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THE CLOUDS.

What are ye? O soft, white things,
Soaring high on noiseless wings,
Now, caressing, seem to lie
On the bosom of the sky.
How swift you 've changed to childish mood!
No more by zephyrs gently wooed;
But scowling, pouting, fitful weeping,
Waking buds that still were sleeping;
Then gay dancing, dimpling, smiling,
Sunbeams to your side beguiling.

I 've watched you at Aurora's gate,
Like handmaids for your Sultan wait,
And trailing o'er the morning sky
Your robes of matchless Orient dye.
I 've watched you when, at truant play,
You 've lagged behind the car of day,
At Venus' signal swiftly run
To reach the fast descending sun;
Then, flushed with haste and guilty fear,
Bend as the soft reproof you hear.

I 've seen the grey, embattled towers
That hold the storm's destroying powers,
Wherein loud echoes roll along
The sullen thunder's hoarse war song:
Anon the lightning's fitful glare
Darts quivering through the murky air,
Swift as an arrow from the bow
Proud ships and forests to lay low;
At morn the fisher sees thy hand
Has strewn with wrecks the yellow sand.

I 've watched you oft,—but ne'er the same
Your places seem when seen again;
'Tis but the teaching of the sky,
"All things must change unti they die."

M. E.

MISTAKEN AMBITION.

"I YEARN for the unattainable," sings a Canadian poet. Very likely, Mr. Sangster, and in so doing you are by no means singular. The trick, though unsatisfactory, is very old and very common. Since the days when men, goaded by fear and allured by ambition, "builded a tower which should reach even unto the heavens," the Plains of Shinar have never been deserted. All ages, all sexes, and all stations, have dwelt thereon, credulously laboring for the accomplishment of the impossible, but the Tower of Babel is yet unbuilt. From generation to generation have the tiny hands of unwise infants been stretched helplessly abroad to

grasp the coveted, but, alas, unreachable moon; and advancing years, with what we pleasantly call increasing wisdom, have simply changed our objects of desire. No matter how high or how slippery the greased pole whose summit bore aloft the alluring leg of mutton, adorned with its gay and many-colored ribbons, it has never lacked ambitious boy climbers, the pain and labor of whose upward progress, bore a ludicrous contrast to the extreme ease and rapidity of their return to Mother Earth. Among men the alchemist has through days of labor and through nights of toil striven to realize his dream—the transmutation of metals; the astrologer essayed to read the result of men's passions in the calm, indifferent stars, while the vast majority of mankind have believed possible, and labored for the purchase of happiness by the acquisition and expenditure of irrelevant gold and silver. Greed and Vanity have ever been lords, and the teachings of centuries have fallen powerless before the ever renewed great passions of humanity.

The love of admiration, which cost the poor deluded crow her cheese, still fills the earth with discordant music, and the terrible fate of the ambitious frog, who sought the similitude of an ox, is lightly disregarded by men whose emulous ambition meets with like results. Still it cannot be denied that what was once the apparently impossible has sometimes become an accomplished fact, and we cannot refuse our sympathy to the spirit which refuses to accept the seeming horizon as the real boundary of the world. The alchemist was the father of chemistry, and the astrologer of astronomy. They found, though it was not what they sought.

And what of woman? The same, with a variety. Some unfledged witling, yet lacking the veneration begotten of years and experience, has said, "Man wants all he can, and woman all she can't get," and the observation, though reprehensibly irreverent in tone, is not without a foundation in fact.