

It is a truth generally recognized by husbands and others interested that the impossible is to woman an unmeaning word. "She says she will, and there's an end on't." It is of course inevitable that this spirit should at times lead her into contests so hopeless, that the world can only look on in admiring wonderment. One of England's most practical and pleasant philosophers thus describes a contest of this nature: "In the winter of 1824 there set in a great flood upon the town of Sidmouth. The tide rose to an incredible height. The waves rushed in upon the houses, and everything was threatened with destruction. In the midst of this sublime and terrible storm, Dame Partington, who lived upon the beach, was seen at the door of her house, with mop and pattens, trundling her mop, squeezing out the sea water, and vigorously pushing away the Atlantic Ocean. The Atlantic was roused. Mrs. Partington's spirit was up, but I need not tell you the contest was unequal. Though for a while the issue seemed doubtful, the Atlantic Ocean beat Mrs. Partington. She was excellent at a slop, or a puddle, but she should not have meddled with tempest."

This, however, was a Homeric contest in which personal feeling became an important element, but we sometimes hear of passionate schemes, so wild and so chimerical, so hopelessly hopeless, that we can only marvel at the ingenuity which conceived, and the folly which pursues them. Let us take an illustration from the writings of a traveller of world-wide reputation, who has left the following record of his experience:—"The first man I saw was of meagre aspect, with sooty hands and face, his hair and beard long, ragged and singed in several places. His clothes, shirt and skin were of the same color. He had been eight years at work upon a project for extracting sunbeams out of cucumbers. He told me that he did not doubt that in eight years more he should be able to supply the Governor's gardens with sunshine at a reasonable rate, but he complained that his stock was low, and entreated me to give him something as an encouragement to ingenuity, especially as this had been a very dear season for cucumbers."

Now, to any one not possessed with a lively faith in human folly, this account

would scarcely seem credible, but history is ever repeating itself, and he who looks around him, even in this Canada of ours, will find experiences so closely analagous, that with a smile he will replace the author upon the pedestal of his confidence.

But, we may ask, can the yearnings for the unattainable "go further and fare worse?" Why, we have always looked upon the cucumber as one of those soft, green, watery vegetables which are pleasant to the eye and agreeable to the parched lip during the sultry summer season, but as generators of sunbeams! Well, it is at least difficult to conceive the production of other than the blue and yellow rays from such a source. Its vines are spoken of by Cowper as affording a comfortable and shady resting place for his family of hares, and this would seem to be more in keeping with its mission than the production of light. We cannot limit possibility, but some things are very improbable.

WIND FANCIES.

THE other day—while sitting in our class room, undisturbed save by the distant din of pianos, and the footstep in the adjoining hall of an occasional passer by—I listened to the learned disquisition on the subject of Intuitions that flowed from the lips of the Professor. Suddenly the strains of music from a passing band smote upon the ears of all. We knew it was a company of jubilee singers advertising, in their own way, that they were to perform in the evening. There was a pause. Then, in solemn tones, the Professor said, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and sometimes through a negro's whistle." A smile rippled over the class, and the lecture proceeded.

Not so easily did the thought ripple through my mind; it lodged there, and unsatisfied with its narrow quarters, beat about for an exit. Yes, the wind blows where it likes; but, I wonder does it take pleasure in blowing through a whistle, particularly a negro's whistle. I could imagine it finding enjoyment in whistling round street corners or under eaves of houses, moaning and sighing all night through, for there is a pleasure in melancholy, and we can find no small consolation in pouring forth wailings and lamentations whether into willing or unwill-