

RAMBLING INCOHERENCIES.

NO. I.—WANTED—A SUBJECT.

A. H. HOWARD.



a child I ever entertained a profound sympathy for the Israelitish slaves, who, as I understood the matter, were required by their Egyptian taskmasters to manufacture bricks without straw; a sympathy none the less sincere for that the precise use of straw in the process of brick making, always remained one of the many deep, unfathomable mysteries that scripture presented to my immature understanding.

But after all was their case any harder than is mine at this moment, required as I am by an inexorable editor to produce a tale of brick without the requisite straw—in other, though quite as discomfiting words, to prepare a paper, being unprovided with the faintest suggestion in the way of subject.

It was towards the end of a day's sketching trip at Lambton Mills last summer, being seated by the way side, employed in transferring to paper, the grandly pictorial elements I had discovered in a towering telegraph pole, that I was accosted by a young man, whose long form bent beneath the weight of a very complete and comprehensive sketching outfit.

"Good day" quoth this gentleman "sketching I see."

"Yes, a little" I modestly replied, adding a mildly interested enquiry as to whether he had done anything himself.

"No," said he "I am just looking round a bit, been looking round all the afternoon."

After a pause, during which I worked

and he looked idly on, he resumed the burden, of which, to enable him the better to sustain his share in the above dialogue, he had temporarily relieved himself, and with a parting "Well, I guess I'll be taking another look round" he trudged aimlessly away.

Now, here was a gentleman walking in the midst of the picturesque, surrounded by the picturesque, steeped to the very eyebrows in the picturesque, *looking round* the whole of a lovely summer's afternoon, utterly at a loss for a subject on which to employ his, perhaps divine, genius. And I have no doubt, no doubt at all, that our worthy editor, in the amplitude of his own literary endowments, fails to perceive the dearth of subject of which I, less gifted, weakly complain. "Here is this ridiculous person" he says to himself "standing in the midst of an illimitable expanse of ripened wheat, crying fretfully 'behold a desert.'"

I wonder if the amateur photographer ever finds himself stuck for a subject? Does he never return home after a day's jaunt in the country with camera and tripod, full of the depressing conviction that the world is a desert.

Some there are, I know, of an indiscriminating habit, who will take aim at the first quarry that discloses itself, be it quail or carrion. To such a sportsman, art presents no difficulties and offers no rewards, in fact, takes no sort of interest in him. He is as happy and useless as a boy with a pop-gun.

There is also the over-fastidious aspirant, who allows a vague, elusive will o' the wisp ideal to stultify him, and who wanders around miserably, like my friend at Lambton Mills, in search of the philosopher's stone, doomed to eternal disappointment.

But between these extremes comes the hearty, hopeful seeker after the