

THE QUARREL OF THE WHEELS.

BY THOMAS D'UNN ENGLISH.

I sat within my wagon on a heated summer day. And watched my horse's flinging feet devour the dusty way. When suddenly a voice below shrieked out, it seemed to me—

"You're bigger, but you cannot go one half so fast as we!"

I looked around, but no one there my straining vision caught: We were alone upon the road; I must have dreamed, I thought: Then almost at my feet I heard, distinct, a voice's sound—

"You'll never overtake us, though you twice go over the ground!"

It puzzled me at first, but soon the fact upon me broke— The fore-wheels of the wagon had thus to the hind-wheels spoke. I listened for the answer, and it came in accents low—

"You're no farther now before us than you were an hour ago!"

I waited the rejoinder, but no further answer came: The fore-wheels were too busy, and the hind-wheels were the same: And though I strained my hearing much, depressing much my head.

By fore-wheels or by hind-wheels not another word was said.

The matter set me thinking how in life one often knows Of bitter controversies with the words absurd as those: How many claim as merit what is after all but fate. With success that others make for them exultingly elate.

Your wise and mighty statesman just before his fellow set. Strives, as fore-wheel in the wagon, farther from the hind to set. Rolls along in his complacency, as he thinks, to name and fame. To find the journey ended, his position just the same.

The patient toiler struggles, but no inch beyond is gained: And he grumbles that, despite him, one position is maintained— Not reflecting that the Owner who can everything control, Bade him ever as the hindmost for a fitting purpose roll.

Still speed along the wagon by the steady roadster drawn. Till ends the weary journey, and the light of day has gone: And all the rivalries of men, the quiet thinker feels. Are idle as the quarrels of the fore and hinder wheels.

THE AGE OF NEWSPAPERS.

It is difficult for a member of this generation of mankind to realize what life was before the age of newspapers. And yet for a very large share of mankind that age began very recently. It was only in the era of the Napoleonic wars that the habit of newspaper-reading became universal in the middle classes of England, and began to extend to the lower social strata. It was the War of American Independence that made the monthly intelligence of the *Scott's Magazine* insufficient for the demands of people who lived outside of London, and brought the great city newspapers to a larger range of readers. Every great crisis sufficient to produce a popular excitement has extended the influence of the newspaper, and has given it a hold which it retained when the excitement was past. Our own civil war did this for American newspapers. It gave opportunities for enterprise in the public service which were rewarded, not only by present patronage, but by permanent influence.

Yet there are heard a few voices in protest against this vast popularity of the newspaper, and they are not altogether without reason. Religious feeling for a time resisted the innovation of newspaper-reading, although the most trusted and honored among the religious poets was the first to welcome the change and to point out its significance. Cowper's "folio of one sheet" was not welcome to all who welcomed the "Task." A lady friend assures us that she heard a good man express publicly his thankfulness that he never had read a newspaper in his life. It is easy to laugh at such people, but it is well to remember John Stuart Mill's saying that while the strongest minds may be looked for in the van of progress the next strongest are to be found bringing up the rear. Side by side with this religious conservatism stands Henry Thoreau, who for years renounced newspaper-reading as inconsistent with ethical culture. Not until the Virginians hanged his friend, John Brown, did he buy one, — a *New York Herald*, — and when he had read it, he says, he washed his clothes in water and was unclean until evening!

It is beyond doubt that even the better class of newspapers may be a source of serious injury to careless readers who are not governed by strong instincts of right. The broadly indiscriminate way in which they depict the daily life of the world is not calculated to keep the great lines of right and wrong before the vision of such readers as these. Eternal and fundamental distinctions are apt to be buried under the mass of details. Indeed, the best and most thoughtful readers need to be on the watch, lest this constant but passive contact of the mind with events which should awaken pity, indignation, or some other emotion, may result in diminishing the capacity for such emotions.

Then, again, the sides of life which the newspaper is apt to bring out in the boldest relief

are not those whose contemplation is most wholesome. It is the calamities, the rascalities and the acerbities of mankind that find their way most easily into its pages. Somebody once took the pains to catalogue the characters in "Hudibras," and showed that England as Butler found it was little more than a menagerie of fools, rogues and hypocrites. A moral analysis of the picture of life in a nation or a city as this is portrayed in the daily newspaper would not show such a lack of the brighter side as is found in "Hudibras," but it would show a preponderance of the darker elements which is not in accordance with the facts. This, perhaps, is unavoidable. It is precisely the darker points which lend themselves easily to the reporter's uses, while the brighter are less easily worked up into paragraphs of public interest.

It is unfortunate also that newspapers tend to foster the spirit of excitement and of unrest which pervades modern society. Their competition is to have the latest and the most extraordinary intelligence, as this is the best way to reach the popular ear. Your newsboy who offers you the afternoon paper, with the assurance that it describes "a horrible murder in the Eighteenth Ward," knows his public. The "display lines" by which the journalist seeks to attract attention to his news are a tribute to the popular craving for the startling and the exciting. This craving is not a subsidiary and unimportant passion with us. It has become a strong—almost a governing—impulse in the cities and other business centres of America. It shows itself in the spirit of speculation in business and in the passion for intoxicants. We are not content to take life in a calm or peaceful fashion, like the great processes of nature, *nil per saltum*. We must have its changes come with telegraphic swiftness, to keep time with our nervous excitability. The climate tends to this restlessness, and the newspapers stimulate it until the quietness and patience that are the strength of wise men threaten utterly to leave large classes of our people.

Again, it may be doubted whether we do not incur intellectual as well as moral losses through the constant and especially the exclusive reading of newspapers. Coleridge quotes from Averroes a list of practices which tend to weaken the memory, such as gazing on the clouds, riding among a multitude of camels listening to a series of funny stories, and reading the epitaphs of tombstones. The common character of these acts is that they occupy the mind with a number of disconnected facts between which no logical nexus is traceable. Much of the same sort is newspaper-reading, and with much the same effects on the mind. It is easy to recall the dictum of Dr. Rush in his will that they are "teachers of disjointed thinking." The possession of a memory so good that we would call it remarkable seems to have been quite common in the earlier ages of mankind. The Hindus carried the "Vedas" and the Persians their "Zend-Avesta" across the centuries in their memories. So the Edomites preserved "Job," the Jews their early traditions, and the Greeks their Homeric epics, before the art of writing came to their aid. There still are Jewish scholars who know the wilderness of the Talmud by heart, Hindus who can repeat the "Vedas" and their commentators, Christians who know every verse of the Bible. But none of these people are much given to newspaper-reading; they would find that altogether inconsistent with such exploits. Fortunately, the *ars artem conservatrix* brings us compensations with this loss. We do not need to know Homer by heart, as every Greek did, when for a dollar we can put a printed copy on our book-shelf. But we have lost something. There was an advantage in having stored the mind with a great work of literary art which is not balanced by the value of the lesser matters which occupy our attention. Indeed, we venture to doubt whether we have done well to wage an indiscriminate war upon the process of memorizing in education. Nothing can be said for the stupid cruelty which exacted the repetition from memory of grammatical rules and dry geographical facts. But if for these were substituted some of the great classics of the language the child would gain more by their acquisition in the memory than he will get from the most rational exposition of "subjects, not books," such as we now insist upon. Mr. Macaulay is an eminent instance of this use in memorization.

The general decay of memory, if we are right in believing that it is decaying, is more than an intellectual loss. Memory is the foundation of moral character. The degraded races of mankind are in no way more marked as degraded races than in their lack of the power of recollection. It is said that some of the Australian savages cannot recall anything that happened three days before. And the same differences reappear in the higher strata of humanity. The possession of a vigorous and retentive memory is all but indispensable to many of the social virtues; the want of it detracts from all.

Yet when all allowance has been made for the evils which grow out of a careless use of the newspaper the balance remains in favor of the practice of using them. The newspaper is the great enlarger of our intellectual horizon, the daily reminder of our bonds to the whole of human kind, the constant admonition against all selfish and narrow construction of life and its duties. It does for us in the space of to-day what the study of history may do for us in regard to the past, by lifting us out of the provincialisms and the limitations to which other pursuits tend to confine us, into sympathy with the whole of humanity.

FOOT NOTES.

THERE is to be a Liverpool of the south! Shoreham is the spot. It has been long talked of and often shelved. Now we hear there is reality in the scheme, and that a Bill is to be promoted in the next session of Parliament, by which the Brighton Railway Company will acquire property rights over Shoreham Harbour. The Bill obtained, then the work will begin.

Is the savage suddenly tameable? In the current *Cornhill* there is a story about a converted black, who comes to England, learns to be a clergyman and a gentleman, returns to Africa as a missionary to his own people with a sweet English girl for his wife, but, in a moment of frenzy, betakes himself to the life of his ancestors. His wife is so shocked that it kills her, and the reclaimed one returns to his savagery. Now, is this story psychologically true?

THE electric light, which has been provisional in the libraries and dining-rooms of the House of Commons, will during the recess become a fixed institution of the Palace of Westminster. Why it should succeed in the libraries and be excluded from the House of Commons is hard to say. Perhaps the only possible explanation is, that a stronger feeling against any innovation prevails, with regard to the House itself than with reference to any of the surrounding apartments.

THE name of the young lady has been given and the locality, so it seems a fact. It appears that she arrived at a certain railway station and gave a sewing machine to a man who, if not a porter, acted as such on this occasion, and who promised in good faith to deliver the parcel. Having received his remuneration and instructions, the bearer set out with the machine on his shoulder. It was carefully covered over with thick paper, and entirely concealed from view. While about half-way to his destination he conceived the idea that he was in danger. He thought the dimensions and weight of such a well-covered parcel were somewhat suggestive of an infernal machine, and at once proceeded to the Police Office, where he was liberated from his perilous position.

THE Bibliothèque Nationale has recovered an album of reproductions in color of architectural monuments which is believed to have been stolen from the Gaignières collection by the notorious Clairambault. Gaignières was an enthusiast who spent his life and fortune in travelling through France and collecting memorials in the shape of books, MSS., and views which were executed to his order. In 1711 he entered into a special arrangement with the crown, and received a pension on the condition of leaving his treasures to the Royal Library. He was afterwards suspected—perhaps wrongly—of making away with some of his curiosities, and Clairambault, who was appointed keeper of the collection, used his position to filch many valuable books and portfolios. The present album is interesting, inasmuch as nearly all the drawings it contains record monuments which have ceased to exist.

It is said to be a fact that many school-boys in Belgium, France and Germany are actually driven to suicide by too much study. For example, the hours at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, in Paris, are reported as follows: Five to seven a.m., study; eight to twelve, instruction; one to three p.m., study; three to half-past four, lectures; five to eight, study—the study in all cases being in a public room under supervision. This means practically that miniature school-boys are compelled to work their brains twelve and a half hours out of every twenty-four. A three years' course of this kind has produced few, if any, first-rate scholars. To counteract such evils as this the School Board of Baden, in Germany, will hereafter have the local physician as an ex officio member, whose duty it shall be to look after the physical health of the school children. The idea is most praiseworthy, and might well be adopted in many places in this country where education is supposed to be synonymous with "cramming" for examinations.

A WRITER in a London paper comments as follows on the slight knowledge of swimming possessed by English ladies: I never go to one of our "seaside resorts" without noticing how very few English women there are who appear to know how to swim. At Brighton, Eastbourne, or Scarborough, you will see dozens of girls ungracefully bobbing up and down in eighteen inches of water, but not one in fifty swimming. Abroad, on the contrary, at Trouville or Boulogne, plenty of ladies swim about in the most fearless manner. This difference I attribute entirely to our insular and idiotic prejudices. Here, the unwritten law of Mrs. Grundy decrees that no girl shall bathe with any man, even her father, husband, or brother, and the consequence is that few of them learn to swim, and many do not bathe at all. Abroad, on the other hand, where the sexes bathe together, ladies are constantly taught to swim by their male relatives. The sooner, therefore, that we supersede our ideas on this point, and allow both sexes to bathe together, the better—especially for the ladies.

GORITZ, the last resting place of the Comte de Chambord, is a little town, dull and dreary, on the borders of the Tronzo, a narrow river which rushes madly along—the only living thing in the whole place. It is celebrated in history as containing the strangely mysterious sepulchre of Attila, King of the Huns, whose

body was conveyed by his followers to Goritz, where the rapid current of the Tronzo was turned, a deep grave dug at the bottom of the river, and the remains of the cruel and pitiless conqueror deposited therein. The tide was then restored to its usual ebb and flow, and all trace of the work obliterated. Tradition declares that the great warrior lies there enveloped in his royal robe of cloth of gold, and fully armed with chain mail of silver gilt, and breastplate richly adorned with jewels. His helmet is of solid gold and the crest, composed of rubies and emeralds of untold value, represents the double eagle with open beak and outspread talons he had chosen for his emblem. His head reposes on his shield of gold and his right hand grasps the sword which none could wield but he.

THERE is one requisite of a good school which is too often omitted in the circular and prospectus. It is the sanitary condition of the rooms and premises. Very pertinently the sanitary engineer cautions parents who are sending their children away for training to make searching inquiries as to the character of house drainage, method of sewage disposal, the source and character of water supply, the ventilation of school-rooms and dormitories. It is of little use to put ideas into the mind, if poison is being infused into the lungs and blood by unsanitary conditions. High theories of ethics will avail little if they are not based on a common-sense regard for vulgar, material health. Let us have all the moral preachment which has made up the prospectus from time immemorial, but let there be added to it such pertinent items as:—"House drainage in thorough order, and ventilated in accordance with the rules of the City Board of Health;" "the school is inspected by a competent physician every month;" "water supply from a well absolutely free absolutely free from all danger of contamination." Such matters have already begun to receive, and inevitably they must become more and more prominent as the basis of health and well being is better understood.

IN Paris there is a most interesting suit of old armor, beautifully chased and wrought with rich metals, that is now a subject of considerable interest. It belongs to Mr. Spitzer, an amateur and a speculator in European antiquities, whose collection is valued at about six hundred thousand pounds, and is one of the finest in all Europe. This suit, it seems, has a curious history that is generally considered authentic. It originally belonged to Francis I. of France, and was bought by the late Sir Anthony Rothschild for one hundred pounds, and sold by him to the late Lord Ashburnham for one thousand pounds. Some years afterward a dealer in curiosities purchased it of Lord Ashburnham for four thousand pounds, and sold it within twenty-four hours for seventeen thousand pounds. Its subsequent history is even more remarkable. It was deposited by its purchaser in the Belgrave Square Pantechnicon, and when that unfortunate building was destroyed by fire the armor was buried beneath the ruins. Dug out of the debris, it was sold for a few pounds as old iron. It survived, however, even this degradation; for, after undergoing a process of renovation, it was subsequently sold for twelve thousand pounds to Mr. Spitzer, of Paris, where it is said to be now on sale for twenty thousand pounds, that is, about one hundred thousand dollars.

SIRAUDIN, the vaudevilleist, was a very clever playwright. His vaudevilles were sparkling and dainty. He was in all his tissues a Parisian and had a genius for setting fashions. As a tradesman he made astonishing hits. When he felt that his literary wit was subsiding he bought the confectioner's shop at the corner of the Rue de la Paix and the Rue Neuve des Augustins, where he made money so quickly that he was soon able to sell the business at a great price and retire from all kinds of mercantile enterprise. It should be added that he gave the distinction of a fine art to confectionery. What could be more distinguished than the candied orange blossoms, violets, and other sweet-scented flowers? Siraudin's shop was to the fashionable world between New Year's Day and Twelfth Night what the Boulevard Fair was to the lower orders. Sight-seers and purchasers advanced slowly through it in a queue, entering at the Rue de la Paix door and leaving by the one in the Rue Neuve des Augustins. The apparition of a new doll in the Rue de la Paix window was an event. Siraudin put an end to the reign of crinoline by exhibiting a poupée "first empire" side by side with a poupée "second empire." The first was made in the image of the Empress Josephine, and dressed in beautiful old lace and soft tissues that showed the form they seemed to hide. At once a reaction set in against the hooped petticoats, and the great trades that had been based upon them collapsed in a few months.

A VOICE FROM THE PRESS.

I take this opportunity to bear testimony to the efficacy of your "Hop Bitters." Expecting to find them nauseous and bitter and composed of bad whiskey, we were agreeably surprised at their mild taste, just like a cup of tea. A Mrs. Cresswell and a Mrs. Connor, friends, have likewise tried, and pronounce them the best medicine they have ever taken for building up strength and toning up the system. I was troubled with costiveness, headache and want of appetite. My ailments are now all gone. I have a yearly contract with a doctor to look after the health of myself and family, but I need him not now.

S. GILLIAND.
July 25, 1878. *People's Advocate*, Pittsburg, Pa.