

The St. Andrews Standard.

PUBLISHED BY A. W. SMITH.]

¶ VARIIS SUMENDUM EST OPTIMUM.—Cic.

[\$2 50 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE]

№ 51

SAINT ANDREWS NEW BRUNSWICK, DECEMBER 22, 1869.

Vol 36

Poetry.

CHRISTMAS.

BY REV. A. G. SPENCER, D. D.

Music in the midnight air,
Strange sounds delight the holy hill,
And seraph-melodies declare
Sweet "peace on earth, to man good will."

Hush'd in the strain; the shepherd's ears
Have heard those words in deep amaze;
And, lo, as morning light appears,
What pomp salutes the warders' gaze!

Robed in the stole of Tyrian dye,
The Magian kings their ranks unfold,
Their gorgeous bondmen bearing high
The myrrh and frankincense and gold.

Whom seek ye, with this proud display
Of perfumed ore and glittering gem?
"Led by yon planet's mystic ray,
We seek the Babe of Bethlehem."

"Law laid in Judah's lowliest town,
Its lowliest hostelry beneath,
We seek the Heir of David's crown,
The Conqueror of sin and death."

Well may ye bow the turban'd head,
Well with your richest gifts prepare;
All glorious is that humble shed,
For Israel's hope is cradled there.

Veil'd in the cloud of human birth—
Deep mystery, which angels scan!
The incarnate God descends to earth,
Creation's Lord obscur'd in man.

Reader, rejoice with fear and love,
And nobler offerings hither bring;
A life whose thoughts are fix'd above,
A death, whence faith hath torn the sting.

Thus rescued from a state forlorn,
By mercy saved, by grace forgiven,
Be thou amongst those blest re-born,
Whose names the Spirit writes in heaven.

Interesting Case.

SOLVING A MYSTERY.

Some years since, professional engagements called me from the Atlantic States to California, where I remained a few months, occupied in my duties pertaining to a case of considerable importance in connection with the interests of some Eastern clients, who were heavy creditors of a bankrupt house on the Pacific coast.

In the course of my business peregrinations I passed a week or two at Sacramento, then a town rapidly growing into note, but not so large or so densely populated as it now is. Shortly after my arrival there, I met at my hotel an old college class-mate whom I had not seen for several years, and whom I should scarcely have recognized, so greatly was he changed in personal appearance. He had seen my name upon the hotel register, and remembering it, waited upon me, and introduced himself.

I was heartily glad to see him in that far-away country, and we sat down to a pleasant chat together over the events of our lives, past and present.

You have succeeded admirably, my friend, in your profession, I am glad to know, he said. I have frequently heard of you.

Alas, doctor, I replied, at the best, our profession is but precarious generally. Personally I have no fault to find with Fortune. We lawyers seldom get rich, however. Still, I am blessed with excellent health, and content to get along smoothly. But you have amassed a competency, you say, and are doing splendidly in a pecuniary way. I congratulate you that you have found the new country a real El Dorado. All our friends who venture hither, dazzled by the promises held out in this naturally wealthy region, do not succeed so well.

You are right, my friend. There is a great deal in luck, as we say here; and as very many, even of those who are successful, have come to believe too, from experience. The fortunate man who strikes a lead, and daily gathers his half a dozen ounces of glittering scales or his quarter pound nuggets for his pains, is the exception not the rule. And one poor fellow is as likely as his neighbor to become wealthy, from mere circumstance, if he chancers to hit right; while scores around him at the same time eke out but a hard existence. I have been lucky, thank heaven.

In the mine? I inquired.

No, sir! exclaimed the doctor, with a smile. Do I look like a miner?

Very true, I replied. But you have struck a lead evidently somewhere, nevertheless. I remembered that my former college-mate had not been overburdened with ready

means in his earlier days; and though he was a man of superior talents, the competition in the business to which he had devoted himself was altogether too great to permit him to enjoy a fair beginning at home. He had therefore relinquished his undertaking in the pretty town at the East where he had hoped to thrive and flourish, soon after graduating; and with a few hundred dollars only, I knew he had started for San Francisco and a market, as he pleasantly termed his intended destination for California.

I now observed that he was expensively attired, wore costly jewels in his bosom, drove a handsome span before a fine carriage, and lived in good style, in a suite of the best apartments at the first hotel in Sacramento. And so I continued;

You are practicing here—eh, doctor?

Yes, he said. Take a glass of sherry, he added; filling our goblets with genuine Ambullado, which he had imported for his special use.

And now let me tell you how and why it is that I am doing so well, as you seem to have discovered.

Go on, doctor. It is a romance?

No. It was the result of an accidental discovery, the merest trifle of circumstance, which made my fortune, and singularly enough too. It will interest you, however.

I have no doubt of it, my old friend. Proceed.

Well, I have fortunately solved a very simple, but perplexing mystery, that fell directly in my way professionally. I arrived in San Francisco with less than two hundred dollars in my possession, four years ago; and I made up my mind in a very brief space of time subsequently, that the vocation of a physician there was a precious poor means by which to amass money. Few people get sick in this blessed climate, in the first place; and if they did, there were plenty of cuppers and blisters already here, who stood waiting to bleed both the patients and their pockets to the last drop. Still, there was an occasional opportunity for practice. I applied myself with assiduity, but soon tired of San Francisco, and came to this city, where I hoped for better success.

I published a staring card in the only paper then printed here, and took lodgings at this fine house, just then completed. But patients were scarce, or shy of the new-comer. However, one day an old Spanish Mexican, who occupies an extensive ranch just out of the city, waited upon me, and informed me in bad English that his daughter was ill, at his residence. He had tried all the physicians, far and near—Spanish, French and American. None of them did her any good. He had seen my card, would I enter his carriage, and ride out to see her?

I readily assented, of course. On arriving at old Rabin's hacienda, I was agreeably surprised to find a handsome residence, ancient in style, but massive in extent, and the interior was elegantly furnished and decorated.

I had acquired a smattering of Spanish, years previously; and having had occasion here to confer with the natives I readily understood him when Senor Rabin informed me that his only child, this daughter he spoke of, had been latterly quite ill, and had declined in health for a year; while more recently she had fainting fits, which had alarmed both the young lady and her opulent father, who had sought in vain for medical aid, and who was ready to pay roundly for my services, could I relieve or restore her. And the old Spaniard implored me to patiently examine the case, and save his darling Carlotta, if possible.

Had you seen the young woman?

Not yet; no. I made general inquiries as to the health of the rest of the family, and found there was in this case no apparent hereditary difficulty. And finally I was shown into the young lady's private apartment. By Jove! my friend she was beautiful. You shall see her, by the way, anon. I will introduce you.

Thank you, I said. Then she still lives?

You shall see. Don't anticipate me, said the Doctor briskly.

I say, immediately on entering her beautiful boudoir, I saw that she was a splendid creature, though she occupied an invalid's chair, and was very pale and reduced in flesh. There was, however, an ivory clearness in her complexion, a ravishing fire in her rich dark eye, and a classic beauty in her hand, some features which at sight greatly interested me; and I said to myself I will earnestly try to save this poor creature from premature death.

You were a bachelor too, Doctor, eh?

Yes. Don't interrupt the thread of my story, please.

Go on, Doctor. You are doing famously. Well—where was I?

In the lady's boudoir—love-struck, I judge. Well, you shall see. I tell you she was beautiful!

I do not question it. Proceed, Doctor.

And as I sat down beside her really my heart beat audibly. I confess it. I took her small delicately rounded wrist in my hand, and consulted her pulse with more than ordinary

interest and some trepidation, as she looked languidly but pleasantly in my face, and said, "Doctor do you think you can aid me?"

We were alone. She propounded this question as if she would intimate, in the expression, that my predecessors had tried and failed and while she thus smiled, I observed that she exhibited two brilliant rows of pearly teeth, that were by no means the least attractive feature in her otherwise beautiful and intelligent face.

I found the young lady's pulse was stifled and feverish and I questioned her as to her symptoms. She informed me briefly that her trouble, whatever it was, seemed to be a nervous affection. She frequently experienced spasmodic and acute pains in the face and head and would faint and fall like an epileptic. Then extreme dulness would succeed, physically and mentally, until she was really discouraged, she said.

With my practice as a physician I had long before united that of the dentist; and I knew well how sensitive and delicate were the nervous combinations of the face, and especially those of the teeth. I asked the patient many questions, and finally interrogated her closely as to the apparent neuralgic affections she had so frequently experienced in her head and jaw. She had no reason to complain of her teeth, she said; they were perfectly sound.

I examined them, however, with professional care. Finally taking from my pocket a small operating dental instrument, I scanned each tooth, and rapped it slightly as I passed along. As I did this the youthful Senora did not flinch until I struck the molar beyond one of the eye-teeth, when to my consternation and surprise, she suddenly sprang up, and with a sharp sigh fell forward senseless at my feet!

As you may well conceive, I was alarmed for an instant. But quickly raising her form upon the divan at the side of the room, I repeated the rap upon this tooth, which, to all outward appearance perfect; and I found, though respiration had temporarily ceased, the effect of this simple rap upon the tooth produced a result upon the patient like that of a galvanic shock almost—the girl starting violently, and struggling in my hands with fearful spasms, at each repeated stroke of the little instrument against the jaw.

Assuming the responsibility of my profession and position, therefore, and believing that the mystery of her illness was in some way connected with the facial nerves, I quickly resolved to try an experiment to relieve her, at least temporarily. And taking the forceps from my dental pocket case, I applied them to what I deemed the offending tooth, and instantly removed it from the jaw while she lay apparently insensible upon the couch.

And what was the result? I asked.

In a moment she came to consciousness. And placing her little hand to her forehead, she inquired, "Where am I? Ah, doctor, what has happened? And then missing one of her teeth, she said, "What have you done? And I briefly replied that I thought I had solved the mystery of her illness.

Upon the side of this tooth, which was perfect there adhered a bit of straw, or what seemed to be a diminutive sharp splinter of hard grained wood, perhaps three eighths of an inch in length, and not larger than a cambric needle in circumference, which had plainly forced up accidentally, and to her unconsciousness, months previously, through the gum, and which had penetrated to the root of the tooth, near the connection of the nerve where it enters the jaw. And there it had remained to fret and cause one of the most delicately sensitive points in the head, until further forbearance with it was too much for the sufferer's physical strength.

Well, did this operation cure her?

Not instantly. But this trivial matter was the really mysterious cause of her pining illness; evidently; for in ten days after my first visit she was as calm as you and I are now, and very soon she entirely recovered, and put on flesh as her spirits revived.

And old Rabin? What did he say of your treatment?

He was delighted, and frankly offered me anything I would ask for as a remuneration. He sent me a score of doubloons at once, as an earnest of his good intentions, and blazoned my success abroad among his host of friends directly. I soon became famous, and my rooms were for a time besieged with invalids whose ills had been of short duration and whom neither my skill nor that of those who had made attempts before on these incurables, could ever relieve of their manifold complaints. Still, the consequence of all was, that I sprang at once into notoriety and a splendidly remunerative practice; and I have now a comfortable competency, as well as a prospective good business.

I congratulate you, Doctor. But what came of the lady?

Oh, Senora Carlotta? I had almost forgotten to say that when I found she was so rapidly improving, I ought to have discontinued my professional visits; but neither father nor daughter would listen to this. Not until the young lady had entirely recovered did I cease to visit the fine old ranch daily. And finally, my dear friend, when the fair Senora

had resumed her health, I claimed the remuneration for my services.

Of course you did. You earned it.

And what do you think I finally demanded?

That I could not guess at—we professional gentlemen are usually so modest, I said; and especially when successful.

Well, he continued, I arranged the affair first with Senora Carlotta. And then I demanded her hand in marriage of old Rabin.

You did?

I did. And I made her my wife, of course.

Married! I exclaimed. Then you are no longer a bachelor.

No my old chum. We have been married over a year.

And ten minutes afterward I was introduced to one of the prettiest women I ever set eyes on in my life.

You are a lucky fellow Doctor, I said to my friend at parting with him. If I could turn my humble talents to similar good account, I really believe I would no longer lead the life of a bachelor myself.

Well my friend he replied take the advice of one of the happiest men alive, and get married.

Thank you, Doctor, I will think of it. And left him one of the jolliest and most fortunate men in existence.

His fortune by his wife was ample, and his professional business continued the very best for years.

He is now reckoned among the "solid men" in California, and his lovely wife is one of the most accomplished and beautiful of her sex, who both are warmly beloved and respected by the large social circle who enjoy their society and confidence.

Tea and Coffee.

Taking into account the habits of the people, tea and coffee for supper and breakfast fast add to human health and life, if a single cup be taken at either meal, and is never increased in strength, frequency or quantity. If they were stimulants, and were taken thus in moderation and with uniformity, they would, in time, become either inert, or the system would become so habituated to their employment as to remain in the same relative position to them, as if they had never been used; and consequently as to themselves, they had better never been used, as they are so liable to abuse. But science and fact unite in declaring them nutritious as well as stimulant, hence they will do a new good to the system every day, to the end of life, just as bread and fruit hence we never get tired of either. But the use of bread and fruit is daily abused by multitudes, and dyspepsia and cholera morbus result; yet, we ought not to forego their employment on that account, nor should we forego the use of tea and coffee because their inordinate use gives neuralgias and other ailments.

But the habitual use of tea and coffee, at the last and first meals of the day, has another high advantage—is productive of incalculable good in the way of averting evils.

We will drink at our meals, and if we do not drink these, we will drink what is worse—cold water, milk, or alcoholic mixtures.

The regular use of these last will lead the young to drunkenness; the considerable employment of simple milk, at meals, by sedentary people—by all, except the robust—will either constipate or render bilious; while cold water largely used that is to the extent of a glass or two at a meal, especially in cold weather, attracts to itself so much of the heat of the system, in raising said water to the temperature of the body—about one hundred degrees—that the process of digestion is arrested in the meanwhile, giving rise to a deadly sickness of the stomach, to twisting pains, to vomiting, purgings, and even to cramps, to fearful contortions, and sudden deaths; which things would have been averted, had even the same amount of liquid in the shape of simple hot water been used. But knowing these things, and being prejudiced against the use of tea and coffee, would subject himself to be most unpleasantly stared at, and questioned if not ridiculed, were he to ask for a cup or glass of hot water. But as tea and coffee are now universal beverages, are on every table, and everybody is expected to take one or the other as a matter of course, they are unwittingly the means of safety and of life to multitudes. They save life where a glass of cold water would have destroyed it. So that the use of these beverages is not merely allowable; it is politic, it is necessary.—[Dr. Hall.

COMFORT IN OLD NEWSPAPERS.—A thin shawl may be made warm by folding a newspaper inside of it. The paper is impervious to the wind and cold air from outside, and prevents the escape of warm air from beneath it. If you suffer from cold feet on a journey, fold a piece of newspaper over your stockings; this is better than rubbers. If you are cold in bed, newspapers spread under the upper cover will serve as an additional blanket.

Lard is the best remedy for cows sore teats.

In the Pacific ocean, a thousand miles from the nearest land, lies a solitary little grassy island, about five miles long, called Norfolk Island. The English once had a penal settlement there, and afterwards transferred thither the Pitcairn Islanders, when they became too numerous for their native island. Some of these became homesick, and were taken back, while others remained and have since increased to about three hundred in number. The island has a delightful climate, and is celebrated in the Pacific for its groves of pine trees. These trees are said to be the most beautiful in existence, forming a magnificent cone, the lower branches resting on the ground and the higher ones tapering till they end in an apex from one hundred to one hundred and fifty feet in height. The broad plains covered with green grass and sprinkled with a beautiful park like fashion with those glorious pines, present a charming appearance.

A correspondent of the New York Evening Post, bawling the nuisance which flippant and chattering concert goers inflict on the amateurs who really want to listen to the music, proposes that the committee of the Philharmonic Society should affix labels in certain parts of the house: "Flirtation Circle," "Department for Candy Eaters," "For Gossip," "For Giggles," &c. reserving a small portion of the house where the genuine music-lover may be unmolested and at peace.

MATRIMONY IN 1869.—Friend (at tea)—"I say, when is your wedding to come off, Gerty?" Gerty—"Oh, I don't know I have a lot of visits to pay this autumn, and Gus will want to be away shooting all November; so I dare say we shall settle it about Christmas, when there is nothing else going on, you know dear."

Some of the sheriff and the officers of the San Quentin Prison, in California, are quarreling over the queues of the Chinese prisoners. By a rule of the Prison every convict must have his hair closely cropped, and the sheriff did the job the before sending the Chinamen to jail, pocket the queues. The prison officers claim the hair as their own perquisite.

"Tom, I hear you are broke?" "Yes," said Tom, with a sigh, "and so broke that if steamboats were selling at a cent a-piece, I couldn't buy a plank!"

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