

they scarcely appeared,—references to the days of girlhood,—congratulations respecting present circumstances,—suppositions of town happiness,—ardent wishes for the future,—yearnings for a sisterly embrace,—and some hints of an approaching change in her own life, were its topics. It was balm to the wounded heart, and poured over it a gush of holy and tender thoughts, obliterating, at least for the moment, late oppressive feelings;—as the summer sea sends its musical surge, in graceful silvery lines, to smooth the strand which had been furrowed by profaning tracks.—Alas! these renovating floods do not come in stated and regular tides to the human breast,—but rather as phenomena whose recurrence defy calculation, and often mock hope.

To answer this epistle, was only to allow the heart to express its feelings, and the easy task formed engrossing occupation for another hour of the night. The silence was no longer oppressive, nor the scene gloomy, nor anticipations sad,—an enchanter's wand seemed to have touched the mental sphere, and to have invigorated and beautified it with the influences of a higher existence. The answer to Maria ran thus:

“MY EVER DEAR SISTER,—

“Your letter came to my heart, as the sight of his own cottage to the traveller who has lost his way on the desert. Strange scenes and thoughts indeed saddened me more than usual, in the hour when your affectionate remembrance came, and shed love and joy around. Many thanks, dear sister, for your forgiveness of my offence in leaving home as I did. Your letter was like yourself in this, and yet I did not expect such kindness. My best excuse is, that my rashness was not predetermined,—and that when the first step was taken, I found retraction almost impossible. It is past, and let that hour be forgotten; may it bring no bad results,—at least none but what I myself may have to meet, and may be able to bear. I have misgivings on this subject,—and you are silent respecting Osborn. His ardent mind, and the way in which I parted with him, too well authorise me to bode some unhappiness, without attaching much value to the object who may have caused it. This, however, is scarcely a fit subject for me now,—and, remorse may be increased by recollecting, that I can take no one step to redeem my fault.

“Charles is as kind as I have any reason to expect, but city business, and, I suppose, amusement, calls him much from home. You need not contrast your more rural life with mine, and think that I have the advantage. City life, if I have seen it, is not much to my inclination,—I wish Charles had a cottage beside Maryville farm, instead of a house in B—.

“The summer was sickly here, as it frequently is,—and I arrived in time to witness some scenes and hear of others, which have marked my mind with traces unknown before. Just imagine dear Maria,—a family on their way to the far west,—to prairies far beyond our own sweet plain,—the father active and full of hope,—the mother ready to dare whatever duty should call her to, in the path of her husband, and anticipating some happy home for her children beside the great rivers of the wilderness. The devouring pestilence seizes the strong man, and in a few days the terrified wailings of his little ones tell that they have lost him for ever. The mother, stupified with the sudden blow,—is roused by the symptoms of sickness in herself. The destroyer's hand is felt, and in an agony of despair, which is blent with the maternal feeling, she forces herself from her orphans, leaves them to the sympathies of strangers, and goes to the public Asylum, to die; hoping that they may escape the infection which her presence might cause. She avoids bidding her bewildered innocents farewell,—and almost maddened with the picture of their fright, and destitution, and the ills that surround them,—she expires, calling on them, entirely forgetful of her own feelings. Imagine the orphans, not knowing whither to turn, shrinking from strangers, and clinging to one another,—the elder soothing, with tears, the cries of the younger, for father, and mother, whom they can never see, and whose departure has almost frenzied that little band. But if I have been shocked by such incidents, I have been made ashamed of my own weakness by the active charity which some few, who devote themselves to good works, have exhibited. No danger was too great, no scene too direful or too repulsive, for some of our own sex to brave and to ameliorate. I felt that I was a fragile selfish creature, indeed,—and that, in some natures, trouble brings out heroism and exalted virtue, and dignifies and hallows where it would be expected to destroy.

The purifying chills of winter have cleansed us from the pestilence,—and have left me more opportunity of examining the usual life of the city. I am not in love with any of its scenes, as compared with more simple and natural existence. You intimated well, at one time, Maria, that habits were powerful. I am still the Prairie girl, and, perhaps may owe my seclusion in the midst of tumult, to my unfitness for blending in general society. The evening does not group the family about its own fire side, as in the country;—when my dear sister is retiring to her pillow, ‘blest with pangless dreams,’ then many here are casting off the cares of business, and entering on the pleasures, as they are called; of the day. Night appears to be a word scarcely known, and calm enjoyment only heard of to be mocked. Amidst the

pride, and form, and display of life,—I have marked traces of care and degradation—and have been informed sufficiently to make me think the ‘plodding farmer’ more dignified, as well as more happy, than the ‘enterprising speculator.’ The man of pomp and circumstance is often a slave to Mammon,—he lives on a commercial volcano,—he smiles and boasts while his mind is on the rack for pecuniary means, and he trembles at an approaching hour, when his credit is at stake, as the culprit trembles at the hour of execution. But why should I trouble you about matters which I scarcely understand, and which can only interest you by your sister being thrown in the midst of them?

“I turn with delight to your own approaching union as intimated in your letter. May all its prospects be realized. May the patriarchal peace and plenty which you are fitted for be your portion,—and may I be blessed by seeing it, and by embracing Maria beneath her own happy roof.

“What gratitude I owe you, Maria, for your sweet recollections of early life,—before the maturity of existence brought the shades and cares which, I suppose, are, more or less, inseparable from man's existence. I have not forgotten one of the blooming spots of childhood,—and will now cherish them as remains of some more blessed state which I have enjoyed,—and as mementos of something better, to be obtained in a better world. As a proof that I have recollected old scenes, I copy some lines, penned to soothe a lonely hour. You have hitherto been partial to my foolish efforts, and I know you will not despise this, on account of the affectionate though erring heart whence it emanated.

Farewell, Wandago, gentle Prairie stream,  
Farewell, the friends who trod your fragrant braes,—  
Farewell, the fancy, free, whose golden beam  
With fairy light illum'd those pangless days.

Now, by Missouri's rushing volume placed,  
Mid grove of masts, and din of eager trade,—  
On banks, by city piles majestic grac'd,  
By city care and sorrow vocal made.

Even mid this motley scene, I well recall  
Wandago,—with its red-deer at the ford,—  
Its snowy heron 'neath the cliff's green wall,  
Its lily shoals,—its silvery sunny board.

Still gently roll, in mem'ry's magic land,  
O'er glistening pebbles, 'twixen thy heathy bowers,—  
Still cool and soothe my breast with purlings bland,  
And bring the past to bless the present hour.

“I need not remind you how much our father deserves from us,—and how the duty of soothing his ‘down-hill of life’ more particularly devolves on you, in consequence of my absence. Tell him, dear Maria, at favourable opportunities, that I revere his name, and yearn, alas vainly, to give him my wonted attentions.

“Another duty, to the memory of another parent, also now becomes your care, solely. Our mother's grave will not want its flowers periodically, I am confident;—place my share on it Maria, and think of me there. It is the passage which we all must go through in quitting this existence. I trust we may look on it even now, as the portal which will lead to a blissful meeting, far from worldly cares and follies. Surely the christian need not attach melancholy, only, to the ‘narrow house,’ but may view it as the dark entrance to light and joy,—to the re-union of divided hearts, and to unspeakable extacies of adoration.

“Ever, ever, Maria's,

“LUCY REYNALL.”

Lucy's effort soothed and dignified her mind,—late disappointments had rather raised her character,—they had dissipated much of her levity, and had, at times, at least, taught her to seek for relief in those more sublime consolations whose principles formed a part of that education which an excellent mother had interwoven with her expanding mind. Yet was she not thoroughly influenced by them—they came like sun-gleams, reflected into ocean caves, not flowing direct,—beautifying, but not warming or vegetating—and intervals of gloom and capriciousness too frequently threw their sickly shades around.

She sunk to rest that night more than usually placid, and had sweet dreams of the Prairie cottage, and its inmates,—but morning brought its cares and anticipations, and the next night half recovered its wonted tones of regret and repining.

(To be concluded.)

#### GEMS OF BEAUTY.

What is the one indispensable quality for a polemic controversialist? Not learning, nor talent, nor orthodoxy, nor zeal. But the spirit of Love, which implies an anxiety to find good in all, and to believe it where we cannot find it. God admits into his courts no advocates hired but to see one side of a question.

We look with wonder at the spectacle which astronomy presents to us, of thousands of worlds and systems of worlds weaving together their harmonious movements into one great whole. But the view of the hearts of men furnished by history, considered as a combination of biographies, is immeasurably more awful and pathetic. Every water-drop of the millions in that dusky

stream is a living heart, a world of worlds! How vast and strange, and sad and living a thing he only knows at all who has gained knowledge by labour, experience and suffering; and he knows it not perfectly.

All the ordinary intercourse of life is big and warm with poetry. The history of a few weeks' residence in a circle of human beings is a domestic epic. Few friendships but yield in their development and decay the stuff of a long tragedy. A summer day in the country is an actual idyl. And many a moment of common life sparkles and sings itself away in a light song; wounds as the poisoned barb of an epigram; or falls as a heavy mournful epitaph. But in all he who has an ear to catch the sound may find a continuous underflow of quiet melody, burbling sometimes into chorusses of triumph, sometimes into funeral chants. The reason why these archetypal poems of real life are so often unfit for the use of the poetic artist, is not their want of the true meaning of poetry, but their unsuitableness to the apprehension of any except the few, perhaps the one immediately concerned. The poet must choose such a sequence of images that shall make the harmonious evolution of events and the significance of human life intelligible and manifest to all, not merely to a few recluse or scattered doers and sufferers.

What an image of the transitoriness and endless reproduction of things is presented by the gumcistus plant, covered to-day with fresh white flowers, while the earth around is strewn with those which similarly opened but yesterday. The plant, however, abides and lasts, although its flowers fall and perish.

#### SCRAPS FROM THE GERMAN OF JEAN PAUL.

NATURE.—Mighty nature! when we see and love thee, we love our fellow-mortals too, and when we are forced to leave or to lament them, thou still standest unchanged before us. Oh! before the soul on which the gay clouds of fancy have melted away and descended in chilling rains—before the heart, which in the walks of life finds only catacombs, and in those it meets, lifeless mummies—and before the eye, that sees no beloved one on which to rest its glances—before all these dost thou stand, reviving and ennobling nature, with thy flowers and hills and cataracts, speaking peace and comfort, and the forsaken one wipes the tear from his eye that it may gaze undimmed upon thy imperishable glories!

A SCENE IN THE ALPS.—What a world lay before him! The Alps stood erect, like giants of another earth, ranked in the distance, and held up their glaciers like glittering shields, to catch the first rays of the morning sun: they were girdled with blue forests, and vineyards and valleys were spread beneath their feet, and the wind played with the cascades as with strips of silver ribbon.

NIGHT.—The contemplation of night should lead to elevating rather than to depressing ideas. Who can fix his mind on transitory and earthly things, in presence of those glittering myriads of worlds; and who can dread death or solitude in the midst of this brilliant, animated universe, composed of countless suns and worlds, all full of light, and life and motion?

LIFE.—Man's journey through life is like ascending a tower: he mounts with pain and toil one steep step after another, and finds at the top an open space for repose, and a view of the world beneath him, writes his name and descends. Some more soaring reach the very base at the top of the spire, but only to gaze for an instant at the heaven above them and to descend.

THE STARS.—The constellations follow in each other's train like the different eras of man's life. The evening star is the herald of youth and joy, the moon is mature age, bright and quiet but cold, and followed by a brief darkness soon to be succeeded by the splendour of the rising sun of immortality.

#### 'LOT'S WIFE.'

Mr. Colman, in his Agricultural Address last week, illustrated the folly of modern fashionable female Education, by an anecdote. A young man who had for a long while remained in that useless state, designated by ‘a half pair of scissors,’ at last seriously determined he would procure him a wife. He got the ‘refusal’ of one, who was beautiful and fashionably accomplished, and took her upon trial to his home. Soon learning that she knew nothing either how to darn a stocking, boil a potatoe or roast a bit of beef, he returned her to her father's house, as having been weighed in the balance and found wanting. A suit was commenced by the good lady, but the husband alleged that she was not ‘up to the sample,’ and of course the obligation to retain the commodity was not binding. The jury inflicted a fine of a few dollars, but he would have given a fortune rather than not to be liberated from such an irksome engagement. ‘As well might the farmer have the original Venus de Medecis placed in his kitchen,’ said the orator, ‘as some of the modern fashionable women. ‘Indeed,’ continued he, ‘it would be much better to have Lot's Wife standing there, for she might answer one useful purpose: she might salt his bacon!’—Boston Herald.