Saint Mary's Beacon.

VOL. VI — LEONARDTOWN, MD., THURSRDAY MORNING, MARCH 4, 1869 — NO. 20

ST MARY'S BEACON

IS PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY BY

JAMES S. DOWNS.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION.—$2.00 per annum to be paid within six months. No subscription will be received for a shorter period than six months and no paper to be discontinued until all arrearages are paid except at the option of the publisher.

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Communications of a personal character will be charged, at the same rates as advertisements; Obituaries over twenty lines in length will be charged at the rate of 50 cents per square.

All communications for publication must be accompanied with the real name of the author or no attention will be paid to them. The real name of the author will not be published, unless desired but we cannot consent to insert communication unless we know the writer.

MARYLAND LIFE

INSURANCE COMPANY.

THE progress of Life Insurance in the United States proves this great crowning triumph of modern science and philanthropy to be one of the marvelous features of our social economy.

The wisdom of all ages has devised nothing that compares with it. It is so manifestly good, that it is difficult to see how an intelligent man, with proper concern for the comfort and protection of his family, can fail to avail himself of its benefits.

Life Insurance leaves ready money to settle estates to advantage. It will prevent a sacrifice of property if a man die in debt. It is subject to no tax during life, nor Orphans' Court expenses after death. It is exempt by law from debt. It is rapidly becoming a rule that all men of just attributes insure.

Our Maryland Company commends itself to the confidence and patronage of our people in all parts of the State. Its directors are men of known integrity and ability, to whom the public may look with confidence for a just and careful supervision of its affairs. It must be clear to every intelligent mind that, if we would secure the largest prosperity to our State and people individually, we must build up our institutions and keep our capital at home.

Had the five million dollars sent out of the State annually for insurance been invested at home, it would have told favorably upon our own wealth and commerce. This is emphatically OUR COMPANY—gotten up by our best merchants to afford the opportunity for all to insure without sending the money out of our own State. The affairs of the Company are managed with economy.

Such has been our success that we were able after the second year to declare and pay in cash as large dividends as the oldest and largest company in the United States. The Company feel greatly encouraged by the patronage and co-operation they have received, and solicit a continuance of the same. The laws of trade, commerce, self-respect and self-interest combine to make this the Company for us.

Now, dear sirs, in view of all the advantages of Life Insurance as an investment—the uncertainty of life—the strong claims of wife and children upon husband and father—the uncertainty of business, and all the ordinary forms of investment—is it not the moral duty of every man to put something in a form that will prevent want and distress, or trouble on the part of those he loves?

By all means insure, and do it at once in the Maryland Company. The officers of this Company are:

GEO P THOMAS, President.

A K FORD, Secretary.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Hamilton Easter,	Geo H Hilner,
Allen A Chapman,	Thomas Cassard,
Geo P Thomas,	William Devries,
Hugh Sisson,	Charles Webb,
Hiram Woods, Jr.,	

A J MYERS, State Agent.

THE COMPANY REFER TO

Judge Magruder, Judge Ford, Judge Mason, Hon Fred Stone, Barnes Compton and Editor of Beacon.

MR. A J MYERS, the State Agent, will be in Leonardtown during the first week of Court to transact the business of the company, and will also insure *property in Baltimore Companies.*

Aug 27, 1868—tf.

NOTICE.

THINK over my annexed prices, public, and find it to your future interest to "spare that tree," and to your present, to buy your LUMBER at my yard, where you will find—

WALNUT,

CHESNUT,

WHITE OAK and HICKORY,

sawed to order at $30 per m.

Pine and other Plank at $20 per m

Scantling at $16 per m. and Hogshead Siding $16 per m. at the Mill and $18 at Darby's Landing.

My siding is cut three lengths thereby saving to the purchaser every fraction.

One thousand feet will make 22 hogsheads and leave a surplus of 10 feet.

☞ Orders respectfully solicited and promptly filled.

A W GARDINER,
Harrow Mills,
near Chaptico.

Feb 4, 1869—5w.

NOTICE.

ON and after February 19th, the New Steamer W. W. COLT, Capt. J. H. Wilson, will leave Light Street Wharf foot of Conway street, every FRIDAY at 4 P. M. for Alexandria, Washington and Potomac River Landings. Returning, leave 6th street Wharf, Washington, every TUESDAY at 6 A. M, and Prince street Wharf, Alexandria at 8½ a. m.

W. J. PENDLETON & CO., Agents,
130 Light street Wharf.

Feb 18, 1869—6m.

(Written for the Beacon.)

OBSERVATIONS UPON NATURE.

Mr. Editor:—One bright afternoon of last autumn, my lonely walk led me towards the hills, which stand not far west of your Town; and sauntering along, with my hands in my pockets, I passed a band of young-folks of both sexes, busily engaged in the fashionable game of Croquet. I stopped for a few moments to watch them, and then passed on, with a smile of satisfaction at the repeated failures of some novices in the art.

I said with a smile of satisfaction; for I was in one of those unamiable moods, brought on by indigestion, a smoky chimney, a musical neighbor, or some such incident to *Town* life,—which makes us look upon any demonstration of happiness in others, as exceedingly ill-timed, if not personally offensive. Further on, my eye fell upon a marble slab, rising above a low railing, and through the open gate I saw many slabs of white marble, while above them, the silent pine and oak trees extended their interlocking branches, and the dark green foliage shut out the sunlight, and cast a fitting gloom around the spot. At another time I should have turned towards it; for though no ghost, nor yet a student of the healing-art, I have spent many a pleasant hour walking among the monuments raised by affectionate grief—*albeit*, sometimes by pedantic affectation. Now, however, the sight had only the natural effect of subduing my feelings in some degree, and when the mellow gurgle of a stream at the foot of the hill reached my ear, I felt reproved for my ungenerous spleen, and stood a moment listening to my merry monitor with quiet pleasure.

What sage reflections and fanciful allusions this suggested to my mind, as I walked on, seek not to know. Nor, truth to tell, my friend, would these lines have ever courted your notice, but for one untimely event, which, by your leave, will also rest untold. Suffice it then, to say, that just before reaching the aforesaid stream, I climbed over the "chained-gate" to the left, stalked through the tall brown weeds and matted blackberry vines, which clung to me with most distressing tenacity, toiled up through the fragrant sassafras bushes that clothe the base of the hill, crossed the zig-zag fence on its side, then up through the yielding furrows of the corn field, and at last stood near the summit, on the edge of the wood which traverses it from North to South. I stopped here a moment before passing over, to balance accounts; and found on the *plus* side, two shoes full of sand, a dozen scratches on each hand, a case of bristling armor from the waist down, and a beating heart; while on the *minus* side, stood two lungs full of breath, half the lining of my coat, most of my physical strength, and my entire supply of ill-humor.

But the scene was varied and beautiful, and I sat awhile, yielding my mind a willing captive to its pleasing influence. The ridge to my right, passed across to the left, and seemed gradually to sink down in the distance, with a break immediately before me, which gave a view of the level country beyond; and through this the town seemed to creep timidly towards the great brick church and the grand old court house, which stood up at either end scowling at the intrusive attempt. Far off to the right and left rose innumerable hills, while nearer to me, perched upon an eminence, stood an ambitious white house, scorning the shelter of a single bough, and staring at the sun in the true style of American independence. Around was spread a most glowing picture: The brown stubble, the yellow corn, the bright foliage, covered the gently swelling hills; and here and there green pine trees contrasted pleasantly with the light brown soil, while the sunshine fell upon all in floods of mellow light. While I sat looking upon it, the faint notes of the "Southern Marseilles" (the accusations of my lady friends of a want of appreciation for music, to the contrary, notwithstanding) came stealing into my very soul, broken at intervals by the smothered cries of the Croqueters.—Giving full scope to the agreeable train of thought this scene aroused, I passed on over the top of the hill, took to the right, descended the western side through the tangled undergrowth, and suddenly emerging from the woods, found myself intruding upon the privacy of a small family of partridges, who, without waiting for the apology I would fain have offered, bustled off with indignant haste.

An old chesnut stump, gray without and charred within, clutching the hillside with its last sapless root, and over which, as I fancied, the vigorous scion at its side spread its branches with truly filial tenderness, seemed plainly to say to me: "Welcome back, my son." I sat down by my old acquaintance, and looked around for other friends. None had grown cold; none had forgotten me.—The countless hills, rising emulously one above the other, as if to greet me, and the long serpentine stream, which broadens out in our pretty little bay, sweeping away toward the South, until the last turn was just visible over the wild and wooded hills to the left, spoke to my soul as in former days. The shocks of corn stood guard upon a rising ground, as oft before I'd seen them. The dappled soil lay newly ploughed near the still green fields of tobacco. The hills around were clothed with the brilliant hues of autumn. Scattering here and there over the undulating surface,

"The chesnuts spread their palms like holy men in prayer"

while from a scarcely visible dwelling in the centre, rose the smoke in a stately column, as incense to the great Creator; and the golden sunlight rested on the scene like His approving smile.

As my eye wandered about, dreamily drinking in the delightful impression, it rested upon a slender peak, whose bright forehead modestly rising above the low hills, blushed with a rosy tint in the glow of evening. Then, indeed, my mind roused itself. Memory's troop came thronging through the "chambers of my brain." Long buried hopes sprang to life again, and I saw ——, but we will pass over this, impatient reader.

Why is it, I said to myself, as I gathered in my thoughts, that there are so few who care to enjoy this fair scene?—How many sit poring over their books, and torturing their brains at this very moment, striving, in violation of every law of nature, and years of experience, to compel their reluctant minds to toil vigorously eighteen hours out of twenty-four!—forgetting, that could they succeed, the intellect does not make up all of man, and that the body is at least a convenient vessel to contain it. Others prefer to sit smoking socially around the blazing hearth, rightly cultivating the heart, but at the expense of body and mind. Number three, to prevent *ennui*, lazily measures the so-called "walk up the road"—passing up the street on one side and down the street on the other, then straight back to his room. Lastly, there came to my mind the man who works by schedule, thinks by schedule, sleeps by schedule, and exercises by schedule.

Gentlemen, said I, (for I fancied myself addressing these different individuals,) I wish you, one and all, success.—Pursue your aim in life by the path that each has chosen; but however they may seem now to diverge, you will soon find them all rapidly gathering in to the same dark spot. The seeds of disease you are now implanting in your constitutions will surely and speedily yield a rank growth of miseries, or an early death. Look at the family record of our mother State. Mark under the first head, the names and dates of those on whom she had anchored her brightest hopes, and then turn back to the last, and compare. Begin ten years later, and run up the list, and you will find but too many of the same names, some, it may be, very near their first date of entry into her service. And before the flowers bloom again, others will lengthen that solemn roll—Stars that might have been Suns, will fade from her bright crown, and many hearts mourn their untimely waning.

For me, when I feel the blood creep sluggishly along my veins; when my lungs seem coated with dust and smoke, and my mind wanders from its task, I love to walk forth into the free air, with a companion, if a congenial one is at hand, if not,—alone. I set my back full upon bricks and mortar, follow the first path that leads from the road; cross the fields of yellow broom straw; kick the rustling leaves about, as I tramp through the woods; climb to the top of the highest hill I can find, to see old Phœbus safely to his couch; then back by some new path that leads over hill and valley, now in the warm upper air, now filling my breast with the cool delicious atmosphere that settles in the low grounds—loaded with its fresh, woody odor; and when I reach home again, I feel more healthful in body, more genial in disposition, and more vigorous in mind, than I could have felt by using any other means.

But, granting that I actually lose time by this system; that I know less law, less Greek and Mathematics, or have done less work at the end of the year,—am I certainly injured in my prospects? Have I not a healthy body, and the prospect of enjoying my full lease of years? Has not my mind its full elasticity and force—or all that nature designed for it—ready to apply itself to practical things? Is not the one great object in all our pursuits, to which all others should be subordinate, rather the development of the faculties, the elevation of the mind, to fit it to grapple with the business of life; or, better still, intrinsically to ennoble it?—And is not this end certainly defeated by the habits I have alluded to? Truly you may compel yourself to master a foreign tongue, and train your mind to logical processes, but these will not, of necessity, produce an efficient intellect.—Fit out a vessel with the most perfect machinery, and place a skillful pilot at the wheel.—yet, if you extinguish the glowing fires below, she will make no headway against the stream.

Now I contend that the study of Nature is, in its way, a most healthful training for the mind. When the faculties become wearied with their daily task, no relaxation is so refreshing as that derived from the contemplation of the bright world around us. Who does not like, sometimes, to lay aside the sober, systematic, work-day thoughts of life, and give loose rein to his imagination and boyish fancy—the bright memories of the past, and the glorious anticipations of the future? And when he draws in his thoughts again, he finds them vigorous and strong, requiring no spur, but only a strong Will to guide them. What is so well calculated to give the mind a natural and graceful cast, as the observation of Nature in her wonderful, yet simple workings? Whence, too, came all the finest figures and illustrations which adorn literature, but first from Nature? From Homer's day to that of Tennyson, she has ever been the inspirer of poets, and the inexhaustible storehouse whence they draw their most beautiful allusions. The Bible itself derives nearly all its most forcible illustrations from the same source.

Why, then, is so little study bestowed upon this great book of Nature—this oldest of God's Testaments? Is there no wisdom, no beauty in it? or can its truths be comprehended in a moment, and appreciated at a glance, whenever an essay is to be adorned, or an idea conveyed with elegance? Does Nature suffer us to scorn her until the hour of need, and then pour forth her stores in rich abundance? Not so. We must learn from this book as from others, by patient study. We can appreciate her teachings only by deep attention. She, like woman, reserves her smiles and favors for those who court them. And they who refuse to seek them thus, must forego their possession. We may draw striking analogies; but they will come at second hand. We may write verses; but they will contain no poetry. We may paint pictures; but they will be only copies.—We may read the works of poets; but feel little of their force. For can one born blind, appreciate fully a graphic description of the visible world; or the deaf mute read music, and be thrilled with ecstacy? And though our souls are so formed in harmony with the Soul of Nature, that spontaneously we feel a sympathy with all around; yet how feeble and undeveloped is this, compared with what it may become by culture; and how certainly will this element of our character be crushed out or dissipated, by violence or neglect.

And where else can we find the character of a wise and benevolent Creator, so clearly displayed? By what other means can we elevate our mind and heart so near to Him, as through his works? I speak not only of the broad landscape, the mountain and the forest; but also of a closer and more particular study of the little beings around; the humble, aye, the mean things we tread upon daily, and call them weeds and vermin. From such unpretending subjects, genius and inspiration have taught lessons of wisdom and reproof to man. These have drawn forth the deepest feelings and most graceful effusions of genuine poetry. And it is on such themes that the poet or poetaster most clearly reveals his true nature.

My auditors began gradually to drop off at this point in my remarks; but "my blood was up," as they say, and I went on.

But does Nature's influence extend no farther than to the mind? How does she cultivate the heart, that noblest part of man, whose graces all affect to cherish, so essential to true worth; but which so few do rightly value? She is the very nurse of what makes up the heart. How she helps us to retain that child-like simplicity and purity of soul, so rarely found among the men who elbow on their way through the crowded thoroughfares of life! How she wards off the blighting influence of fashion upon our simple tastes! She paints life in its brightest hues, and leaves, still clinging there, some of the sparkling dew-drops, that once so thickly studded it. To many, this may seem a doubtful blessing. But the man, whose sympathies are not barred to all but wealth or honors, desires to retain while he can, a faith in virtue; to believe still, that *his* is not the only generous nature in the universe; that selfishness is not the main-spring to all our actions. And where has liberty ever made her home, and found her truest sons but in the woods and mountains? Where do hearts and hands greet us so warmly as at the country fireside? Where is there seen such genuine piety, such deep devotion, as the parish church affords?

If, then, the influence of unstudied Nature is so potent, how much more must she exert upon all who strive to seek out her hidden ways, appreciate her wisdom and beauty, and attune their hearts to her sweet music.

Yes, said I, and when does woman seem half so queenly as when she stands

"Like Proserpine, amid the flowers, herself
The fairest flower—"

And if she scorn her sister lilies of the field, how will she brook to stand through life, watching with her winning arts, to still the first troubled beatings of that treacherous thing, the human heart?

There must have been something amusing in my manner of saying this, I fancied, for the last of my auditors seemed to vanish with an unmistakable smile upon his face.

'Tis always so, thought I, with our friends—we must either flatter or offend them. If we venture to open our hearts a little, when they are bursting with emotion, they call us childish or tiresome; sometimes even harder names. How cold the friendships of this day! And as we journey onward through the long dusty road, they grow colder and fewer, until at last we have nothing but acquaintances. Who can now boast a friend, that shares his joys and sorrows as schoolmates once did? And of those school-fellows whom Fortune has still left unscattered, some address him respectfully as Mister; others give him his surname with neighborly kindness; a few remember him by a full Christian name, while rarer and more valued than all, are they who still greet him with its first syllable, so rich in old associations.

But the one who makes Nature his friend, has no such sad experience. Each hour of intercourse deepens his admiration, his confidence, his love. She is always at hand; never growing weary of him; never refusing to respond to the feelings of his inmost soul, with a deep though silent sympathy, which the world knows little of elsewhere. When other friends forsake him, he walks forth, and she greets him as in former days. When bright hopes fade, and the world looks joyless, let him turn to her, and she will stay him in his dark dispair, with her kind maternal tenderness, until his drooping spirit revives, and he returns to busy life restored. When base feelings possess him, when furious passions tear his heart, let him but place himself in Nature's gentle hands, and her potent charms will exercise the demon from his breast, and "silence, like a poultice," soothe its festering wounds. When old age comes on, with its retrospective joys; when the battle of life has been fought, and the hero wears the laurel, or would escape the cold ingratitude of men, Nature spreads wide her fostering arms to receive him. Mount Vernon, Monticelle and Lexington bear witness to her power to please, when other sources fail. Vaucluse was Petrach's bride. It was through the silent olives of Gothsemane that the stars alone, of all his creations, watched with Him that "one hour."

Darkness was now fast gathering in, and the scene around recalled Gray's familiar lines most forcibly. But before descending, I turned to look again at that slender sunlit peak. It had vanished—all was bleak and dark as the grave. But as I strained my eyes in vain to trace its outline, a bright star slowly shone forth, from the fading glow of evening, above the very spot:—it was full of meaning for me; cannot you interpret it, friend?

*

WHAT TO EAT.—Shakespeare makes one of his characters ask: "Upon what meat doth this, 'our Cæsar, feed that he hath grown so "great?" This shows that Shakespeare, always in advance of his age, anticipated the discoveries of modern science in the art of living. The elements are so combined in food that one kind may make a man vigorous in body and mind, while another may make him as dull and slothful as a pig in his sty.—There is food that will make a man fat There is food that will make a man thin. Mr. Banting, an Englishman, made himself both slim and famous by a system which was only this: he ate food that contained little carbon in it. Chance rather than science led him to his discovery, which excited great attention in England. He left off eating fine bread, rice, and all vegetables that contain much starch. He lived chiefly on lean meats, in which nitrogen predominates, the element which nourishes the muscles, and makes a man vigorous, but not fat. To get fat, reverse this practice. Our fellow citizens of Alaska are described as plump, good humored and greasy, and like the Esquimaux, they make a good repast from a few pounds of tallow candles, washed down with a gallon or so of whale oil. To the same class of aliments belong, however, butter and lard, which play an important part in our own *cuisine.* Another important element in food is phosphorus; for while a box of matches would not enlighten the mind if put into the stomach, a certain amount of phosphorus seems essential to the brain. It is contained largely in some classes of food; for instance, in fish. Professor Agassid says that a fish diet refreshes after intellectual fatigue, and supplies intellectual deficiencies. Coarse bread, also contains phosphorous, which the refining process eliminates. There is, in these times, a great desire to improve their minds among office-seekers, if we may judge by their eagerness for an intellectual diet of "loaves and fishes."

Elaborate tables have been published showing the measure in which each kind of food contains the necessary elements.—Milk, the sole food of infancy, contains them all in just the right proportion.—Generally, various kinds of food must be used to obtain the carbon, the nitrogen and the phosphorus that are needed to supply the waste of body and mind.—But, those who do not choose to study these matters too closely, may console themselves with the fact that common observation has anticipated science, and the ordinary food of a family in good circumstances gives, in one or other of its components, every element necessary for the sustenance of life and strength.

It must be remembered, however, that it is what he digests, not what he bolts down his throat, that nourishes a man.—He may miss his aim entirely by eating too much of the very food best qualified to supply his wants. If he cannot digest it, he can appropriate to himself the virtues of neither fish nor flesh. To be well a man must follow the golden rule of moderation. A divine precept we may call it. Swedenborg persuaded himself and others that he lived in constant communication with celestial visitants. The first apparition to him, as he relates it, was opportune. While he was at supper, an angel appeared to him and said, "eat not too much." A like messenger admonished our first parents in Eden, to

Observe the rule by temperance taught,
Of not "too much" in what thou eat'st and drink'st.

Our authority for this is Milton.—Higher authority we have in the Scriptures; and those who, like Beverly Johnson, eat and drink for the service of their country, should remember the counsel of Solomon:

1. When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee.

2. And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.

3. Be not desirous of his dainties, for they are deceitful meat.

We have said enough to show our readers that eating is a important matter, and—for many good reasons, moral, physical, political and even religious—should not be slighted.—*Age.*

A little boy being asked what were his desires, replied, "Health, wealth and a writing-desk."

THE ORIGIN OF THE MOCKING-BIRD.—The young and beautiful Princess Neroyah loved the brave warrior Tonaka, but the tribes to which they respectively belonged were bitterly hostile; therefore, the secret meeting of the young lovers had to be conducted in the most adroit and disguised manner. Fortunately, Tonaka was endowed by the Great Spirit (who ever distributes his wondrous benefactions, with an all seeing eye, to the future requirement of the recipient) with a singular power of mimicry. So gifted was he that, with but slight effort, he could imitate any known bird or animal under the sun.

Often, in the stillness of the midnight hour, Neroyah hearing the preconcerted signal, would steal from her couch of leopard-skin, and seek the vast depths of the forest, where she would find her beloved waiting her with anxious impatience.—Sometimes the signal would be the shrill cry of the panther or wild-cat; again, the barking of a dog; but more frequently the exquisite notes of some forest night-bird.

This bliss endured for many moons when, notwithstanding their extreme caution, their attachment became known, and the two tribes then at war resolved that they should be put to death. The decree was unknown to either; and when they were both tied to the fatal stake, and the grim and painted warriors around them, the faggots piled ready for the fires, and all the implements of torture displayed with cruel significance, each was busy imploring the Great Spirit who sat in the clouds above and gazed down on the scene, to preserve the life and happiness of the other.

The heart of their god was touched at this devotion; this compass deigned to avert the wrath of their persecuters and he caused a strong whirl wind to blow around each, which filled the eyes of the astonished warriors with dust, and when the whirlwinds passed, the captives could not be found.

The Great Spirit, however, did not forget that the lovers, absorbed in their devotion to each other for many long months, and in the contrivance of those secret meetings which had gladdened, their live and neglected the ceremonies of devotion due to him, and therefore would not grant them the immediate union they coveted in this world, and were impious enough to prize above the joys to be sought in the happy hunting-grounds of the future existence.

He changed the young warrior to a mocking-bird, and the princess to a beautiful and wondrous bird, of rare plumage, who should have no mate, but should wander alone, the sole type of her species on earth, until the mocking-bird succeeds in producing a weird and singular note of exquisite and difficult harmony, which alone has the power of calling her to his side.

By this note alone can they know each other. Since then she has wandered over the world unrecognized, but still existent, and Tonaka, who still retains the power of imitating, sings, forever sings, imitating every sound he hears, even to the wail of the infant, and, forming every possible combination of his own contriving, hoping to discover his lost and loved Neroyah.

His lonely and loving heart prompts him to make night melodious with his music, and often the nightingale, joins him in the sad refrain; he sings softly, bends his head, and listens—it is not the voice of his lost love, and with a despairing cry, he soars away into the vast unknown.

THE EYE OF AN EAGLE.—The eyes of all birds have a peculiarity of structure which enables them to see near and distant objects equally well, and this wonderful power is carried to the greatest perfection in the bird of prey. When we recollect that an eagle will ascend more than a mile in perpendicular height, and from that enormous elevation will perceive its unsuspecting prey and pounce on it with unerring certainty, and when we see the same birds scrutinizing, with almost microscopic nicety, an object close at hand, we shall at once perceive that he possesses power of accommodating his sight to distance in a manner to which our eye is unfitted, and of which it is totally incapable.

If we take a printed page, we shall find that there is some particular distance probably ten inches, at which we can read the words and see each letter with perfect distinctness; but if we move a page to a distance of forty inches, we shall find it impossible to read it at all; a scientific man would, therefore, call ten inches the focus or focid distance of our eyes. We cannot alter this focus except by the aid of spectacles.

But an eagle has the power of altering the focus of his eye just as he pleases, he has only to look at an object at the distance of two feet or two miles in order to see it with perfect distinctness. The ball of his eye is surrounded by fifteen little plates, called, sclerotic bones. They form a complete ring, and their edges slightly overlap each other.

When he looks at a distant object, this little circle of bone expands, and the ball of the eyes being relieved from the pressure becomes flatter; and when he looks at a very near object the little bones press together, and the ball of the eye is thus squeezed into a rounder or more convex form. The effect is very familiar to everybody. A person with very round eyes is near-sighted, and only sees clearly an object that is close to him; and a person with flat eyes, as in old age, can see nothing clearly except at a distance. The eagle, by the mere will, can make his eyes round or flat, and see with equal clearness at any distance.

CASHMERE SHAWLS.—Here is the latest information respecting cashmere shawls which women love so well because they are expensive and rare: "All the best wool must be dear; a large goat gives at the most about six or eight ounces only of the grayish down which makes the shawl. This down or underwool is bleached, spun into threads and dyed of many lovely colors; and then the shawl merchants give out the yarn to their spinners with minute instructions regarding the pattern and quality. The poor Indian weaver, can get no more than seven or eight pence per day for the exquisite fabric which an empress perhaps will wear. But then a really fine cashmere will occupy a shop of three or four workers a whole twelvemonth. The plain cashmeres are woven with a thin long shuttle alone; the riches are made with woolen needles; a distinct needle for every shade of color; a quarter of an inch of such a shawl will take three oostands a whole day to complete it. Ladies ought to know that sometimes to expedite the manufacture, the cashmeres make the article in separate pieces which they sew together with such wonderful dexterity that in Paris or London many a shawl is bought for $100, which is not worth half its price. The weavers work the wrong side uppermost with a colored paper pattern before them for guides; nevertheless, they attain the most beautiful accuracy. It is this mode of working that puzzles all the imitators in Lyons, Nismas and Paisley.

The true cashmere is indeed a delightful article—so light and yet so warm, besides displaying a splendid harmony of tints, which it has taken three or four thousand years to teach the weavers, for its design is as old as the Arians. Therefore it must needs be imitated; the French make their wrap and woof of the genuine goats wool, and faithfully copy the figures and hues of the original. But they cannot, with all their machinery and manifold shuttle, match the brown fingers of the Asiatic; and the Paris cashmeres show on the reverse side cut ends of yarn which the veritable shawl never betrays: Lyons fabricates an extraordinary imitation, it is true, of the oriental article, cut with such pain and cost that the price is scarcely lower than that of the genuine Srinuggur square. Could we but have the Cashbegi's goat wool brought into the Punjaub at a cheap rate of cost, the patient humble spinners of India would beat Europe hollow, with all Europe's ingenuity. We have no machine that will go for two pence a day; for that price the Umritsur spinner's toes and fingers will work all the year round, turning out in a place like a third rate cowshed, a gorgeous blaze of color, "bright as sunlight to look at"—so the traders tell us—"and warm as sunshine to wear."

THE SEVEN ANCIENT WONDERS.—We publish the following for the satisfaction of those who are in doubt as to what are the wonderful specimens of ancient handiwork—

These were: 1. The brass Colossus at Rhodes, 121 feet high, built by Ceres, occupying twenty years in making. It stood across the harbor at Rhodes 66 years. It was bought by a Jew from the Saracens, who loaded 900 camels with brass.

2. The pyramids of Egypt. The largest one engaged 360,000 workmen, was 50 years in building, and has now stood at least 3,000 years.

3. The aqueducts of Rome, invented by Appius Claudius, the Censor.

4. Labyrinth of Psalmetichus, on the banks of the Nile, containing within one inclosure 1,000 houses and 12 royal palaces, all covered with marble and having only one entrance. The building was said to contain 3,000 chambers and a hall built of marble adorned with statures of the gods.

5. The Pharos of Alexandria, a tower of Ptolemy Philadelphus, in the year 172 before Christ. It was erected as a lighthouse, and contained magnificent galleries of marble, a large lantern at the top, the light of which was seen nearly a hundred miles off. Mirrors of an enormous size were fixed around the galleries, reflecting everything in the sea. A common tower, is now erected in the same place.

6. The walls of Babylon, built by order of Semiramis or Nebuchadnezzar, and finished in one year by 200,000 men. They were of immense thickness.

7. The Temple of Diana, at Ephesus, completed in the reign of Servius, the sixth king of Rome. It was 450 feet long, 200 broad, and was supported by 123 marble pillars.

A lady gave a fancy ball not long since, and in order to be distinguished, placed a servant at the door to announce the costumes as they entered. A couple of ladies appeared full ball-room dress. "What costume shall I announce?" asked the servant. "We are not in costume," they replied. "Two ladies without costume," shouted the servant, to the horror of everybody.

A gentleman traveling in a railway carriage was amused by a constant fire of words between two ladies. One of them at last kindly inquired if their conversation did not make his head ache; "No, ma'am; I've been married twenty years."

A lady noticed a boy sprinkling salt on the sidewalk, to take off the ice, and remarked to a friend, pointing to the salt, "Now that is true benevolence." "No," it ain't said the boy, "it's—"