

[Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.]

VIOLETS IN THE CITY.

Child of the vernal year,
Dear harbingers of radiance and of bloom,
Nestling amid the forest's leafy gloom,
Whence sped ye here?

A poet's holiest thought
Contains no meanings like your petals show.
Soft shadowed with the azure's tenderest glow,
With purity inwrought.

Your stainless loveliness
Rebukes the uneasy and tumultuous throng.
Who heed not, as they wildly rush along,
The love your looks express.

I marvel at your life,
Shining where darkest mists enshroud the ways
Of London streets, to blot the vernal rays,
Amid trade's jarring strife.

What charm you must possess,
To bloom near courts where crime, the child of woe,
Crouches and creeps, or wandering to and fro
Might dim your loveliness!

Whence sped your subtle power?
To shine with such sky-dowered constancy.
Amid a crowd who lacks the time to see
Perfection in a flower!

Type of that trust divine,
Of hope that waits—of faith that never dies—
Living alone amid a myriad eyes
That have no light for thine.

Like a strange memory
Of giddy raptures when the world was new,
When visions sparkled like the morning dew,
Your fragrance seems to me.

Or like emurpled dreams
Of shadowy joys, that haunt the idle brain,
That have no shape and only dash to wane,
Your softened beauty seems.

The valleys cast ye forth,
The mossy nooks, where Heaven smiled to see
The blue-eyed token of her purity
Mirrored so near the earth!

And placed you near our sight
Charming it to reverence—as we gaze
On loveliness amid unlovely ways,
To edge our thought with light.

ISIDORE G. ASCHER.

London, (Eng.) 9th February, 1871.

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"CLOUDS AND SUNSHINE."

(See Title Page of this No.)

O! fleecy clouds that float upon the air,
Adorned with changing colours by the beams
Of Ancient Sol, whose ever burning rays
Dart through void space, and strike the bosom fair
Of shivering Terra, chained in Frost's embrace,
Bringing the vernal colour to her face:

Possess ye aught, in all your wondrous charms,
Your wealth of imagery and varying form,
That equals, in its beauty and its grace—
That in the Spring-time of life's current warms
Man's heart, as does—the face behind the cloud
Of youthful maid who jostles in the crowd?

Avant! Ye dainty changeable clouds of sky,
Ye are but vapoury, watery emanations
Drawn upward by the strong rays of the Sun,
And, for a time the sport of wind on high,
Apon you visit Mother Earth again
In form of snow, or hail, or pouring rain.

The other clouds, adorning ladies fair,
Half hide the sunshine in their many folds,
But yet the smile, the blooming cheek, the eye,
Sources of sunshine brightening life's "dull care,"
And all the charms which face of woman shows,
These fleecy clouds do also half disclose.

Montreal, 1871.

ALPHA.

SCIENTIFIC.

The microscope reveals the fact that a speck of potato rot the size of a pin-head contains two ferocious little animals, biting and clawing each other savagely.

A substance has been found in Pancake Mountain, Nevada, which is said to resist intense heat better than anything heretofore discovered, and it is to be used in lining smelting furnaces in the silver mines.

Professor C. Nicati has investigated the causes of the curious redness of the snow, sometimes seen on the Grisons, Switzerland, and seems to have demonstrated that it is produced by the dust of the desert of Sahara, transported over sea and land by siroccos.

An ingenious and simple method of examining the structure of flames has been suggested. The flame is to be cut across horizontally by a flat lamellar jet of water or of air, and may then be examined at leisure by looking down upon it from above.

A scientific lecturer on walking says his experiments show that one side of the body always tends to outwalk the other side. It is not possible when the eyes are shut to walk in a straight line for any length of time, and it will be found where persons lose their way, that they almost invariably wander off to the right rather than to the left.

How to avoid wet cellars.—An excess of water, or too much dampness, in some instances, arises from surface water, and in others, from spring veins that crop out in the cellar. In many instances, when the excavation is being made for a cellar, in a heavy, springy ground, water veins are cut off two or three feet below the surface of the ground. When such is the case, the water in those veins will be discharged behind the cellar wall, and will settle down and pass along on the surface of the cellar bottom. Sometimes, however, the veins of water are not reached till the excavation is about completed. Then, when the water veins, which pass through the earth like the blood veins through the body of a living animal, are filled with water, the bottom of the cellar will often be covered with water, even when a good underdrain has been provided to convey it away as soon as it has accumulated in sufficient quantities to flow out through the underdrain.

Now for the remedy. The correct way to avoid a wet cellar, is to lay a tile drain entirely around the outside of the excavation, nearly a foot lower than the bottom of the cellar, before the foundation walls are laid. But after an edifice has been erected, and water appears on the cellar bottom, the most satisfactory way to render the bottom dry is to sink a chan-

nel nearly a foot deep entirely around the cellar close to the wall, and lay a course of drain tiles in the bottom, which will cut off all water veins, and thus render the cellar quite satisfactorily dry, by conducting the water into the tiles before it can work along toward the middle of the cellar.—*Scientific American.*

MISCELLANEA.

Gold having been discovered in Madagascar, (says *Nature*) the Government of the island has prohibited the search. If gold is discovered in remunerative quantities, there will be such a rush of Europeans to the country as will dispossess the native inhabitants.

AULD LANG SYNE.—The Ormskirk Guardians have just granted the workhouse porter, Luke Hemer, a week's holiday. The fact is that Mr. Hemer, notwithstanding his humble position, is going to spend a few hours at Hawarden with no less a personage than the Premier. Luke and Mr. Gladstone were school-fellows together, and, although they now stand so far apart in the social scale, Luke every year pays a short visit to the right honourable gentleman.

An Italian journal reports the discovery, in a barn, of two precious pictures, one of them a Correggio. This picture is above one metre in height, and represents a Presepe, with many figures, in very good preservation, of extraordinary strength of colour, with wonderfully painted accessories. The other is the upper part of a Christ, life size, and bearing the cross, painted on a panel by Gaudenzio Ferrario. The stupendous anatomy of the hand supporting the cross is very remarkable. These two masterpieces are now being exhibited in the Museum of Dr. Rusconi, in the Gallery of Vittorio Emanuele.

THE COST OF DIMPLES.—Six bottles of brandy or wine are popularly supposed to make a gallon, and six imperial quarts do fairly make up the gallon. Mr. Church has been at the pains to measure the contents of some reputed quart bottles in which different wines and brandy were sent out by a respectable house. They contained, in nearly every instance, less than two-thirds of the full measure. Port at 65s. a dozen was really sold at 82s. full measure. Cognac at 60s. was sold at the rate of 86s. full measure. Santo was sold at 84s. a dozen; the bottles consisted of only 22 ounces, instead of 40, and the cost was, therefore, at the rate of 87s. Even the 20s. Roussillon, bought by the bottle, counts up to 30s. a dozen. The kick or dimple in each bottle often holds as much as a small tumbler. Evidently dimples are a considerable, and probably a not sufficiently considered, item in our family expenditure.—*British Medical Journal.*

A committee has been formed in England for supplying with seeds the small French proprietors of land in Alsace, Lorraine, and other districts of France devastated by the war. The progress of the war has deprived large numbers of the peasant farmers of the means of cultivating their lands, in consequence partly of the destructive marches and conflicts of hostile armies, and partly of having had their horses, cattle, and seed corn requisitioned.

Notwithstanding the varied distresses and heart-rending events of the siege, the birthday of Molière was duly celebrated in Paris on the 15th of January, at the Théâtre Français. After the *Dépit Amoureux* and the *Amphitruon* had been played, a recitation was given by M. Coquelin.

The Emperor-King has "inaugurated" his new accession of dignity by a very unpopular exercise of his prerogative. As is well known, in the Prussian army officers are forbidden to marry without first obtaining the consent of the Sovereign—a consent accorded or withheld according to circumstances. It has come to the Emperor's knowledge that during the very exceptional order of things which has existed for the last six months this rule has been disregarded, and that marriages have been contracted without his sanction. This is clearly a breach of military discipline which the Emperor is fully competent to punish, and he has issued an order cancelling all these marriages, and rendering them null and void. It may easily be understood under what circumstances these hasty marriages have been contracted, on the eve of bitter separations, many of them for ever. As among the Lutherans in Germany marriage is purely a civil ceremony, to which the rites of the Church are quite secondary, it is possible that the Royal dictum may be sufficient to put asunder those whom man has joined; but should any of the contracting parties, as is quite possible, happen to belong to the Roman Catholic Church, in which marriage is regarded as a sacrament, it is not easy to see how these unions can be annulled. It should be added the Emperor is pleased to add that any engagements which may have been formed may continue in force. It is to be hoped his subjects will be duly thankful for the small mercy.

EMPLOYMENT FOR LADIES WITH LIMITED MEANS.—A correspondent of the *Queen* makes the following sensible remarks on this subject, so frequently mooted:—"I am sure the secret of failure lies in the fact that ladies, when they work for money, do not compete with tradeswomen by offering for sale articles sold in trade and of every-day use, but make and try to sell pin-cushions, sofa cushions, crochet cuffs, screens, and fancy work of all sorts, which not one lady in a hundred can afford to buy, and which most ladies make for themselves; here I believe lies the secret why so many associations for the sale of ladies' work have failed—not in the sense of putting up the shutters and returning the work to the senders, but failed to be much practical help to women of the better classes to help themselves in poverty. No lady, however industrious, has ever made an income out of any depot. The largest sum I ever knew a worker receive in one year was £20, and that was an exceptional case. About £1 is a more usual sum, while many, of course, are out of pocket altogether. I believe that shops or stalls not stocked with one special thing would answer. Many ladies are good milliners, dressmakers, &c., and many would learn useful arts if they found them remunerative. I need not particularise the things which find a ready sale in the open competition of trade. Pride and prejudice prevent ladies (and want of capital also) entering into trade; but under the protection and with the assistance of a work society, they might practically become tradeswomen with ease; and, their industry being steadily rewarded by sure gains, they would rejoice in giving up a fruitless struggle to make the public buy illuminations and fancy work they don't want and can do without, instead of offering them hats, boots, stays, jackets, and what-not, which they must have and are most likely to buy.

THE PRUSSIAN CAMP.—A writer in an English paper gives some interesting details concerning the conduct of a Prussian camp. The Prussians always form their camp in the shape of a square, whatever may be the strength of the force obliged to bivouac. Their brigades, divisions, and army corps, are distinguished by electric beacons, or ordinary lights covered with white or many coloured glasses, the object of which is, first, to mark the abode of the Generals; secondly, to facilitate the communication of orders emanating from those in command. This mode of lighting might be introduced with advantage into the French army, for there have been many instances during the late campaign of orders from headquarters never reaching the generals at all. The Prussian camps are guarded by sentries scattered on the wings and fronts, thirty or forty paces from each other, taking care to cross each other continually, so as to prevent any soldier or stranger from going out without orders, or entering without a safe conduct. The sentinels at the outposts are generally placed checker-wise, and united to the guards (who are placed in the manner prescribed by Frederick the Great) by little posts of cavalry charged with immediately informing the main body of any surprise. The fires are lit in the morning and let out at night-fall; no cooking is done by the Prussians when they arrive at the bivouac by night. There are some fires to show the general direction of the line of sentries, but they cannot be seen, the flank on the side which the enemy might attack being masked by slopes. The Prussians always throw up earth-works; they carefully avoid sounding clarions or beating drums, either in their camp or in action. Every officer or soldier has a whistle which enables the chiefs to perform the different calls and the men to give warning of the approach of an enemy, to call each other, and to seek their company when they have strayed. The Prussians never use the drum or clarion except in a conquered country, as, for example, the Meuse.

The Paris correspondent of the *Queen* writes:—"Our grandes dames have turned out very brave little women; one with whom we were talking the other day inhabits the smallest rooms of all her big apartments, so as to bear with the least possible bit of fire—for wood has become horribly scarce, almost unobtainable; and the lady had taken six wounded soldiers into her house, and they must have their rooms well warmed, she said. Another, who attends the ambulances, and whose horses have been claimed by Government, now goes to her self-imposed avocations on foot through the frosty streets, and, as she goes and comes daily in her comfortable-looking winter dress, none of her sister-nurses from the humbler classes can understand how much resolution on her part the act betokens. One lady, the wife of an officer in the army went as far as the Plateau d'Avron, braving cold and fatigue and sights of pain, to carry help and consolation to the wounded there; and others, though less adventurous, still do their part of courage and kindness, since many evenings see them return home faint and tired, after hours spent at the soldiers' bedsides, having refused, as all these volunteer *infirmières* do, to touch any of the soup for fear that the supply for their patients should run short. Young Mme. Heintzler, who was wounded on the Plateau d'Avron, is recovering, though the injuries she received were somewhat severe. She had gone out to see her husband, the commandant Heintzler, whose battalion was quartered at Avron, and had remained to breakfast with him while the Prussian shells were roaring and crashing near. The soldier's wife must have been a brave woman, although of course the commandant's breakfast room (in one of the little houses of the village) was supposed to be out of danger. And then, while the party were talking, crashing on to the tiny house came the terrific bomb, bursting on to the very breakfast table, and laying dead around it four young officers and the almoner of the regiment, and wounding several others, amongst whom were the colonel and his wife. M. Heintzler, it is feared, is in a dangerous condition.

The correspondent of the *Daily News* with the Crown Prince of Saxony relates the following incident, which we recommend to the attention of Canadian volunteers:—"Presently there drops in a very intelligent young Saxon volunteer, who likes to sit down and have a chat over the contents of the paper he read the day before. He is a one-year volunteer, finding his own uniform and serving as a private soldier. This morning as he sat down and lit his cigar he burst out suddenly, 'Napoleon was quite right about you; you are a nation of shopkeepers and hucksters to the very marrow.' I thought the vehemence of my young friend might have something to do with our view of the neutrality question, and was preparing to annihilate him with the *tu quoque* that a German baron is acting as European agent for a great American fire-arms house, and selling his wares to the French with patriotic readiness; but I was mistaken. 'Your London volunteers,' he continued, 'claim the right to do as they please, to kick discipline to the dogs—not because they are volunteers, not because they hold themselves free men, but because they paid out of their own pockets for their uniforms. They make the question of the liberty of the subject turn, not on Magna Charta, not on the Mutiny Act, not on any broad principle, but on the price of a coat, and who pays that price. Surely you will own that you are a huckstering lot.' I could not help laughing at my young friend's vehemence, but presently he imported into the question a matter personal to himself. 'Do you see this coat?' said he, holding up the tail of his tunic—'well, I paid Mohr and Spöhr for that out of my own pocket, and for every scrap of kit I own. On the shoddy reasoning of your volunteers, I am as free to disobey orders as they are while I am inside a coat I have myself paid for. I took an oath of allegiance when I joined the army. Is any oath of allegiance exacted from your free and easy gentlemen, who make the pivot of civil liberty turn on the question who pays for a coat? If I—a volunteer, and wearing the coat I have myself paid for—were deliberately to disobey important orders' deliberately issued, I should be taken out into a field and shot in my own coat that I paid for, and serve me right, too.' 'I expect,' he continued, 'if it should ever happen that any of your volunteers, wearing their own uniform, should fall in action, their representatives would have a claim on the Government for the value of the suit, and if the tailor's bill were unpaid he would have a right to send it in to your War Office.' The young fellow was piling up his irony so high, that I assured you I felt quite relieved when the doctor came in. I should have desired Mr. Merriman to have been present to have said to the volunteer, in the words of the poet:—"In me, in me, convertite iras."