

SNOW IN TOWN AND IN THE COUNTRY.

BY W. H. WITHROW, M.A.,

ALL night the snow came down, all night,
Silent, and soft, and silvery white;
Gentle robing in spotless folds
Town, and tower, and treeless woods;
On homes of the living and graves of the dead,
Where each sleeper lies in his narrow bed,
On the city's roof, on the marts of trade;
On rustic hamlet and forest glade.

When the morn arose, all bright and fair,
A wondrous vision gleamed through the air;
The world, transfigured, and glorified,
Shone like the blessed and holy Bride;
The fair, new earth, made free from sin,
All pure without and pure within—
Arrayed in robes of spotless white,
For the Heavenly Bridegroom, in glory dight,

But, ah! not yet hath that blessed morn
Dawned on our weary world, forlorn,
When clothed in her bridal garments white
She shall stand redeemed in Heaven's
pure light;
For, trampled upon by a thousand feet,
Hurrying to and fro in the street;
In the crowded mart, mid the city's din,
In the haunts of shame, the abodes of sin,

All marred and soiled is that whiteness
pure,
Beyond retrieving and past all cure;
The virgin snow is befouled and stained,
Its purity all besmirched, profaned;
Save in some quiet, sequestered spot,
Where the rush and strife of life are not;
Screened from polluting dust and soot,
And defiling tread of vagrant foot

The snow in the country lieth white,
Dazzling and pure in the morning light;
Softly flushing with sunset's gold,
Spectral and ghastly 'neath moonlight
cold;
A scarce-stained path from house to barn
Save this, untrodden is the broad farm;
A single track leads o'er the hill,
All sounds of life are hushed and still.

So, human nature, amid the strife
Of the crowded city's toilsome life,
Is marred and stained by the subtle spell
Of keen temptations, fierce and fell,
That trample beneath their soiling feet
Its virgin purity, fair and sweet,
Till, oft defiled by sin and shame,
Its virtue is gone beyond reclaim.

Yet some there are who keep unstained.
Their heart's pure treasure, their lives
unshamed;
Although temptation and sin abound
On every side, and hem them round.
Amid the country's sequestered life,
Remote from the city's din and strife,
Temptation doth less assail the truth,
And virgin innocence of youth.

Yet, no condition is wholly blest;
Not upon earth find we perfect rest;
Neither in town or country life
Is wholly free from sin and strife;
Neither wholly pure, nor wholly vile,
In crowded city or lonely isle;
Only in Heaven, home of the soul,
Is respite found from sorrow and dole.

TORONTO, Ont.

A MISSIONARY in one of the islands of the Pacific preached on dishonesty and the next morning he looked out of his window, and he saw his yard full of goods of all kinds. He wondered and asked the cause of all this. "Well," said the natives, "our gods that we have been worshipping permit us to steal, but according to what you said yesterday, the God of Heaven and earth will not allow this, so we bring back all these goods, and we ask you to help us in taking them to the places where they belong."

THROUGH DEATH TO LIFE.

BY REV. T. D. WITHERSPOON, D.D.



BETWEEN the *Mer de Glace* and the *Chapeau*, the foot-path lies for a considerable distance upon a narrow ledge of rock, along the face of a smooth and almost perpendicular cliff overhanging the glacier. This part of the way is very appropriately called the *Mauvais Pas*, though its perilousness has been greatly diminished of late years by attaching to the face of the cliff a line of iron rods, which the tourist may grasp with his hand and thus steady himself above the abyss of rock and glacier beneath.

What gives to this difficult pass its chief interest is that it commands so full a view of the lower extremity of the glacier, that unspeakably rugged and chaotic mass, scamed in every direction by yawning crevasses, broken by glacial action into every conceivable form of outline and shape; from beneath which, through its wondrously arched tunnel, rushes the chalky, impetuous torrent of the Arveiron.

As we paused to look over the dreary waste, the guide pointed to one of the wildest and deepest of the crevasses whose lips were distinctly visible to us, as the place where thirty years before a tourist and guide had met with a most wonderful preservation from death. In attempting to cross the glacier they had slipped and fallen over the edge of this crevasse. Catching themselves by the projections of ice and stone along the slippery face, and thus breaking from time to time the momentum of their fall, they reached the bottom of the crevasse in safety only to find themselves shut in by walls that no human power could scale. One only hope of escape remained. A little rivulet at their feet formed by the melting ice had cut a channel for itself under the great mountain of ice. This dark and difficult passage might possibly lead to some aperture through which they could reach the outer world.

Silently, the guide leading the way often upon hands and knees, along the cold streamlet and under the dim, weird light through the ice above, they made their way down the mountain side, making at each downward step an advance from which there could be no retreat, until at length all farther progress was prevented by a great mass of rock in front, and a sheer precipice at their feet over which the little rivulet leaped into a sub-glacial river that was heard rushing and roaring in the darkness below. What shall they do now? To make that awful plunge is to leap as it were into the jaws of death. But there is no alternative. A moment's pause and then the voice of the guide is heard as he makes the ominous leap, saying, "Follow me." A moment more and the tourist has followed. Then ensue a few moments of awful suspense as they are whirled down through the darkness, benumbed by the icy waters and deafened by the roar of the torrent. Then comes a faint glimmer of light. A moment more and they have reached the source of the Arveiron at the foot of the glacier, and are swept out into the summer air, and are safe amid the green fields of the Val of Chamouni.

Could anything picture more truthfully the entrance of the Christian into life? The pathway which leads down to death is a rugged and cheerless one.

The moment comes for every one of us when he stands on the brink of the precipice and must make the fatal plunge. Happy is he who at such a moment hears the voice of the Divine Guide who has gone before us, saying, "Follow me." The waters may be cold and chilling, the darkness may be profound, but through those dark portals shall soon gleam a light from the land that is beyond, and the child of God shall soon be safe amid the fair fields and summer skies of the paradise of God.—*Illus. Chris. Weekly.*

THE MIGRATION OF BIRDS.

FAMILIAR as this migration of birds is to us, there is, perhaps, no question in zoology more obscure. The long flights they take and the unerring certainty with which they wing their way between the most distant places, arriving and departing at the same period year after year, are points in the history of birds of passage as mysterious as they are interesting. We know that most migrants fly after sundown, though many of them select a moonlight night to cross the Mediterranean. But that their meteorological instinct is not unerring is proved by the fact that thousands are every year drowned in their flight over the Atlantic and other oceans. Northern Africa and western Asia are selected as winter-quarters by most of them, and they may be often noticed, on their way thither, to hang over towns at night, puzzled in spite of their experience, by the shifting lights of the streets and houses. The swallow or the nightingale may sometimes be delayed by unexpected circumstances. Yet it is rarely that they arrive or depart many days sooner or later one year with another. Prof. Newton considered that were sea-fowl satellites revolving round the earth their arrival could hardly be more surely calculated by an astronomer. Foul weather or fair, heat or cold, the puffins repair to some of their stations punctually on a given day, as if their movements were regulated by clock-work. The swiftness of flight which characterizes most birds enables them to cover a vast space in a brief time. The common black swift can fly two hundred and seventy-six miles an hour, a speed which, if it could be maintained for less than half a day, would carry the bird from its winter to its summer quarters. The large purple swift of America is capable of even greater feats on the wing. The chimney-swallow is slower—ninety miles an hour being about the limit of its power; but the passenger-pigeon of the United States can accomplish a journey of one thousand miles between sunrise and sunset. It is also true, as the ingenious Herr Palmen has attempted to show, that migrants during their long flights may be directed by an experience partly inherited and partly acquired by the individual bird. They often follow the coast-line of continents, and invariably take on their passage over the Mediterranean one of three routes. But this theory will not explain how they pilot themselves across broad oceans, and is invalidated by the fact, familiar to every ornithologist, that the old and the young birds do not journey in company. Invariably the young birds travel together; then come, after an interval, the parents; and finally the rear is brought up by the weakly, infirm, molting, broken-winged. This is the rule in autumn.

The return journey is accomplished in the reverse order. The distance travelled seems, moreover, to have no relation to the size of the traveller. The Swedish blue-throat performs its maternal functions among the Laps and enjoys its winter-holidays among the negroes of Soudan, while the tiny ruby-throated humming bird proceeds annually from Mexico to Newfoundland, and back again, though one would imagine that so delicate a little fairy would be more at home among the cactuses and agaves of the Tierra Caliente than among the firs and fogs of the North.—*London Standard.*

YOUTHFUL ECONOMY.

HERE is no harm in a certain moderate occasional amount of innocent pleasure. But a young man who has his own way to carve in life can spare neither the time, the strength, nor the expense of much social pleasure. In the country, where the style of living is simple, one can get all the gaiety he needs without spending much. We recommend to every young man who is starting in life the most rigorous economy in expenses—in clothes, food, and equipment. Young men usually do not take their measures of economy from what they can actually forego, but from what society around them is accustomed to demand.

By far the greater number of young men have only their hands, their good character, and their mother-wit, for capital. Success will require industry, industry, and rigorous economy. The practice of these qualities for ten years ought to put a sensible man on a good foundation on which he can build an enduring prosperity. But if a young man must have three or four "outings" a year, if he must join various societies which tax his slender resources severely, if he must be counted upon for parties, balls, suppers, or drinking bouts, if he must pay for billiards and prime cigars, he will find it uphill work to save enough to make his mid-life and old age comfortable. Youth may be the time for pleasure, but there is no reason why a man should squander the best part of his life. Youth is good for pleasure; but it is the very time, too, for learning, for work, for self-discipline. And pleasure itself does not need to be peculiarly expensive. Do not be ashamed to economize, no matter what the girls think nor what the boys think. Build yourselves up in intelligence and sound morals. Acquire an honorable competence, and you will have a chance to lend money to the fools who ridicule your rigid economy and your scrupulous employment of time.

NELSON had one eye blind; and on a certain day he wished to take his own way, and fight on, feeling sure of victory. What did he do? He put the telescope to his blind eye, and said he could not see the admiral's signal. Of course not; he didn't want to see it; he wished to disobey it. Oh! there are many people who, when warned or forbidden, always put the glass to the blind eye; they do not like to be forbidden; they like to please themselves and take their own way.

THE slightest sorrow for sin is sufficient, if it produce amendment; the greatest is insufficient, if it do not.—*Volton.*