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SATURDAY EVENING MAGAZINE.

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The following beautiful lines will find a response in the bosom of every reader:—

A DIRGE.

BY THE REV. GEORGE CROLY.

"Earth to earth and dust to dust!"
Here the evil and the just;
Here the youthful and the old;
Here the fearful and the bold;
Here the matron and the maid,
In one silent bed are laid;
Here the vassal and the king
Side by side lie withering;
Here the sword and sceptre rust;
"Earth to earth and dust to dust!"

Age on age shall roll along,
O'er this pale and mighty throng;
Those that wept them, those that weep
All shall with these sleepers sleep,
Brothers, sisters of the worm,
Summer's sun or winter's storm,
Song of peace or battle's roar,
Ne'er shall break their slumbers more,
Death shall keep his sullen trust:
"Earth to earth, and dust to dust!"

But a day is coming fast,
Earth, thy mightiest and the last!
It shall come in fear and wonder,
Heralded by trump and thunder;
It shall come in strife and toil;
It shall come in blood and spoil.
It shall come in empire's groans;
Then, Ambition, rue thy lust!
"Earth to earth, and dust to dust!"

Then shall come the judgment sign,
In the East, the King shall shine,
Flashing from heaven's golden gate,
Thousands, thousands round his state;
Spirits with the crown and plume;
Tremble then thou solemn tomb!
Heaven shall open in our sight,
Earth be turned to living light,
Kingdom of the ransomed Just!
"Earth to earth, and dust to dust!"

Then thy mount, Jerusalem,
Shall be gorgeous as a gem,
Then shall in the desert rise,
Fruits of more than Paradise;
And the earth again be trod,
One great garden of her God!
Till are dried the martyr's tears,
Through a thousand glorious years;
Now in hope of him we trust
"Earth to earth, and dust to dust!"

SPRING.

"When conscious beauty puts on all her charms."—I really do not understand what people can want who do not find all they wish in London now.

Moore says, that, in the Malay language, the same word expresses women and flowers; if so, it is the prettiest compliment ever paid the sex, not that any one of them will be grateful for it, for who cares for a general compliment more than a general lover. Just, however, at this season, the Malay tongue might be used in London. How many sweet bright and lovely faces pass us by! Most women look well in their bonnets; and as for the other sort of flowers we have them in profusion and perfection—such exquisite violets, such delicate lilies of the valley, such a rainbow world of hyacinths as now fill the rooms with perfume. How often at the end of morning with the fashionable world—afternoon with the more quiet part of the community—and evening with the very respectable indeed—a young cavalier may be seen curbing a horse "impatient of the rein," at the nursery grounds of the King's Road, till a bouquet of the most fragrant exotics is brought out. It does not ask much imagination to read a history of sighs, smiles and blushes on every leaf. But I have less to say for the spring than for any other season; it has a name which is tantamount to every thing in this world—all know the pretensions of a London spring.

SUMMER.

Nothing can be so pleasant as London in summer! It is so cool, putting Piccadilly, from two till five, out of the question; there is always shade on one side or other of the street, a shade which you doubly enjoy, on the principle of contrast. It is satisfactory to think how hot the people must be on the opposite side; then, though I do not eat ice myself, I can suppose other people doing it. If they do, an eastern poet might gain new ideas about coolness and fragrance, while enjoying the colored coldness at Grange's.

Towards the close, flowers begin to pass away; you are not met at every second step in Regent's street by a bunch of moss-roses—a little faded it is true, allegorically by the way of our pleasures, but sweet notwithstanding. Dark-eyed pinks no longer heap the stands in such profusion; but then the fruit is come in, such fruit as London only can furnish. I confess that I have no simple and natural tastes about gathering it myself. My experiences in that way have been unfortunate. I once picked some strawberries, and disturbed a whole colony of frogs; I once gathered a plum, and was stung by a wasp. I pass over a horde of other miseries, such as stooping in the sun, thorns, dirt, &c. and will only observe, that fruit never looks to such an advantage as it does on china, whether Dresden, Sevres, or even Worcester. There are two seasons when Covent Garden will more especially reward a visit,—at the beginning of summer and at the close, Flora holds her court in the first instance, and Pomona in the second. Pass along the centre arcade, and it is lined with trophies of the parterre or of the orchard, and you may look upon the early roses, and grow sentimental about

"The blush that ever haunted early love!"

or become unsophisticated, and go back to the innocent enjoyments of your childhood while gazing on the crimson sided apples. I like, too, Hungerford Market; it gives one the idea of a Dutch picture. People wear mere bargaining faces; fruit and flowers have their price, but fish were sent into the world, at least into the market, to be cheapened.—Every body beats down the price of a fresh pair of soles, or a fine turbot. By the by, Kensington Gardens are just now singularly beautiful; I do not mean the walk *par distinction*; for I am writing of the picturesque, not the social pleasures of London:—no, go among the old trees, whose depths of shade are as little known as the depths of the Black Forest. The fine old branches will close over your head, the caw of the rooks is heard in melancholy but musical monotony, while their flight ever and anon disturbs the quiet leave, and lets in fantastic streaks of sunshine on the soft grass. From afar off comes the perpetual and deep voice of the huge city,—that human ocean, whose waves know not rest. After wandering through many a shadowy walk—all, darkly green, for there no flowers—you arrive at the square old palace,—associate with William and Mary; formal, staid, suiting the town portion of a period when the tangles of *Nemra's hair* were powdered, and “the silver footed *Thetisses*” wore high heeled slippers. During this time the sun has been setting; the fine old trees stand still and solemn in the crimson air; the Park is empty; the smoke has rolled away, and rests, like a thunder storm, over the distant buildings. A clear and softened atmosphere is immediately above you; a few light clouds are flushed with lights of fugitive red; a deep purple hue is upon the Serpentine, along which are floating, still as shadows, snowy as spirits, two or three white swans. They alone share with you the silence and the solitude to be found even in London.

BY THOS. CANNRIA JONES.

THE EARTH.

A valley broad, that's shaded
By storm, and mist, and night,
Whose flowers soon are faded
By some untimely blight;
Where youthful hearts are aching
With pains of frame or mind,
Where olden men are shaking,
Like winter leaves in wind;
Till, having measured out their days
In folly, shame or pride,
An epitaph doth speak their praise,—
Their deaths,—to whom allied.

THE GRAVE.

Rest hath made her dwelling here,
Though the living call it drear,
Beauty, youth, and wisdom, meet
In this meek and low retreat.
Generations without end
Here in silent ashes blend;
As the sands upon the shore,
Here they lie for ever more,
Waiting the life giving call
That shall break Death's sullen thrall.

HEAVEN.

Where flesh and blood hath never been;
Where mortal eye hath never seen;
A mental sphere; a flood of light;
A sea of glory, dazzling bright;
Where the crown of eternal life's placed on,
And the righteous kneel round their Father's throne,
Singing the songs of praise and bliss.
O for a flight to a sphere like this!

HELL.

A hopeless gulph of ruin and dismay,
Where rage and darkness never pass away;
In which lost spirits writhe God's curse beneath,
Bound with the chains of everlasting death.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CITY OF CANTON.

The literary institutions of China, are the pillars that give stability to the government. Her military forces are utterly inadequate to hold together the numerous and extensive provinces and territories that constitute the wide dominions of the reigning dynasty. With great difficulty the Tartar troops overrun the country—conquering province after province, and gradually extending their authority over the territories on the west of China Proper. But for a long period both the discipline and the energies of the Chinese soldiery have been on the wane: and at this moment the imperial hosts present nothing formidable but their numerical amount;—the recent insurrections at Leen-chow and Formosa have afforded the most complete evidence of this imbecility. And not only in this part of the empire, but along the whole coast up to the great wall on the north, and even beyond that in Mantchou Tartary, both the land and naval forces have become so exceedingly enervated and dissolute, that they exercise no salutary influence or control, except it may be over a few who are equally debased with themselves. As policemen, in the capacity of lictors, thief-takers, and executioners, they are not less detested than feared by the common people. They are in fact, for all purposes of defence, little better than *dead men*; nay, were they stricken from the catalogue of the living, we can scarcely doubt that the stability of the empire would remain unimpaired.

Many there are who look with astonishment at the magnitude of this empire, and believe it strong and immovable as the everlasting hills. But an examination of its history and present organization, would show them that it has been frequently rent and broken by rebel chieftains and ambitious statesmen and haughty kings; and that its present greatness is chiefly attributable to its peculiar literary institutions. These, though they are the glory and strength of the nation, are, for mere purposes of government, amazingly deficient; and it is their relative rather than their intrinsic value, that renders them worthy of special notice. Wealth and patronage have great influence here; they often control the acts of the government, stay the course of justice, cover the guilty, and confer honours and emoluments on those who deserve them not. But as a general rule, *learning*, while it is an indispensable prerequisite for all those who aspire to places of trust and authority in state, is sure to command respect, influence, and distinction. Thus, without the dreadful alternative of overthrowing the powers that be, a way is opening to the ambitious youth, by which he may reach the highest station in the empire, the throne only excepted. Usually the most distinguished statesmen are those who have risen to eminence by intellectual efforts, and they are at once the philosophers, the teachers, the rulers of the land. These distinctions they cannot maintain, however, without yielding implicit obedience to the will of the monarch, which is most absolute and uncontrolled. Let them honor and obey the power that is over them, and they stand—dependant indeed on the one hand, but on the other—in proud and envied distinction. High rank in the state is the brightest glory to which this people aspire: and with them learning derives its chiefest value from the simple fact that it brings them within the reach of that dazzling prize.

Strict examinations, regulated by a fixed code of laws, have been instituted and designed solely to elicit from the body of the community the “*true talents*” of the people, with the ulterior intention of applying it to purposes of government. At these examinations, which are open to all except

menial servants, lictors, play-actors, and priests, it is determined who shall rise to distinction and shed glory back on their ancestors and forward on their posterity, and who shall live on in obscurity and die and be forgotten. The competitors at the Olympic games never entered the arena before the assembled thousands of their countrymen, with deeper emotion, than that which agitates the bosoms of those who contest the palm at these literary combats. The days on which they are held and their results, are published in Canton, are the proudest which its inhabitants ever witness.—brief notice of them may be interesting to the reader, and at the same time enable him to understand more fully the nature and object of the schools and colleges of the provincial city.

The highest literary examinations in the empire are triennial, and take place at Peking. Beside these stated, there are also other occasional examinations, which are granted by special favour of the emperor. Up to these contests, the most distinguished scholars go from all the provinces. This privilege is not gained without long, patient, and successful endeavour; the examinations, at which it is determined who shall enjoy it, occur also triennially, and are held in the metropolis of each province. These examinations are of incomparable interest to great multitudes of the people in every department and district of the empire. High honors, rich emoluments, and in a word every thing that the young aspirant and his numerous kindred most esteem, are at stake. A long season of preparation has been endured; heavy expenses incurred; and now the decisive hour approaches.

Two examiners are chosen from the distinguished officers at Peking, under the immediate superintendence of the emperor. They must leave the capital within five days after they are chosen. They are allowed the use of the post horses belonging to government. Upon those who come to Canton six hundred taels are conferred to defray their expenses while on the road; two hundred of which are paid when they commence their journey from Peking; and the remainder by the governor of the province when they are about to return after the examination is completed. These are assisted by ten other examiners, who are selected from the local officers over whom the *foo-yuen* presides. Besides these there are many inferior officers, who are employed as inspectors, guards, &c. All these, together with the candidates, their attendants, &c., amounting to 10,000 and upwards, assemble at the *Kung-yuen*, a large and spacious building designed solely for these occasions. It contains numerous apartments, so that each candidate may be seated separate from his competitors. All of the seats are numbered. The apartments are low and narrow, and have only a single entrance, and no furniture except a chair and a narrow writing desk.

The number of candidates who assemble in Canton is between seven and eight thousand. They are often attended by their friends, and continue here for several weeks, and sometimes for months; during which time the hum and bustle of the city is greatly increased, and every kind of mercantile business receives a new impulse. These candidates are always persons of some distinction, which they must have gained, either at previous examinations or by the payment of large sums of money. They are all called *sew-tao*,—a title not unlike that of master of arts; but they are divided into several classes, and those who have purchased their degree are often despised by the others, and are generally regarded with less respect than those who have gained it by their own merits. They meet now on equal terms, and their 'true ability' is to be determined by personal efforts, which are to be made during a given period and under given circumstances.

The candidates assemble on the 8th moon; but none are allowed to enter the examination except those who have been previously enrolled by the literary chancellor of the province.

The age, features, place of residence, and lineage of each candidate must be given in the chancellor's list; and a copy of it lodged in the office of the *foo-yuen*. They must all attend at the examinations in their native province; and those who give in a false account of their family and lineage or place of nativity, shall be expelled and degraded:—for no candidate can be admitted at any place, without proving that his family has been resident there for three generations.

The examination continues for several days, and each student must undergo a series of trials. The first trial is on the 9th of the moon; the second, on the 12th; and the third, on the 15th. The candidates are required to enter their apartments, on the day preceding the examination, and are not allowed to leave them until the day after it is closed. Thus they must pass two nights in close and solitary confinement. On the first day of their examination, three themes, which are selected from the 'Four books,' are proposed to them, and they are required to give the meaning and scope of each; and a fourth theme, on which they must compose a short poem in rhyme. On the second day, a theme is given them from each of the 'Five classics,' and on the third day, five questions, which shall refer to the history or political economy of the country, are given them.—The themes must be sententious, and have meaning which is refined and profound. They must not be such as have often been discussed. Those which are given out for poetry must be grave and important. In the themes for essays on political economy, the chief topics must be concerning things of real importance, the principles of which are clear, and evidently of a correct nature. "There is no occasion to search and enquire into devious and unimportant subjects." All questions concerning the character and learning of statesmen of the present dynasty, as well as all topics which relate to its policy, must be carefully avoided.

The paper on which the themes and essays are written is prepared with great care; and must be inspected at the office of the *foo-ching-sae*. It is a firm, thick paper, and the only kind that may be used. The price of it is fixed by authority. The number of characters, both in the themes and essays, is limited. The lines must be straight; and all the characters full and fair. At the close of every paper, containing elegant composition, verses, or answers to questions, it must be stated by the student how many characters have been blotted out or altered; if the number exceed one hundred, the writer is *tee chuk*, 'pasted out':—which means, that his name is pasted up at the gate of the hall, as having violated the rules of the examination, and he is forthwith excluded from that year's examination. There are usually a hundred or more persons at every examination in Canton subject to this punishment, for breaking this or some other of the regulations.

The candidates are not allowed "to get drunk and behave disorderly" during the examination. All intercourse of civility between the examiners and the friends and relations of the students must be discontinued, and there must be no interchange of letters, food, &c. On entering the outer gate of the *kung-yuen*, each candidate must write his name in a register kept for that purpose; and if it is afterwards discovered that the name was erroneously written, then the officer superintending the register, shall be immediately arrested and delivered over to a court of inquiry; and if it shall be ascertained that the student has employed any person to compose his essays for him, or if he is found guilty of any other similar illegality, both he and his accomplices shall be tried and punished. Moreover, the student on entering the hall of examination must be searched; and if it be discovered that he has with him any pre-composed essay, or miniature copy of the classics, he shall be punished by wearing the wooden collar, degraded from the rank of *sew-tao*, and for ever incapacitated to stand as a candidate for literary honors; and the father and tutor of the delinquent shall both be prosecuted and punished.

All the furniture and utensils, such as the writing desks, inkstands, &c., in the apartments where the students write their essays, must be searched; and also each and all of the managers, copyists, attendant officers, servants, porters, &c. &c.—If in any manner a learned person, who is to decide on the papers, be admitted to the apartments of the students, dressed as a servant, he shall be punished, and the chief examiner delivered over to a court of enquiry. A watch, composed of military officers and soldiers, is maintained both day and night both in the inner and outer courts of the hall, and if any of these men are guilty of conveying papers to the candidates, concealed with their food, or in any other way, they shall be punished. There are many other regulations and precautions which have been adopted to prevent fraud; but we have given enough to show something both of the interest which gathers around these examinations, and of the schemes which are formed to gain distinctions without the toil and fatigue of hard study.

Of the thousands of candidates assembled at these examinations at Canton, only seventy-one can obtain the degree of *Keu-jin*; the names of these are published by a proclamation, which is issued on or before the 10th of the 9th moon, and within twenty-five days after the examination is closed. This time is allowed the examiners to read the essays and prepare their report. The proclamation, which contains the names of the successful candidates, after it has received its appropriate signatures, is pasted up on the office of the *foo-yuen*. At a given hour, three guns are fired, and the *foo-yuen* at the same time comes forth from his palace accompanying the official paper; it is forthwith pasted up, and again a salute of three guns is fired; his excellency then advances and bows three times towards the names of the 'promoted men' (*Keu-jin*); and finally retires under another salute of three guns.

Ten thousand anxious minds are now relieved from their long suspense. Swift messengers are despatched by those who have won the prize to announce to their friends the happy result of the long trial which they have undergone; and while the many return with disappointment to their homes, the successful few are loaded with encomiums and congratulations, and their names with their essays sent up to the Emperor. To crown the whole, a banquet is prepared for these newly-promoted men; and the examiners, and all the civil officers of rank in the province join in these festivities. Gold and silver cups for the occasion must be provided by the provincial treasurer. The chief examiner from Peking presides; the *foo-yuen*, at whose palace the banquet is given, and who is present as a visitor, is seated on his right, and the assistant examiner on his left. The governor of the province is also present; a train of inferior officers wait as servants; and two lads, dressed like *naiads*, holding in their hands branches of olive, grace the scene with a song from their ancient classics.

There are three other examinations in Canton, which occur twice in three years, and are attended by great numbers of aspirants. At the first, which is attended by the students of *Nan-hae* and *Pwan-yu*, the *che heens* preside; at the second, which is attended by candidates from all the districts of *Kwang-cho-foo*, the *che foo* presides; but the third is conducted by the literary chancellor of the province, whose prerogative it is to confer the degree of *seu-tsee* upon a limited number of the most distinguished competitors. These are preparatory to the triennial examination, and inferior to it in interest; they need not therefore be further particularised. It may be remarked, however, in passing, that they are open to persons of all ages; and a case very recently occurred, where a hoary head of eighty, accompanied by a son and grandson, attended the examination; all of them were candidates for the same literary honors.

To qualify the young for these examinations, and thereby prepare them for rank and office in the state, is a leading object of the higher schools and colleges among the Chinese.

But a great majority of the schools in Canton are designed only to prepare youth for the common duties of private life. These latter, as well as many of the higher schools are private establishments. And though there are teachers appointed by government in all the districts of the empire, yet there are no public or charity schools for the benefit of the great mass of the community. Whatever may be his object and final destination, almost every scholar in Canton commences his course at some one of the private schools. These, among the numerous inhabitants of this city, assume a great variety of form and character, according to the peculiar fancy of individuals. The opulent, who are desirous of pushing forward their sons rapidly, provide for them able teachers, who shall devote their whole time to the instruction of two, three or four pupils. A school of this description we have repeatedly visited; it is in a hall belonging to merchants from *Ning-po*, and is kept by an old man who has three lads under his care, one five, another seven, and a third, nine years old; he instructs them in the learned dialect, and the youngest has already made greater proficiency than is usually done by boys at the age of ten. Sometimes the inhabitants of a single street, or a few families who are related to each other, unite and hire a teacher and fit up a school-room, and each defrays a stipulated part of the expenses. At other times, the teacher publishes the rules and terms on which he will conduct his school, and seeks for scholars wherever he can find them.

Children are not generally sent to school until they are seven or eight years old; they enter, usually, for a whole year, and must pay for that term whether they attend regularly or not. The wages of the teachers vary greatly: in some instances (and they are not unfrequent in the country,) the lads pay only two or three dollars, but generally fifteen or twenty, per annum. When the teacher devotes his whole time to two or three pupils, he often receives a hundred dollars or more from each.

The ordinary school-room, with all its defects, presents an interesting scene. At the head of it there is a table, on which the name of the sage—"the teacher and pattern for myriads of ages"—is written in large capitals; and a small altar is placed before it, upon which incense and candles are kept continually burning. Every morning when the scholar enters the room, he bows first before the tablet and then to his teacher; the form is not merely a tribute of respect, but an act of worship, which he is taught, nay, compelled to pay to Confucius. The boys usually continue in school from six o'clock in the morning until six in the evening, except two or three hours which they are allowed for their meals. When in school they all study aloud; and each one raising his voice at the same time, and striving to out-do his fellows, the noise of the whole is very great. Upon those who are idle or disobedient, the teacher plies the rattan with woful severity. Every lesson must be committed perfectly to memory; and the lad who fails in this is obliged to bow down and learn it upon his knees; and those who are the most incorrigible, are made to kneel on gravel or small stones, or something of the kind, in order to enhance their punishment.

The *San-tsee-king*, the famous "three character classic," is the first book which is put into the hands of the learner. Though written expressly for infant minds, it is scarcely better fitted for them than the propositions of Euclid would be, were they thrown into rhyme. But "it is not to be understood" at first; and the tyro, when he can rehearse it correctly from beginning to end, takes up the Four books and masters them in the same manner. Thus far the young learners go without understanding aught, or but little, of what they recite; and here, those who are not destined to a literary course, after having learned to write a few characters, must close their education. The others now commence the commentary on the Four books, and commit it to memory in the same way; and then pass on to the other clas-

sics. The study of arithmetic, geography, history, and so forth, forms no part of a "common school" education.

The high schools and colleges are numerous; but none of them are richly endowed, or well fitted for the purposes of education. The high schools, which are fourteen in number, are somewhat similar to the private grammar schools in England and America; with this difference, that the former are nearly destitute of pupils. There are thirty colleges, most of which were founded many centuries ago. Several of them are now deserted, and are falling to ruins. Three of the largest have each about two hundred students, and like all the others, only one or two professors. We have sought long and diligently—but thus far in vain—for some definite information concerning the existing discipline and regulations of these colleges; should we affirm that they are without rules and order, we should say what we do not doubt, but what we cannot prove. All those systems of instruction which have sprung up in modern times, and are now doing so much for the nations of the West, are here entirely unknown. There are, however, a few books in the Chinese language which contain excellent maxims on the subject of education, give numerous rules to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, and detail systems of gymnastic exercises for the preservation of health.

Of the whole population of Canton not more than one half are able to read. Perhaps not one boy out of ten is left entirely destitute of instruction; yet of the other sex not one in ten ever learns to read or write. There is scarcely a school for girls in the whole city. Public sentiment here is against the education of females; immemorial usage is against it; many passages in the classics are against it; and the consequence is they are left uninstructed, and sink far below that point in the scale of being, which they are fitted, and ought ever to hold. The degradation into which the fairest half of the human species is here thrown, affords cause for loud complaint against the wisdom and philosophy of the sages and legislators of the celestial empire.

We do not knowingly detract from the merits of the Chinese; in comparison with other Asiatics, they are a learned and polished race. Those who have been educated are generally remarkably fond of books; and though there are no public libraries in Canton, yet the establishments for manufacturing and vending books are numerous. And to supply those who are unable to purchase for themselves the works they need, a great number of circulating libraries are kept constantly in motion. But almost all of these books are bad; this charge, however, does not lie with equal force against those works which usually constitute the text-books of literary men.

We are admirers of Greek and Roman literature, but we deprecate the practice of putting into the hands of young students the "master pieces" of some of their most celebrated authors. The moral tendency of many of those heathen writings, which, ever since the dark ages, have continued to form the basis of the literary education of not a few christian schools, is decidedly inferior to the Chinese. An elegant English scholar has spoken well on this point. 'The Chinese student,' says he, 'not being secured from error by the light of revealed religion, can only derive his moral precepts from his school learning. He is certainly therefore fortunate in the possession of a body of ancient native literature, which, while it cultivates his taste and improves his understanding, contains nothing to inflame his passions or corrupt his heart. The Chinese are not compelled, as we are, upon the authority of great names, and for the sake of the graces of the style of language, to place in the hands of youth, works containing passages which put modesty to the blush,—works, in which the most admirable maxims of morality, are mixed and confounded together in the same page, with avowals and descriptions of most disgusting licentiousness. The Chinese press is certainly by no means free from the charge of grossness and indelicacy; but the higher class,

at least, of Chinese literature, that which usually forms the library of the youthful student, is in this respect wholly unexceptionable."

THE PRODIGAL.*

The sultry air was choking, and the sun
Poured down, in flame, his burning vertical rays;
The flowerets hung their fainting heads, and shrubs
Drooped 'neath his radiance, and each wither'd bough;
And birds, beasts, insects,—every living thing
Sought shelter from the fierce meridian heat

The prodigal was weary; he had trod
The sliding desert sands, with hunger faint,
And with that feverishness of soul that comes
From deep misfortunes, joined with conscious guilt,
Weighing with weariness the spirit down.
Beneath the spreading branches, thrown at large,
Oblivion stole upon him; and in sleep
He wandered to his far, far distant home—
The scene of innocence and joy in youth,
Dear to his heart by twice ten thousand ties.

There is a magic in the name of home,
Felt in the spirit's yearnings: man may roam
Careering on his wild and thoughtless way,
Like the mad, untamed comet, from the sun;
Yet, in his wanderings, is still within
Th' attractive influence of that sunny spot.
The prodigal awoke, and thoughts of home
Swelled his full breast, and penitential tears,
As sudden waters from the desert rock,
Flowed from his flinty, sorrow-smitten heart,
Adown his pale and famine-blanch'd cheeks;
And in his soul impartial conscience held
The mirror of reflection, and displayed
His guilt and folly to repentance true;
And godly sorrow, and impressions pure,
And holy resolution nerved his frame,
And he exclaimed, "I will arise and go
Unto my father, and my guilt confess."

The sun was verging to the distant west,
Flinging his golden radiance on the mounts
That girded, as with emerald zones, the plains
Of his own happy regions, and he longed
For speed like his, that he might soar away
As if on wings of eagles, and behold
His father's house, his long forgotten home.

His feet were sandal'd, and his loosened loins
Girded for journeying, and in his hand
A pilgrim's staff; and in his bosom thoughts
And yearning aspirations that had nerved
With vigour every fibre of his frame.

Onward he journeyed, with unflinching step,
Beneath the silent eunopy of night,
With famine faint, and sleepless, though the stars
Were tired with watching, and the wearied light
Seemed to lie down upon the mountain's couch—
Onward, still onward sped he, night and day,
With pace unslackened, and unwearied feet.

Day broke in beauty on the rosy earth;
Upon the purple clouds, the yellow hair
Of Phœbus floated, like a web of gold,
The mountain tops, like smoking altars, sent
Their cloudy incense to the smiling heaven,

* Luke xv.

And slow revealing through the silver mist,
 Their sparkling plain of waters, creek and rill
 Rolled on their way, trilling a song of glee;
 The variegated carpeting of earth
 Glowed in the embroidered flowers of Nature's loom,
 The velvet foliage of the trees and shrubs,
 Was studded with the dewy gems of morn,
 The flow'rets bowed their purple coronets,
 And from a thousand throats of gay-plumed birds
 Arose the woodland anthem on the air:
 All nature seemed rejoicing in new life,
 As if conspiring to his ancient home
 To bid him welcome.

On a little mound
 He stood, and down a sloping vale, beheld
 His father's halls, that rose in pillar'd pride,
 High in the sunlight,

The rill whose purlings had amused his youth,
 The copse, the glade, and ancient looking trees,
 The scenes of childish sport were still the same,
 And with familiar, and with smiling face,
 Greeted his coming. Now the dread of change
 Stole o'er the prodigal his father's house.
 Had sickness and decay wrought changes there?
 Would a kind father's voice and mother's tears,
 In nature's speechless eloquence, receive
 Their guilty, wandering, and unworthy child?
 Or would they coldly scrutinize his form,
 The wreck of dissipation, and his rags,
 The tatters of his wretchedness and shame?
 Did they yet live, or had their hoary hairs
 Descended in much sorrow to the grave,
 For the low fall of their unhappy son?
 Oppressed with thought, he carefully composed
 The shredded garments on his shrivelled form,
 And as he went, moistened each step with tears.

Far off, a venerable man appeared,
 With locks and beard of snow, sweeping his breast,
 And in his step and mien, the prodigal
 His father recognised; and hastening, bowed
 Him prostrate in humility of soul,
 And deep abasement, while he kissed his feet,
 And craved the place of service in the hall
 That gave him being; once his happy home.

Silent and solemn still the father stood,
 No pardon spake, no word of joy or love,
 Yet, from his aged eyes, the gushing tears
 Fell on the trembling hands that clasped his knees,
 And ever and anon a heavy sob
 Convulsed his bosom; and as nature gave
 Strength to his joy-stunned intellect, he raised
 The suppliant wanderer, and to his breast
 Strained him, in all the fervency of love,
 Mingled with pity—to his errors gave
 A free and willing pardon, and restored
 The mourner to his home, and all the joys
 Of peace and innocence, that chase the clouds
 Of golly sorrow, and repentance dark,
 And pour bright sunshine on the smiling soul.

THE VOW.

From Jephtha downward, few have ever vowed rashly
 without repenting bitterly, and yet our self-conceit is so
 much more powerful than our better judgement, that neither
 our own personal experience, nor our observation of the
 course and experience of others, can cure us of promising

unconditionally, which, if we perform at all, we can perform
 only upon certain conditions which may, or may not, exist.
 If a thousand other instances of the folly and danger of rashly
 vowing, had not previously occurred to my observation, that
 folly and that rashness would have been firmly and impres-
 sively taught to me by a late occurrence in a not very dis-
 tant branch of my own family. In England, distinguished
 as it is by the abundance and the excellence of female beauty,
 there is not a more lovely woman than my cousin Emily
 Mordaunt; and she was beloved as well as lovely, and if the
 village in which she passed her girlhood, and of which she
 was the ornament and the pride, were to be canvassed, I
 doubt if a human being could be found in it who would not
 have perilled life and limb to procure her a pleasure, or to
 spare her from pain. A good and a beautiful girl she was,
 and it was the greater pity that she was silly enough to make
 a rash vow.

About four years ago, and at this very season of the year,
 I left town for the village at, or rather near, which she re-
 sided; the name of which, for reasons quite sufficiently cog-
 ent, if not more than usually obvious, the reader must be
 so good as to excuse my not mentioning. My uncle is a fine
 specimen of "the good old English gentleman;" and though
 only moderately wealthy, is possessed of immense influence,
 and unbounded affection in his neighbourhood, from the con-
 stant well-doing in which his own long life is spent.

Entre nous, though I yield to no one in admiration of his
 numberless fine qualities of breast and heart, I must earnestly
 confess that my annual visits are none the less punctual or
 extended in their duration from the spot of my uncle's
 grounds affording me finer sport than I can enjoy elsewhere,
 without making a longer or less convenient journey. And
 it was partly, if not mainly, for sport's sake, at the time
 above mentioned, I deposited myself, my Manton, one tiger,
 two horses, and ditto dogs, at the good old English house
 of my good old English uncle. I was welcomed, as I always
 am, cheerily and heartily; duly thanked for sundry newspa-
 pers sent by divers posts to the old gentleman, and for cer-
 tain Court Magazines, which I had forwarded for the espe-
 cial delectation of my fair coz.—But she, usually the first to
 bid me welcome, was not visible, and when I had gossiped
 and lunched away for a full hour after my arrival, with-
 out perceiving any signs of her intention to become visible, I
 took the liberty to pop the plain question to my uncle as to
 the cause of her absence. The answer was categorical
 enough, but not altogether so satisfactory as I could have
 wished.

"She was ill," her father said, "and yet not ill; debili-
 tated and nervous, shunning all society, perpetually in tears,
 and yet unable, or unwilling to assign any cause of her in-
 disposition. In short," concluded my uncle, who doats on
 her, "she is a woman, and who the deuce is to know a wo-
 man's mind? And yet, she's young and pretty, and she
 knows it; and I have picked her out a husband as young and
 as handsome as herself, and egad! one would think it impos-
 sible for her to be otherwise than happy."

"So" thought I, "the murder's out!" I need not trouble
 my readers of either sex with the wise saws of "every
 one has his faults," "the best of us are not perfect," and so
 forth. We all know that, though we are a little apt to make
 ourselves, our wives sometimes, and our children always,
 special exceptions to this general rule. Now if my uncle
 has any very considerable and lamentable failing in his char-
 acter, it is a certain warmth and arbitrariness of temper.
 Though in other respects very unlike Squire Western, I
 could sometimes almost fancy him sitting to Fielding; so
 decisive and "Sh't ha' un"-like is his mode of ruling his
 household when any of his whims, more or less, are unfortu-
 nately by some accident thwarted or neglected. And from
 the instant of his having told me of his having "picked out"
 a husband for my pretty cousin Emily, I judged that his pa-
 ternal kindness had been far more sincere than acceptable.

"The course of true love really never *does* run smooth," thought I, "but poor Emily shall not want for all the little wit or wisdom I possess." And I, accordingly, pestered her with coaxing notes, until, just as the evening was darkening down, the stubborn little puss relented in her obstinacy at last, and honoured me, the stately minx! with an interview. I went to her *petit boudoir* with the full determination to rally her most unmercifully; but when I entered, I was too much shocked by her appearance to carry my determination into effect, or even to remember that I had ever made it.

She lay upon a sofa by the opened window, pale, haggard, and with that ghastly glassiness of eye, which but too frequently is the prelude to

"—— cold obstruction's apathy."

I thought of "the angel and the cramp iron," and my tears "flowed feelingly and fast," as I gazed upon the wreck of one so loved by all, so envied by many, and but a brief time before so joyous in herself.

Our conversation was long, too long to be set down here; but it ended in my starting the following morning for Malta, instead of dealing death among the nut-brown beauties of my uncle's preserves.

Poor girl! she had reason enough to be unhappy, and yet her unhappiness, like but too much of that which afflicts humanity and defies the doctor, was in no slight degree self-sought and self-inflicted. Very true it is that it was no agreeable task to oppose my uncle in so important a matter as the marrying of his daughter to the man of *his* choice.

"Sha't ha' un, I tell thee; sha't ha' un," would have been his reply to any maidenly reluctance; and if from blushing reluctance my fair cousin had preceded: "hint a doubt and hesitate dislike," incomprehensible English, I would not be bail for the safety of any fragile materials within much of the good, but rather choleric squire. But there was a word which would have ruled him at his wildest, and have sent the unwelcome and pertinacious suitor of his choice to choose more fittingly, or to vent his disappointment in a rattling run with the nearest hounds. But that one word she would not, could not, dared not speak; she had a vow, and she kept it until she looked like a spectre, and was in an extremely fair way of becoming one. For once in the way—for I am the unluckiest dog now extant, in all matters of locomotive, rarely riding in a coach that does not lose a linch pin, or journeying by a steamer which does not boil over, or run upon a sand-bank—for once in the way I say, I made a good voyage, and in an unusually short time, had presented myself and my credentials—a letter, namely, penned in the prettiest *crow-quill hand* that ever wrote verses in an album—to Lieutenant ——, of —— regiment. He perused the letter with all the approved symptoms of a gentleman afflicted with hydrophobia or love. Very stark indeed, very, thought I, is the poor gentleman's mania, pray heaven he do not toss me out of the window by way of rewarding my civility! He did a much more sensible thing; he ordered in dinner, wrote to his colonel for leave of absence, and in four hours after my arrival, I was again on "the deep, deep sea," in company with the smitten subaltern.

We arrived at my uncle's safely enough; but I was so fairly done up with excessive fatigue, from travelling night and day, that I would fain have preferred a sound sleep to a scene. He who takes part in the affairs of lovers, must make up his mind to bear their despotism. They feed on love, so he must eschew more nourishing diet; they wake ever, so he need not dream of—they will take especial care he shall not dream *in*—sleep. And so it was in the present case; my valiant sub insisted upon our seeing my uncle that very night.

Poor Emmy had been literally a prisoner for a long time previous to my going down; and her mind, unlike the waiting maids of the most approved novel heroines, had

sternly refused to aid her in any attempt to convey clandestine epistles. And when my companion now announced to my uncle that *he* was her lover, her accepted lover—old acquaintance as his father had been of the squire's—the rage of the latter knew no bounds. Seldom is there much reasoning when people are very passionate, and very determined to have their own way. I shall therefore leave the dialogue that passed between the pair unsung and unsaid. But there was one fact elicited in it that was important and decisive—Emily was unable to marry the man of her father's choice, from the simple fact of her having some time previously gone through that ceremony with the man of her own! My subaltern friend had, in fact, been for some time married to my pretty cousin; but as his father left him no fortune, he had judged it best to conceal their marriage for a time, and he had extorted a vow from his young and devoted wife, that she would not betray the secret without his consent.

How well she kept her unwise vow, we have seen. She is alive and well, and as happy as her own virtues and every one's love can make her, and he is no longer a sub. But if I had not chanced to see her, to carry that news to her husband which she could not otherwise have conveyed, I verily believe she would have died in her unwise obstinacy.

Rash vows should never be made. Should they even be kept when made?

SCHOOL AND SCHOOL-FELLOWS.

Twelve years ago I made a mock
Of filthy trades and traffics;
I wonder'd what they meant by stock;
I wrote delightful sapphies;
I knew the streets of Rome and Troy,
I suppd with fates and furies;
Twelve years ago I was a boy,
A happy boy, at Drury's.

Twelve years ago!—how many a thought
Of faded pains and pleasures,
Those whispered syllables have brought
From memory's hoarded treasures;
The fields, the farms, the beasts, the books,
The glories and disgraces,
The voices of dear friends, the looks
Of old familiar faces.

Where are my friends? I am alone
No playmate shares my beaker—
Some lie beneath the church-yard stone,
And some before the Speaker;
And some compose a tragedy,
And some compose a rondo;
And some draw sword for liberty,
And some draw pleas for John Doe.

Tom Mill was used to blacken eyes,
Without the fear of sessions;
Charles Medler loath'd false quantities,
As much as false professions;
Now Mill keeps order in the land,
A magistrate pedantic;
And Medler's feet repose unscann'd,
Beneath the wide Atlantic.

Wild Nick, whose oaths made such a din,
Does Dr. Maxtext's duty;
And Mullion, with that monstrous chin,
Is married to a beauty;
And Darrell studies, week by week,
His Mant and not his Mantion;
And Ball, who was but poor at Greek,
Is very rich at Canton.

And I am eight-and-twenty now—
The world's cold chains has bound me ;
And darker shades are on my brow,
And sadder scenes around me :
In Parliament I fill my seat,
With many other noodles ;
And lay my head in Gernyn-street,
And sip my hock at Double's.

For hours and hours, I think and talk
Of each remember'd hobby ;
I long to lounge in Poet's Walk,
To shiver in the lobby ;
I wish that I could run away
From house, and court, and levee,
Where bearded men appear to day,
Just Eton boys, grown heavy ;

That I could bask in childhood's sun,
And dance o'er childhood's roses ;
And find huge wealth in one pound one,
Vast wit in broken noses ;
And pray Sir Giles at Hatchet Lane,
And call the milk-maids Hours ;
That I could be a boy again—
A happy boy at Drury's !

EXTRAORDINARY MURDER.

A trial took place very recently in the Grand Duchy of Hesse Cassel, in Germany, which excited a very strong sensation throughout the whole continent. The history of the case is as follows:—

Two young travellers, in the course of a tour which they were making into one of the provinces of the above duchy, visited a Benedictine monastery which is situated on a very high mountain, and from the beauty of the scenery, had been much frequented by tourists. In returning down from the convent the strangers saw, lying under a beech tree, the dead body of a man, with a cord doubled round his neck, and they instantly ran back to the convent and gave information of the fact to the monks. The Prior instantly dispatched a messenger to the proper officers, who lost no time in hastening to the spot. It is mentioned in the account that, according to the custom in Germany, the legal officer was accompanied by two medical men. Upon an examination of the body, they found that it was that of a highly distinguished count, Count Uregg, who lived in the neighbourhood, and whose ancient castle could be seen from the mountain where the monastery was situated. The question now was, how the count met his death, and, as the circumstance under which he was found justified the suspicion that he lost his life by violent means, the officers instituted an immediate inquiry. An inquest was accordingly held, and the jury, who relied on the evidence of the medical witnesses, brought in a verdict to the effect that the deceased must have been murdered.

The history of the catastrophe was this:—The Count Uregg lived in his castle, where his ancestors had resided before him, in splendor and comparative happiness. About the period when he had attained his fifteenth year, there came into the neighbourhood to live a military gentleman and his family. The name of the stranger was Conrad Essor, and having the habits of a gentleman, he became acquainted with the count, and was hospitably received by him. An intimacy sprang up between the count and Essor's family, and the result was that the former offered his hand to Miss Essor, then a beautiful girl. The count was so determined on the marriage, that he was ready to secure the young lady for his wife on any terms; and he agreed by the settlement not only to provide an ample fund for his wife in

case of his death, but to support the parents in his castle, or, if they disagreed, that he should give them in ample allowance for supporting them in a suitable manner. For some time the family lived very happily together, but about two years after the marriage the villagers began to remark that a very rich landlord, who resided a short distance from the castle, and whose name was Antoine Osterfeld, came every Sunday to see M. Essor. The real truth was that Osterfeld paid clandestine attentions to the countess, and he was encouraged by the parents, and particularly Mrs. Essor, in his immoral project. Such was the nature of the evidence obtained by the law officers in their early inquiries; and having ascertained thus much, they thought it essential at once to proceed to the castle, and make inquiries. They examined the countess.

At this period it is proper to state that the count had left his castle some months before for a short time; that he had charged his wife with criminality, and imputed both to her father and mother a privy of her guilt; he moreover obtained a legal prohibition for preventing Osterfeld from visiting his residence. The mother of the countess was examined, as were also her father and the servants, and the nature of the evidence was such as to authorise the officers to place those parties in custody, on the accusation of being accessories to the murder.

Whilst in prison a young woman, who happened to be a prisoner also, in an adjoining apartment to that where the Countess and Osterfeld were placed, overheard their conversation, and she communicated the substance of it to the officers.

A variety of witnesses were afterwards forthcoming, who spoke to the utterance of various expressions on the part of the Countess, her mother, and Essor, which confirmed the suspicion they had had a hand in the murder.

The countess was, therefore, submitted to a fresh examination, when the President of the Court conducted the interrogatories. The acuteness and address which he displayed were too much for her, and she confessed that Osterfeld had told her that he murdered her husband with the assistance of her father and mother; but, in the most solemn manner, she declared that she was convinced that neither of her parents had any thing to do with the crime. At this juncture Osterfeld was brought in and confronted with the countess. He first attempted to make a denial, but he at last confessed that he and Essor, with Essor's wife, all were parties to the murder. Osterfeld proposed a mild way of getting rid of the count, but Essor would not listen to this, and said that he had injuries of his own to avenge. He then stated that he was the person who dragged the count from his horse, assisted by Mr. Essor, and when the count was down he held his mouth while Essor perpetrated the murder!—(We refrain from giving the account of this act in detail, as the death of the unfortunate victim was effected in a manner which showed a great anatomical skill.)—It was Essor who put the cord about the victim's neck.

The whole were found guilty. Essor died in prison before the final trial. The other prisoners were sentenced as follows:—

Osterfeld imprisoned for life in the House of Correction, but in the mean time he is at liberty to prove that he was not the principal.

Julia Essor, the mother-in-law of the victim four years of hard labour, after which she must give security that she will be forthcoming whenever required by the government.

Amelia Uregg, three years and a similar penalty.

The three prisoners were further obliged to pay the whole expenses of the prosecution.