapons from thence which may parry the thrusts of his adversaries, there is no fear of being vanquished. Sometimes a young man seems for a time to succumb to evil influences, and we deem him lost, but he finally rises again above temptations and triumphs at last. He has, perhaps, been drawn back from destruction, by the influences which were shed around his childhood by a wise and gentle mother. The influences of a mother's early prayers and counsels seem but a slender cord, but it is fastened to the tenderest spot in our bosoms, and if, in after life, we stray from the right path, that little cord will be found tugging at our heart strings.

In this battle of life the most sublime achievements, the most glorious victories are won in silence and in secret. The struggle goes on where the world cannot see, and the final reward to the conquering spirit cannot be fully realized until it has passed away from the world altogether. If we were gifted with keener perceptions, we might every day witness upon earth triumphs which would shed around poor human nature a halo of glory, and cause us to remember and realize that man was truly created in the image of God.

Autumn.

Sweet Autumn, bright, beautiful autumn is here. Behold her hand-writing on the leaves; it is traced with a pen dipped in the hues of the rainbow. Hear how gently she sings the requiem of the flowers, poor tender things, that are perishing, because summer is sleeping, and needs them no longer to make garlands for her sunny brow.

Look upon the hills. Autumn and her sprites are busy there; wherever their dancing feet touch the sward, lo! it is transfigured, and a thousand nestling beauties sleep in the little hollows they have made. Gaze upward to the skies; has summer gone there? They are as darkly, as richly blue, as in her softer reign. The little runs babble to the meadows answer back again, and tell how a strange a desolation cometh in the train of Autumn, and how, if they were little brooklets, they should find some dark, warm cavern, out of the reach of grasping winter. But the brooklets, like children, heed not the words of experience, and babble on, contented, because just now they are warm, and the sun glitters to their very depths.

Behold again, Autumn wraps her mantle of scarlet about her glorious form, and bows her head in sorrow. Just beyond the little enclosure I see her, shadowy, yet bright, moving like a spirit, while the fading verdure scarcely feels the pressure of her soft tread. And Autumn is among the

tombs—among the green mounds and white monuments. Many a young bride who waited for her to bless her bridal, twelve months ago, is folded in the ceremonies of the grave. He who swung his scythe, and carolled a song to her honour, when last she was here, he of the manly form, the powerful arm, the noble brow and merry eye of blue, has finished his course in his bright spring time, and his head is pillowed on a lowly bed. Autumn misses the venerable and the aged; she pauses by the tall shafts that mark the repose of the fallen great; she kneels by the simple headstone of the village clergyman, and her fingers play with the faded chaplet, that adorns a father's grave.

Yes, Autumn, we have lost our beloved since last the fair heavens crimsoned at thy wooing. Shake from thy golden tresses the pearls that summer rains have fashioned there; they cannot repay us for the long absence of that darling babe, the death silence of that cherished father. Give of thy full store from the vintage and the fruits glowing under thy smiles—they can never revive that poor frame that lies waiting for a final visit from the angels.—*Boston Olive Branch.*

Wonders of the Universe.

What mere assertion will make any one believe that in one second of time, in one beat of the pendulum of a clock, a ray of light travels over 192,000 miles, and would therefore perform the tour of the world in about the same time that it requires to wink with our eyelids, and in much less than a swift runner occupies in taking a single stride? What mortal can be made to believe, without demonstration, that the sun is almost a million times larger than the earth? and that, although so remote from us, that a cannon-ball shot directly towards it, and maintaining its full speed, would be twenty years in reaching it, yet it affects the earth by its attractions in an appreciable instant of time? Who would not ask for demonstration, when told that a quail's wing, in its ordinary flight, beats many hundred times in a second; or that there exists animated and regularly organized beings, many thousands of whose bodies laid close together, would not extend an inch? But what are these to the astonishing truths which modern optical inquiries have disclosed, which teach us that every point of a medium through which a ray of light passes, is affected with a succession of periodical movements, regularly recurring at equal intervals, no less than five hundred millions of millions in a single second! That it is by such movements communicated to the nerves of our eyes that we see: nay more, that it is the difference in the frequency of their recurrence which affects us with the sense of the diversity of colour. That, for instance, in acquiring the sensation of redness, our eyes are affected four hundred and eighty-two millions of millions of times; of yellowness, five hundred and forty-two millions of millions of times; and of violet, seven hundred and seven millions of millions of times per second. Do not such things sound more like the ravings of madmen than the sober conclusions of people in their waking senses? They are, nevertheless, conclusions to which any one may most certainly arrive, who will only be at the trouble of examining the chain of reasoning by which they have been obtained.—*Herschell.*

Energy.

Energy is omnipotent. The clouds that surround the houseless boy to-day are dispersed, and he is invited to a palace. It is the work of energy. The child who is a beggar this moment, in a few years to come may stand forth the admiration of angels.—Who has not seen the life-giving power of energy? It makes the wilderness blossom as a rose; whitens the ocean; navigates our rivers; levels mountains; paves with iron a highway from State to State, and sends thought with the speed of lightning from one extremity of the land to the other. Without energy what is man? A fool, a clod.

A grown up man without energy is one of the most pitiable objects we know. He plods on the same cow-track his father

made; uses the same old-fashioned flint and steel; sits before the same huge fireplace; reads the same old books; takes no newspaper; and has all his thoughts, if such a man can think—cast in a mould worn out a century ago. If he shows a vote he does it to please a neighbour, and sends his children to school because he has been advised to do so. How many such men there are, stumbling blocks on God's footstool—clogging the wheels of industry and enterprise, or hanging like millstones upon the skirts of those who would mount up, and do the work the Almighty designed them to accomplish.

Are you a young man? Be not like those who live and die like fools. Give full play to all the energies of your bodies and minds, and mount up and press on, determined to accomplish something worth looking back upon when death hurries you away. Measure not your strength by what others have done; be not influenced by what others may say. Take new ground—break your way through—overcome every obstacle, and go on from conquering to conquer.

Thus will you not live in vain. Your activity, your zeal, your work, will survive when you slumber in the dust, and be an incentive to the perseverance of those who follow after.—*Ma. Ledger.*

The Tempest Prognosticator.

That leeches are sensitive to the approach of thunder storms is well known. Cowper, the poet, gives an interesting account of a leech, which he kept as a barometer, in a letter to Lady Hesketh, Nov. 10th, 1787: "Yesterday," he says, "it thundered, last night it lightened, and at three this morning I saw the sky red as a city in flames could have made it. I have a leech in a bottle, which foretells all these prodigies and convulsions of nature. Not, as you will naturally conjecture, by articulate utterance of oracular notices, but by a variety of gesticulations, which here I have not room to give an account of. Suffice to say, that no change of weather surprises him, and that in point of early and accurate intelligence he is worth all the barometers in the world. None of them all, indeed, can make the least pretence to foretell thunder,—a species of capacity of which he has given the most unequivocal evidence. I gave but sixpence for him." Dr. Merryweather, of Whitby, in Yorkshire, has constructed what he calls a "tempest prognosticator," with leeches for the basis of the plan. He arranges a frame of twelve bottles, each containing a leech, and each having an open tube at the top. From a piece of whalebone in the opening of each bottle proceeds a brass chain, communicating with a bottle hung in the top of the apparatus. Accordingly when a tempest is approaching the leeches rise in the bottles, displace the whalebone, and cause the bell to ring. Hitherto, after a year's experience, it is found that no storm escapes notice from the leeches. Dr. Merryweather has also satisfied himself that it is the electric state of the atmosphere, and not the occurrence of thunder within human hearing, which affects the leeches.

A Notable Character.

There is a common pedestrian of London streets, well known to all who are acquainted with their notabilities. He is a short, stout, sturdy, energetic man. He has a big round face, and large, staring and very bright hazel eyes. His hair is cut short, and his hat flung back upon the crown of his head. His gait is firm and decided, with a little touch of pomposity. He is ever provided with an umbrella, which he swings and flourishes, and batters on the pavement with mighty thumps. He seems generally absorbed in exciting and impulsive thought, the traces of which he takes no pains to conceal. His face works, his lips move and mutter, his eyes gleam and flash. Squat as is the figure, and not particularly fine the features, there is an unmistakable air of mental power and energy, approaching to grandeur about the man.—He is evidently under the influence of the strong excitement of fiery thought. People gaze curiously at him, and stop to stare when he has passed. But he heeds no one

—seems, indeed, to have utterly forgotten that he is not alone in his privacy,—and pushes on, unwitting of the many who stare and smile, or of the few who step respectfully aside, and look with curiosity and regard upon Thomas Babington Macaulay. Occasionally, however, the historian and the poet gives still freer vent to the mental impulses which appear to be continually working within him. A friend of mine lately recognized him dining in the coffee-room of the Trafalgar Hotel at Greenwich—a fashionable white-bait house, which, it appears, he frequently patronizes. He was alone, as he generally is, and the attention of more than one of the company was attracted by his peculiar muttering and fidgetiness, and by the mute gestures which he ever and anon illustrated his mental dreamings. All at once—it must have been towards the climax of the prose or verse which he was working up in his mind—Mr. Macaulay seized a massive decanter, held it a moment suspended in the air, and then dashed it down upon the table with such hearty good will, that the solid crystal flew about in fragments, whilst the numerous parties dining round instinctively started up and stared at the curious iconoclast. Not a whit put out, however, Mr. Macaulay, who was well known to the waiters, called loudly for his bill to be made out at the bar, and then, pulling, with a couple of jerks, his hat and his umbrella from the stand, clapped the one carelessly on his head, strode out flourishing the other.—*London Corr. of Inverness Courier.*

Deafness.

Timely attention, such as the generality of people are able to command, would greatly lessen the number of the deaf. Unfortunately, it is common for those who are threatened with loss of hearing to argue, that from the tardy advance of the evil, the causes which are producing it cannot be very powerful or deeply rooted, and they flatter themselves that time will of itself bring relief rather than aggravation. Thus it is that thousands, by culpable neglect, throw away the invaluable chance of recovery offered by early treatment and prudent self-regard. The tissues of the ear are so solid, and shut out from other organs, that when once a diseased habit has been established within it, it is only with the greatest difficulty the enemy can be dislodged. Nothing more surely proves the slow-stealing advance of deafness, (in a general sense,) than that very few of the deaf are able to name the precise date of their misfortune. They can generally remember that long before they considered themselves deaf, there were times when conversation in a large room, or in the society of several persons, required unusual attention to be correctly apprehended. That in damp weather, or while eating, or when the back was turned to the speaker, the difficulty was increased. That words containing certain consonants, as *L* or *S*, were sometimes mistaken for others, this being the case especially with proper names; that the voice of a stranger, or conversation in a strange room, was less intelligible than one to which the hearer has been accustomed. All these facts are interesting, as being among the first signs of failing hearing. On their earliest manifestation, it would be wise to place the auditory organ in the best possible state of defence. As the mucous membrane is the chief point affected by injurious influences, all causes that act upon it prejudicially should be held in apprehension, and cold and humidity, being by far the most frequent of these, and affecting the ear in the greatest variety of forms, should be guarded against with the most assiduous care. When deafness has commenced, every fresh catarrh will be sure to add something to its aggravation. Sudden transitions from heated assemblies to the cold air, or *vice versa*, are much more likely to occasion cold than exposure to either a uniformly high or low temperature, and should therefore be avoided. I have known persons liable to catarrh who guarded against it by never entering a warm room from the open air in cold weather, without lingering a minute or two in the hall or lobby, and on passing out observing the same precaution.—*Yearsley on Deafness.*

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