

the fluid beneath. We have been out on one of those vast ice-fields on a mild winter evening, when the sun was setting in cloudless serenity, and the scene before and around us has often been one equally difficult to describe or forget—the whole surface of the lake gleaming like a vast burnished mirror, quivering and flashing beneath the splendour of the almost level sun—the white sail of the becalmed ice-boat glancing brightly in the distance—the sullen gurgle of the imprisoned waters beneath, as they strive to surge up through the occasional flaws in their glassy covering—the snow-clad shore spread silently around—and the distant crests of the pine forest, bathed in the colouring of the sunset heavens.

When the heavy snow falls after the freezing of the waters, much of this beauty is, of course, lost, as land and sea seem alike wrapped in the one monotonous garment.

Our long, long winter night—can we say anything in favour of this dreaded period, this terror-fraught visitant of the shivering vagrant?

"Ah! bitter chill it is!

The owl, for all his feathers, is a cold."

In a wooden country, as this province has been emphatically called—the thrifty and industrious have but little to dread from the approach of frost and darkness. A log-built pyramid of flame, in the recess of a huge chimney, roaring and crackling like a furnace, is admirably calculated to restore confidence to the very chilliest trembler at the blast of winter. We can face the enemy boldly and look out upon the night. Starlight is glittering over the silent world, with an intensity and brilliancy unknown to the blue summer nights of our fatherland. No damp or exhalation is dimming the ethereal clearness of the frosty air, and thousands apparently of stars, invisible through the fog and vapour of duller atmospheres, are looking down upon us. A white light is trembling on the verge of the northern heaven, just where dim crests of the far pine-ridge mingle with the deep blue sky. Now pale shadowing columns are advancing with swift strides toward the zenith, shifting and changing in the kindling ether. Well do we know—gladly do we hail, those quaint masquers of our midnight skies—

"We may tell by the streamers that shoot so bright,
That spirits are riding the northern light;"

and beautiful, startlingly beautiful, are the wild evolutions of those wandering phantoms. For hours together, we have seen the heavens, one instant overspread with the tangled labyrinth of streamers, the next, the pale stars alone gleaming white and wan through the darkening air. Again the columns dash swiftly from the northern horizon, no longer in thin pale lines, but thrown together in a mighty flood of radiance,—deepening and colouring as it advanced, till the zenith was lit up with a glowing ocean of crimson light—and the snowy world nestled beneath the fleeting splendour, as we have seen it glitter at the parting flush of the sunset heaven—

"Like the rose tints that summer twilight leaves
Upon the lofty glacier's virgin snow."

But it is time that we retrace our steps, and thought of returning from empty speculation by frozen-lake and forest river, "or idle star-light reveries," to the busy haunts of active life.

Hark to the tinkling and chiming of the sleigh-bells, every variety of tone and jingle combined in their endless repetitions. How some of our English whips would delight to exhibit their taste and dexterity over the smooth surface of our now unrivalled roads! That matchless artist, Frost, puts poor Macadam completely to the blush in the formation of those conveniences for travel; and the smoothest turnpike track in the mother country could not for an instant be compared to the noiseless and exquisitely even road afforded to the transit of the sleigh runners, as the winter substitute for wheels is designated. In summer we make no remark on our Canadian thoroughfares, but now we challenge competition or comparison from any country, and assert our measureless superiority.

From 'Portugal and Galicia,' by the Earl of Carnarvon.

THE CONVENT OF BUSACO.

Leaving the highway I rode towards Busaco, to see the memorable field of battle, through mountain passes, finely crested with pines, and abounding in every variety of the orchis-tribe. I lost my way among the defiles, and did not easily regain it, being unaccompanied by my muleteer, who had started at an early hour; but after wandering for some time, exposed to the intolerable sun, I reached the monastery of Busaco. I knocked long at the gate of the convent lodge before it was opened, and my first reception was ungracious enough, as the porter observed that arrivals were inconvenient at that hour.—I was so much exhausted by the heat that I could hardly keep my seat on horseback, and was not therefore disposed to be easily rebuffed, so compelling the reluctant menial to inform the Prior of my arrival, and slowly following him through a fine wood of oak and pine, I reached the convent, a straggling edifice, completely embosomed in the forest. The Prior received me courteously, and placed some wine and salt fish before me, regretting he could not offer me better fare, as meat was strictly forbidden by the convent regulations. He afterwards led me to my cell, where I threw myself on the bed, too happy to enjoy an interval of repose. These monkish dormitories are most welcome to the wearied traveller, from their coolness, their perfect cleanliness, and the total absence of the winged and creeping caubals that infest the inns. I slept for some time, and awoke

even more fatigued than when I first lay down.—I frequently observed that, during the intense heats, the mid-day siesta was followed by a sense of increased exhaustion, nor were its invigorating effects fully experienced till after sunset.

I now joined the friar, and as he led me round the convent I was surprised at the unbroken silence that pervaded the place; a silence which seemed rather to indicate a mansion of the dead than the social dwelling of a numerous brotherhood. The profound stillness was only interrupted by the echo of our footsteps, and the low tones of my conductor's voice. The long galleries were partially hung with black cloth, and the shadows of evening, fast stealing over them, gave birth to mingled feelings of melancholy and awe. The Prior afterwards explained to me the cause of this strange silence. The monks who inhabited the convent were Carmelites, and their system was, to a great extent, modelled on that of La Trappe; for, like the friars of that order, they are enjoined to observe perpetual silence, with the exception of the Prior and of an assistant brother, who acted as porter.

The Prior accompanied me to the entrance door, and kindly pressed me to pass the night at the convent; but I was anxious to proceed. "This spot is indeed delightful," I observed, as I wished him farewell. "It is, my son," he replied with the cold and melancholy smile of one who felt the truth of my remark, but had ceased to derive enjoyments from the objects of my admiration. As I mounted my horse, the last beams of the sun were setting, and forest trees cast their lengthened shadows along the ground. A cross, the emblem of peace, was placed on a pedestal before the door. The beauty and seclusion of the spot appeared to have marked it out as peculiarly fitted for the enjoyment of tranquil happiness, but the piety of man had robbed him of those temperate pleasures which nature had so lavishly prepared for his gratification. The oak and fern reminded me of the deep glades of England, and the majestic cypress of Portugal, with its waving branches, impressed the scene with a character of Oriental grace: yet even on such a calm and heavenly evening, the monks were not allowed to walk beneath the shade of their forest trees.

TRIBUTE TO SPRING.

The sun of May was bright in middle heaven,
And steeped the sprouting forests, the green hills
And emerald wheat fields, in his yellow light.
Upon the apple tree, where rosy buds
Stood clustered, ready to burst forth in bloom,
The robin warbled forth his clear full note
For hours, and wearied not. Within the woods,
Whose young and half-transparent leaves scarce cast
A shade, gay circles of anemones
Danced on their stalks; the shad-bush, white with flowers,
Brightened the glens; the new-leaved butter nut,
And quivering poplar to the roving breeze
Gave a balsamic fragrance. In the fields,
I saw the pulses of the gentle wind
On the young grass. My heart was touched with joy
At so much beauty, flushing every hour
Into a fuller beauty.

BAYANT.

THE MOTHER AND HER FAMILY.

Philosophy is rarely found. The most perfect sample I ever met, was an old woman, who was apparently the poorest and the most forlorn of the human species; so true is the maxim which all profess to believe, and none act upon invariably, viz. that all happiness does not depend on outward circumstances. The wise woman to whom I have alluded, walks to Boston, a distance of twenty or thirty miles, to sell a bag of brown thread and stockings, and then patiently walks back again with her little gains. Her dress, though tidy, is a grotesque collection of shreds and patches, coarse in the extreme.

"Why don't you come down in a wagon?" said I, when I observed she was wearied with her long journey.

"We hav'n't got any horse," she replied: "the neighbours are very kind to me, but they can't spare their'n, and it would cost as much to hire one, as all my thread will come to."

"You have a husband—don't he do any thing for you?"

"He is a good man—he does all he can, but he's a cripple and an invalid. He reels my yarn, and mends the children's shoes. He's as kind a husband as a woman need to have."

"But his being a cripple, is a heavy misfortune to you," said I.

"Why, ma'am, I don't look upon it in that light," replied the thread woman. "I consider that I've great reason to be thankful that he never took to any bad habits."

"How many children have you?"

"Six sons and five daughters, ma'am."

"Six sons and five daughters! What a family for a poor woman to support!"

"It's a fine family, surely, ma'am; but there an't one of 'em I'd be willing to lose. They are all healthy children as need to be—willing to work, and all clever to me. Even the littlest boy, when he gets a cent now and then for doing an errand, will be sure to bring it to me."

"Do your daughters spin your thread?"

"No, ma'am, as soon as they are big enough they go out to service, as I don't want to keep them always delving for me; they are always willing to give me what they can, but it's right and fair that they should do a little for themselves. I do all my spinning after the folks are abed."

"Don't you think you should be better off, if you had no one but yourself to provide for?"

"Why, no, ma'am, I don't. If I hadn't been married, I should have had to work as hard as I could, and now I can't do no more than that. My children are a great comfort to me, and I look forward to the time when they'll do as much for me as I have done for them."

Here was true philosophy! I learned a lesson from that poor woman which I shall not soon forget.—Miss Sedgwick.

THE END OF "GREAT MEN."

Happening to cast my eyes upon some miniature portraits, I perceived that the four personages who occupied the most conspicuous places were Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar and Bonaparte. I had seen the same unnumbered times before, but never did the same sensation arise in my bosom, as my mind hastily glanced over their several histories.

ALEXANDER, after having climbed the dizzy heights of ambition, and, with his temples bound with chaplets, dipped in the blood of many nations, looked down upon a conquered world, and wept that there was not another world for him to conquer—set a city on fire and died in a scene of debauch.

HANNIBAL, after having, to the astonishment and consternation of Rome, passed the Alps—after having put to flight the armies of this "mistress of the world," and stripped three bushels of golden rings from the fingers of her slaughtered knights, and made her very foundation quake—was hated by those who once exultingly united his name to that of their god, and called him Hannibal, died, at last, by poison administered by his own hand, unlamented and unwept, in a foreign land.

CAESAR, after having conquered eight hundred cities, and dyed his garments in the blood of one million of his foes, after having pursued to death the only rival he had on earth, was miserably assassinated by those he considered his nearest friends, and in the very place, the attainment of which had been the greatest object of his ambition.

BONAPARTE, whose mandate Kings and Princes obeyed, after having filled the earth with the terror of his name, after having deluged Europe with tears and blood, and clothed the world in sackcloth—closed his days in lonely banishment, a miserable exile from the world, yet where he could sometimes see his country's banner waving o'er the deep, but which would not, could not, bring him aid.

Thus these four men, who, from the peculiar situation of their portraits, seem to stand as representatives of all those whom the world calls "great"—those four who severally made the earth tremble to its centre, severally died—one by intoxication, the second by suicide, the third by assassination, and the last in lonely exile. "How are the mighty fallen!"—Anon.

NEW WAY OF RAISING BEETS.—A writer in the Farmer's Cabinet says that the best crop of beets he ever raised, was in alternate rows with corn; the corn was a full crop, and he obtained 300 bushels of beets to the acre beside. The shade of the corn seems to be useful in dry weather, as the beets with the corn did better than others in an open patch alongside. This was practised in Pennsylvania, where it may be more successful than in colder climates; but we would suggest to farmers who have a warm, dry soil, an experiment on a small scale.—Yankee Farmer.

There is in the heart of man, a native sense of beauty, a latent sympathy, a harmony with all that is lovely on earth, which makes him unconsciously seek out spots of peculiar sweetness, not only for his daily dwelling, but also for both his temporary resting place and for the mansion of his long repose.—James.

UNPARALLELED PRECOCITY.—"Isn't he a fine child?" said a young mother to a visitor, as she proudly exhibited her first-born. "The handsomest boy as I ever saw," was of course the instant reply of the old bachelor to whom the appeal was made. "Yes, bless his little heart!" exclaimed the better-half author of the little bantling: "and so very forward of his age, don't you think?" "Very forward," said the echo. And, as the young matron removed the cap from her Bobby's head, the inexperienced bachelor continued in evident amazement, "Bless me!—he is forward—never before saw a person bald-headed so soon!"

The Vicksburg Whig says that an Irish servant girl, of that place, in the employment of Wm. H. Hurst, Esq. having heard of the calamity at Natchez, and that a subscription was on foot for the relief of the people, generously placed in the hands of her mistress twenty dollars, to be transmitted to the committee.

DO WHAT YOU OUGHT, COME WHAT MAY.—This proverb has stood the test of time. It ought to have an abiding place in every mind, and a controlling influence upon every action of man.

During the recent political canvass in Alabama, Hart, a candidate for the Legislature, lacked the requisite number of votes. Not liking the result, he started on a tour through the country, determined, as he said, to "lick every man" who had presumed to vote against him. At the last accounts he had flogged fourteen.