

COST OF SUBURBAN DRAINAGE.—A space of ground near Birkenhead, now called the Park, was, a short time ago, a mere marsh, over which thick mists hung at nightfall. "It was thoroughly drained with drains varying in depth from seven feet to close surface drains. The mists and fogs created on this tract have, since the drains came into operation, disappeared. The expense of that work was £20 per acre; and the land, which before the drainage was worth only £1 per acre, is now worth, at the least, £4 per acre for pasturage; so that the work pays 15 per cent direct profit, besides effecting its main object—the improvement of the neighbourhood in comfort and salubrity." The cost of draining one acre of land for a detached building, the site of the building deep drained, and the rest of the land thoroughly drained is shown by the return of the Board of Health, just quoted, to be met by an annual charge for 20 years of 18s. 3½d. in heavy soils. The drainage of one acre of land for four semi-detached residences would be met by an annual charge per house for 20 years of 3s. 11d., 4s. 7d., or 5s. 7d.—*Builder.*

LIFE IN THE ARCTIC SEA.—Iceicles hung round the deck, peaches became a mass of calcedone, but beef was cut with a chisel, beef with a pickaxe and crowbar. Walking out you are conscious of a bracing atmosphere. Whiskers and face are glazed with ice. Put out your tongue and it is frozen to your chin. On one occasion, a poor fellow recovering from inflammation of the lungs, being asked how his frost bitten ear came off, he produced it in a piece of paper, and said, "Doctor, I didn't want to trouble you, but it dropped off last night."—*Dr. Kane's Lecture on the Arctic Expedition.*

DEEP WELL NEAR BANSTED DOWNS.—I am well acquainted with the country immediately south of the Bansted Downs, and can give W. S. G. some information about the wells there. The nearest stream is a small branch of the Mole, which has its rise some three miles off, just beyond Merstham (pronounced "Meestum"). The ponds are very few and shallow, so that the inhabitants have to rely on wells for their water. Wells, however, are an expensive luxury, and appertain only to the bettermost dwellings. I know several labourer's cottages distant upwards of a mile from the nearest well or pond; they use what water they catch, and when that is gone, shift as they best can—most commonly do without. This scarcity of water may be the reason, why a district within fifteen miles of London is so thinly populated.—*Notes and Queries.*

WALKS ABROAD.

Go abroad
Upon the paths of Nature, and when all
Its voices whisper, and its silent things
Are breathing the deep beauty of the world,
Kneel at its simple altar, and the God
Who hath the living waters shall be there.

WILLIS.

EVENINGS AT HOME.

Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast;
Let fall the curtains; wheel the sofa round;
And while the bubbling and loud hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups
That cheer but not inebriate wait on each:
So let us welcome peaceful evening in.

COWPER'S "TASK."

THE OLD GREEN LANE.

BY ELIZA COOK.

'Twas the very merry summer time
That garlands hills and dales,
And the south wind rung a fairy chime
Upon the fox-glove bells;
The cuckoo stood on the lady birch
To bid her last good-bye—
The lark sprung over the village church,
And whistled to the sky;
And we had come from the harvest sheaves,
A blithe and tawny train,
And tracked our paths with poppy leaves,
Along the old green lane.

'Twas a pleasant way on a sunny day,
And we were a happy set,
And we idly bent where the streamlet went
To get our fingers wet;
With the dog-rose there and the orchis there,
And the woodbine twining through,
With the broad trees meeting everywhere
And the grass still dank with dew.
Ah! we all forgot, in that blissful spot,
The names of care and pain,
As we lay on the bank, by the shepherd's cot,
To rest in the old green lane.

Oh, days gone by! I can but sigh
As I think of that rich hour,
When my heart in its glee but seemed to be
Another wood-side flower;
For though the trees be still and fair,
And the wild bloom still as gay—
Though the south wind sends as sweet an air,
And heaven as bright a day;
Yet the merry set are far and wide,
And we never shall meet again;—
We shall never ramble side by side
Along that old green lane.

STAR LIGHT.

From the wild disorder of scattered stars which the first picture of the heavens presented, science has enabled us to grope our way through the dark labyrinth of chaos, guided only by the soft lustre of those winning stars, till we have been enabled to see the whole grouped together in one great and complete system, of a magnitude which makes arithmetic ridiculous, yet simple in arrangement as the conceptions of a child. Man has no part in all these sublime galaxies but to stand a silent spectator of their overwhelming beauty. Compared with the awful periods which compose the years and ages here, what is this momentary life-time of man? Nature works complete at every step, from the whirling bubble on the brook to the congress of a million stars. The fall of dynasties, the growth of new peoples, antiquities, and traditions, vanish before this severe face of marble solemnity. The petty cares, jealousies, and passions of men fade away in the contemplation of these awful cycles; and startling is the contrast, after traversing such realms of majesty to wonder, where worlds whirl without jar, and orbs rush without concussion, to turn back to man, and see him struggling on the surface of a flood and buffeting with its boiling waves. "One might think the atmosphere was