

## THE FAIREST LAND.

From the Persian.

'Tell me, gentle traveller—thou  
Who hast wandered far and wide,  
Seen the sweetest roses blow,  
And the brightest rivers glide—  
Say, of all thine eyes hath seen,  
Which the fairest land has been ?'

'Lady, shall I tell thee where  
Nature seems more blest and fair,  
Far above all climes beside ?  
'Tis where those we love abide ;  
And that little spot is blest  
Which the lov'd one's foot hath press'd,  
Though it be a fairy space,  
Wide and spreading is the place ;  
Though 'twere but a barren mound,  
'T would become enchanted ground.  
With thee yon sandy waste would seem  
The margin of Al Cawthar's stream ;  
And thou could'st make a dungeon's gloom  
A bower where new-born roses bloom.'

## MISCHIEFS OF FASHION.

From 'Young Women's Guide.'—By Dr. Alcott.

If the muscles concerned in moving the chest—near a hundred in number—do not properly act ; if the breast bone, when we inhale air, is not thrown forward, and the ribs thrown outward and upward, so as to increase, very greatly, the size of the internal cavity ; then the venous blood which is brought into the lungs to be purified and cleansed is not as it ought to be ; and the whole system must suffer the consequences, on being fed and nourished on impure, and I might say poisonous blood.

This is the case when the lungs are compressed during a single breath : how great, then, is the evil, when the compression continues an hour—during which period we probably breathe ten or twelve hundred times ! How much greater still, when it is continued through the waking hours of the day—say fifteen or sixteen—in which period we breathe nearly twenty thousand times—and a young woman of twelve or fifteen years of age, probably more ! But think of the evil as extended to a year, or three hundred and sixty-five days !—or to a whole life of thirty, fifty, or seventy years !

How much poisoned blood must go through the living system in sixty or seventy years, should the injured system last so long ! And how many bad feelings, and how much severe pain and suffering, and chronic and acute disease, must almost inevitably be undergone !

Thirdly—this poisoning of the blood, however, is not all. The chest, so constantly compressed, even if the compression is not begun in earlier infancy, shrinks to a much smaller size than is natural—and in a few years becomes incapable of holding more than half or two thirds as much air as before ; so that if the compression is removed, the injury cannot be wholly restored—though if removed any time before thirty-five years of age, something may be done towards restoration. But not only is the cavity diminished permanently in size ; the bones and tendons are bent out of their place, and made to compress either the lungs themselves, or the other contiguous organs—as the heart, the liver and the stomach—and to disturb the proper performance of their respective offices or functions.

Fourthly, tight lacing, as I have already said, compresses the heart as well as the lungs, and impedes the motion of this important organ. The suffering and disease which are thus entailed on transgression, tho' not quite so great in amount as that which is induced by the abuse of the lungs, is yet very great—and added to the former, greatly diminishes the sum total of human happiness, and increases, in the same proportion, its miseries and its woes.

Fifthly—the stomach is also a sufferer, and the liver ; and, indeed, all other organs. There is suffering, not only from being in actual contact with each other, but also from sympathy and fellow feeling. I have already adverted to that law, by which, if one member or organ of the human system suffer, all the others suffer with it. This is very remarkably the case with the lungs when they suffer. Other organs suffer with them from mere sympathy ; and that to a very great extent.

Let no young woman forget, moreover, that she lives, not for herself alone, but for others ; and that if she injures health and life by improper dress, she does it not for herself alone, but for all those who shelter their abuses under her example, as well as for all those who may hereafter be more immediately influenced by her present conduct. Let her neither forget her responsibility nor her accountability. Would to God that she could see this matter as it truly is, and as she will be likely to see it in a year to come.

Let it be remembered, moreover, that as we can diminish the size of the chest by compressing it, so we can enlarge it, gradually, especially in early life—by extra effort ; or by general exercise as I have mentioned in a former chapter—I mean, moderate labor in the garden, or in the field, and in housekeeping. Nor is spinning on a high wheel—which requires not only walking to and fro, but also considerable motion of the arms and chest—a very bad exercise. A great deal may be done by reading aloud in a proper manner, and by conversation ; and especially by singing.

I believe that by a proper education of the lungs, instead of the modern custom of uneducating them, it would be possible in the course of a few successive ages, greatly to enlarge the cavity containing them. And if this can be done, it will be a means of promoting, in the same degree, the tone and vigor, not only of the lungs themselves, but also of the whole physical frame ; and the aggregate gain to our race would be immense. Let us think of the amazing difference between a race which has been deteriorating in body and mind, from generation to generation, and at the same time suffering from disease in a thousand forms, and one which is not only free from primitive disease, but gradually improving, both bodily and mentally, and in a fair way to go on improving for centuries, perhaps thousands of years, to come !

## FLOWERS.

HOUSE PLANTS.—If the room is light and airy, with the windows in a suitable aspect to receive the sun, plants will do nearly as well as in a greenhouse ; but if they are observed to suffer, the effects may be generally traced to one of the four following causes :—want of proper light and air, injudicious watering, filthiness collected on the leaves, or to being potted in unsuitable soil.

Want of proper light and air is perhaps the most essential point of any to be considered ; for however well all other requisites are attended to, a deficiency in either of these will cause the plants to grow weak and sickly. Let them always be placed as near the light as they can conveniently stand, and receive as much air as can be admitted, when the weather will allow ; they derive immense advantage from being, during fine weather, in spring and autumn, turned out of doors in the evening, and taken in again in the morning—the night dews contributing greatly to their health and vigor.

Injudicious watering does more injury to plants in rooms than many persons imagine. To prevent the soil ever having a dry appearance is an object of importance in the estimation of many ; they therefore water to such an extent that the mould becomes sodden, and the roots consequently perish. Others, to avoid this evil, run exactly into the opposite extreme, and give scarcely sufficient to sustain life.

The best plan is always to allow the soil in the pot to have the appearance of dryness (but never sufficient to make the plant flag) before a supply of water is given, which should then be pretty copious, but always empty it out of the pan or feeder in which the pot stands, as soon as the soil is properly drained. The water used for the purpose ought always to be made about the same temperature as the room in which the plants grow.

Being potted in unsuitable soil is by far the most difficult part of the business to rectify, for no certain line can be drawn, unless each genus was treated on separately ; but a few general remarks, which will be found to be correct must suffice.

All plants whose branches are fragile and slender, and roots of a fine thready fibrous texture, with general habits like the heaths, will require two-thirds peat, and one-third sand, and very similar treatment to Cape Heath. Those whose wood and habits partially differ, and whose roots are of a stronger texture, as acacia, will require a portion of sandy loam, in many cases about equal parts ; and where the habits, &c. differ materially from the heath, only a small portion of peat earth will be required, and a compost may be made a little rich, by the addition of well rotted dung. Shrubby and herbaceous plants, with luxuriant roots and branches, several species of myrtles, jasmines, &c. require rich loam, lightened with leaf soil without any portion of peat. Plants with powerful roots and slender heads, as the veronica, require a light sandy soil, mixed with a small portion of leaf mould and very rotten dung. At the time of potting, lay plenty of broken pot shreds always at the bottom of each pot, to give a good drainage.

Succulent plants of all descriptions require very little water, and in general are very easily managed in rooms ; many of them thrive in a mixture of sandy soil and lime rubbish, as the aloe, cactus, &c. ; others grow well in a mixture of peat and loam, as the mesembry, anthemum, &c. Aquatic plants, generally do well in a mixture of peat and loam, and consequently require to be constantly kept in a wet state ; indeed, the best way is to place the pot in a deep pan or feeder, which should always be kept full of water. Bulbs of most sorts flourish in rooms with less care than most other kinds of plants.

## COMMON PEOPLE.

When Christianity first made its way into Rome, the imperial city was the seat of wealth, philosophy and luxury. Absolute power was already established ; and had the will of Claudius been gained, or the conscience of Messalina been roused, or the heart of Narcissus, once a slave, the prime minister, been touched by the recollection of his misfortunes, the sovereign power of the civilized world would have been moved. And did the apostle of divine truth make his appeal to them ? Was his mission to the emperor and his minion, to the empress and her flatterers, to servile senators, to wealthy favorites ? Paul preserves for us the name of Junia, Julia and Nerca, and the beloved brethren. All plebeian names, unknown to history. Greet them, he adds, that be of the household of Narcissus. Now every Roman household was a community of slaves. Narcissus, himself, a freed man, was the chief minister of the Roman empire ; his ambition had left him no moments for the envoy from Calvary, the friends of St. Paul were a

freed man's slaves. When God selected the channel by which Christianity should make its way in the city of Rome, and assuredly be carried forward to acknowledged supremacy in the Roman empire, he gave the apostle of the gentiles favor in the household of Narcissus : he planted truth deep in the common soil. Had Christianity been received at court, it would have been stifled or corrupted by the prodigal vices of the age ; it lived in the heart of the common people ; it sheltered itself against oppression in the catacombs and among the tombs ; it made misfortune its convert, and sorrow its companion, and labor its stay. It rested on the rock, for it rested on the people : it was gifted with immortality, for it struck root in the hearts of the million.

So completely was this greatest of all reforms carried forward in the vale of human life, that the great moral revolution, the great step of God's providence in the education of the human race, was not observed by Roman historians, Christianity being hateful to the corrupt Nero, who had abandoned its professors to persecution. The Christians in Rome in the darkness of midnight, were covered with pitch and set on fire to light the streets, and this singularity has been recorded by the Roman historian. But the system of the Christian morals, the religion which was to regenerate humanity, which was the new birth of the human race escaped all unnoticed.

Paul was a Roman citizen, was beheaded just outside of the eternal city ; and Peter, who was a plebeian, and could not claim the distinction of the axe and the block, was executed on the cross with his head downwards, to increase the pain and the indignity. Do you think the Roman emperor took notice of the names of these men, when he signed the death warrant ? And yet as they poured truth into the common mind, what series of kings, what lines of emperors, can compare with them, in their influence on the destinies of mankind, in their powerful aid in promoting the progress of the human race ?—*Boston Quar. Review.*

IMPROPRIETY OF SEVERE EXERTION IMMEDIATELY AFTER MEALS.—The practical rule of avoiding serious exertion immediately after eating, has long been acted upon in our treatment of the lower animals ; and no one who sets any value on the lives of his horses or dogs, ever allows it to be disregarded with respect to them. And yet the same man who would unhesitatingly dismiss his groom for feeding his horse immediately after a chase or a gallop, would probably think nothing of walking into the house, and ordering dinner instantly for himself in similar circumstances. In the army, the difficulty of managing recruits on a march, in this respect, has frequently been remarked. Fatigued with the days exertions, they can scarcely refrain from food so long as to allow of its being properly cooked. They consequently labor under the double disadvantage of eating before the system is in a sufficient state of repose to benefit from the supply, and of having the food unfit for easy digestion. The old campaigner, instructed by experience, restrains his appetite, kindles his fire, cooks his victuals, makes his arrangements for the night, with a deliberation surprising to the recruit ; and he is amply repaid for his temporary self-denial.

STUDY AND SLEEP.—Mr Combe says that nature has allotted the darkness of the night for repose, and the restoration by sleep, of the exhausted energies of the body and mind. If study or composition be ardently engaged in, towards that period of the day, the increased action in the brain which always accompanies activity of mind, requires a long time to subside ; and if the individual be of irritable habit, he will be sleepless for hours, or tormented with unpleasant dreams. If, nevertheless, the practice be continued, the want of refreshing repose will ultimately produce a state of irritability of the nervous system, approaching insanity. It is therefore of great advantage to engage in severe studies early in the day, and devote two or three hours preceding bed times to light reading, music, or amusing conversation.

TO TAKE GREASE OUT OF SILK.—If a little powdered magnesia be applied on the wrong side of silk, as soon as the spot is discovered, it is a never failing remedy, the dark spots disappearing as if by magic.

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