

# St. Mary's Beacon

LEONARDTOWN, MD., THURSDAY MORNING, JUNE 30, 1820

VOL. VII

NO. 38

## ST. MARY'S BEACON

IN PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY BY  
JAMES S. DOWNS.

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 The name of the author will not be published unless desired, but we cannot consent to insert communications unless we know the writer.**

### THE ENCHANTED NECKLACE.

Little Gertrude sat eating a piece of brown bread by the tiny brook that flowed over the round smooth pebbles, at the foot of her father's garden.

"O dear," she exclaimed at length, "I wish I had something better than brown bread to eat. I wish I had a fairy godmother who would give me everything I wished, like the little girl in my story book. I wish I could see a fairy this minute."

### SHADE AS A FERTILIZER.

More than once we have alluded to the great importance of shading the surface soil by the use of some natural or artificial covering. Every body knows that where hay or straw is stacked out for some time, or where bushes or weeds have been heaped up for burning and allowed to remain on the field, or where the ground beneath the stacks or heaps has been shaded when next put into crops shows a heavier growth on those spots than on any other part of the field. A short time ago a Western correspondent of one of the Northern agricultural journals called attention to the fact, as if it were a new discovery. Yet no observing farmer can have failed to have noticed it, and the philosophy of it. The correspondent in question seems to have been taught by accident the advantage to be derived from shading the soil with refuse straw, and to have subsequently profited by the discovery. He remarks, that "years ago I spread some refuse straw upon a meadow and reaping therefrom an unlooked for benefit. I continued the practice subsequently, and always and ever with good results." The benefit to be derived from the same quantity of straw turned under would have been very small indeed. Spread over the surface soil, it checked evaporation by intercepting the rays of the summer sun, it decayed gradually and thus absorbed and retained moisture from the rainfall, and it also returned, as it decayed, some silicious salt to the soil, which it stood in need of. But the chief value of a mulch of this kind lies in its protection of the soil from loss by evaporation, and its beneficial effect on the chemical and electrical action which is always going on beneath a soil, and by which inorganic substances are gradually broken down and rendered soluble. It is this which makes lands newly opened from the virgin forest so rich. The leaves falling from year to year, and decaying gradually on the surface, have covered it with a thick layer of vegetable mould, rich in potash, and have also kept the surface, spongy and open, so that the descending rains could penetrate easily and be absorbed by the soil. Forest lands, notwithstanding the constant drain which the growing trees make upon the soil, not only never grow poorer, but year by year, store up in the soil a greater quantity of fertilizing constituents. It is upon this principle that mulching acts.

### THE FATE OF A FIGHTING DOG.

A man he owned a terrier dog—  
A bold, brave, and very true  
And that there pup got that there man  
In many an ugly mood.  
For the man was on his side,  
And the dog was on his side,  
So to kick that dog-dog-dog  
Was sure to raise a fight.

A woman owned a Thomas cat,  
That fit as fiddle pointed;  
And other cats got up and slid  
When that there cat was round.  
The man and his dog came along one day,  
Where the woman she did dwell,  
And the pup he growled ferociously,  
And went for the cat, pell-mell.

He tried to catch the neck of the cat,  
But the cat he wouldn't be chawed;  
So he lit on the back of that there dog,  
And bit and clawed and clawed;  
Oh, the hair it flew! and the pup he yowled!  
As the claws went into his hide,  
And chunks of flesh were peeled from his back;  
Then he summized, and kicked and died!

The man he ripped, and cursed, and swore,  
As he gathered a bigrickbat,  
That he would be durned essentially  
If he didn't kill that cat!

The woman she allowed she'd be best if he did!  
And snatched up an old shot-gun,  
Which she fired, and peppered his diaphragm,  
With bird-shot number one.

They toted him home on a window blind,  
And the doctor cured him up;  
But he never was known to fight again,  
Or to own another pup.  
Folks may turn up their snouts at this here rhyme,  
I don't care a straw for that!  
All I wanted to show is that a fighting dog  
May tackle the wrong Tom cat.

### JANE AUSTEN.

A few years ago, a gentleman visiting the beautiful cathedral of St. Paul's, London, desired to see the portrait of Jane Austen. The organist pointed it out, and said, "Pray do not tell me whether there was any thing particular about that lady; so many people want to know where she was buried." We fancy the ignorance of the honest vergers of the present day, respecting the life and character of a lady, who has so long and so deservedly been the admiration of the world of letters, is a singular evidence in her favor. Even during her lifetime she was the subject of much curiosity, and her name was mentioned in the pages of the literary world; but her correspondence nor by personal acquaintance was she known to any contemporary authors. It is probable that she never was in company with any person whose talents or celebrity equalled her own; so that her powers never could have been sharpened by collision with superior intellects, nor her imagination aided by the suggestions of others. Even during the last two or three years of her life, when her works were rising in the estimation of the public, they did not enlarge the circle of her acquaintance. Few of her readers know even her name, and none know more of her than her name. It is almost impossible to mention any other author of the time, whose personal obscurity is so complete. Fanny Burney, Madame de Arbury, was at one time mentioned by Dr. Johnson, and introduced to the wife and scholars of the day at the tables of Mrs. Thrale and the Jonsons. Anna Seward, in her self-consecrated shrine at Litchfield, would have been miserable, had she not treated the eyes of all lovers of poetry were devotedly fixed on her. Joanna Baillie and Maria Edgeworth were the most popular of the day; they loved the privacy of their own families, one with her brother and sister in their Hampshire hills, the other in her more distant retreats in Ireland; but fame pursued them, and they were the favorite correspondents of Sir Walter Scott. The chief part of Charlotte Brontë's life was spent in a world solitude compared with which St. Helena might be considered to be the gay world; and yet she attained to personal distinction which never fell from her. Austen's lot, when she visited her kind publisher in London, literary men and women were invited purposely to meet her; Thackeray bestowed upon her the honor of his notice; and once in Willie's Rooms, she had to walk shy and trembling through an avenue of lords and ladies, drawn up for the purpose of gazing at the author of "Jane Eyre." Miss Mitford, too, lived quietly in "Dear Village," devoting her spare time and talents to the benefit of a father severely afflicted with the gout; and she lived five years in London. She numbered Millman and Talouff among her correspondents; and her works were a passport to the society of many who would not otherwise have sought her. Hundreds admired Miss Mitford on account of her writings for one who ever connected the idea of Miss Austen with the press.

It was not till toward the close of her life, when the last of the works that she saw published was in the press, that she received the only mark of distinction that was ever bestowed upon her; and that was remarkable for the high quarter whence it emanated rather than for any actual increase of fame that it conferred. It happened thus. In the autumn of 1815 she nursed her brother Henry through a dangerous fever and slow convalescence at his house in Hans Place. He was attended by one of the Prince Regent's physicians. All attempts to keep her secret had at this time failed, and though it had never appeared on a titled page, yet it was pretty well known; and the friendly physician was aware that his patient's nurse was the author of "Pride and Prejudice." Accordingly he informed her one day that the Prince was a great admirer of her novels; that he read them often, and kept a set in every one of his residences; that he himself therefore had thought it right to inform his Royal Highness that Miss Austen was staying in London, and that the Prince had desired Mr. Clarke, the librarian of Carlton House to wait upon her. The next day Mr. Clarke made his appearance, and invited her to Carlton House, saying that he had the Prince's instructions to show her the library and other apartments, and to pay her every possible attention. The invitation was of course accepted, and during the visit to Carlton House Mr. Clarke declared himself commissioned to say that if Miss Austen had any other novel forthcoming she was at liberty to dedicate it to the Prince. Accordingly such a dedication was immediately prefixed to "Emma," which was at that time in the press.—*Harper's Magazine for July.*

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A Boston correspondent assures us that the following one of the many funny anecdotes that Portsmouth, New Hampshire, people tell of Mr. Webster, has not appeared in print:

During Mr. W.'s residence in that city in his younger days, there was a furniture-dealer named Jenkins doing business in the town, who was a very well informed as well as ambitious man. He was patronized by Mr. Webster, who often dropped into the shop to order or superintend the making of some piece of furniture. These opportunities of conversing with a man so learned as Mr. W. were the delight of Mr. Jenkins's life; and on the removal of the former to Boston, the payment of a considerable debt due Mr. J. was willingly left for future settlement. Attempts were made at various times to collect the debt—always in vain. Finally, Mr. Jenkins determined to go to Boston and see Mr. Webster himself. He reached the city after a long and fatiguing stage-ride, and making a Sunday toilet, proceeded to the large house on the corner of High and Sumner streets. "Is Mr. Webster in?" asked he of the servant who answered the bell. "Yes, but he cannot possibly be seen." "But I must see him." "No; he is entertaining some Washington gentlemen—they are dining." Mr. Jenkins had heard of subterfuges, and believed not the serving man. "Well, I will come in and wait till dinner is over." The puzzled servant, needed below stairs, decided to take the important stranger's name to his master. Fanny the surly of Mr. Jenkins, as seeing Mr. Webster rushing up stairs and insisting upon the poor man's joining him at the dinner-table! He would take no denial, and carried him forcibly almost, introducing him as "my old and dear friend, Mr. Jenkins, of Portsmouth," and seating him between a distinguished Bostonian and the Secretary of the Navy; and to use the words of the worthy cabinet-maker, "I was for four mortal hours just as good as any body; my opinion was asked on a good many subjects, and they all seemed to think I knew a good deal. I invited to visit them, and to go to Washington, and every body asked me to drink wine with them; and, by George! I made up my mind never to ask for my bill again. I was a poor man, and needed my money, but I had been treated as I never expected to be treated in this world, and I was willing to pay for it."—*Editor's Drawer, in Harper's Magazine for July.*

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The fears of the millions of lovers of Dickens, on both sides of the Atlantic, that the "Mystery of Edwin Drood" was left unfinished, are dispelled by the announcement of the London publishers. They state that they have sufficient material on hand for three more complete numbers, and that from a mass of memoranda the story can easily be completed by a competent hand. It is perhaps premature to speculate on the person whom Dickens has designated to finish his novel, but it is impossible to avoid thinking of his friend and relative, Wilkie Collins, in this connection.—*N. Y. World.*

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And that there pup got that there man  
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That fit as fiddle pointed;  
And other cats got up and slid  
When that there cat was round.  
The man and his dog came along one day,  
Where the woman she did dwell,  
And the pup he growled ferociously,  
And went for the cat, pell-mell.

He tried to catch the neck of the cat,  
But the cat he wouldn't be chawed;  
So he lit on the back of that there dog,  
And bit and clawed and clawed;  
Oh, the hair it flew! and the pup he yowled!  
As the claws went into his hide,  
And chunks of flesh were peeled from his back;  
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The man he ripped, and cursed, and swore,  
As he gathered a bigrickbat,  
That he would be durned essentially  
If he didn't kill that cat!

The woman she allowed she'd be best if he did!  
And snatched up an old shot-gun,  
Which she fired, and peppered his diaphragm,  
With bird-shot number one.

They toted him home on a window blind,  
And the doctor cured him up;  
But he never was known to fight again,  
Or to own another pup.  
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### JANE AUSTEN.

A few years ago, a gentleman visiting the beautiful cathedral of St. Paul's, London, desired to see the portrait of Jane Austen. The organist pointed it out, and said, "Pray do not tell me whether there was any thing particular about that lady; so many people want to know where she was buried." We fancy the ignorance of the honest vergers of the present day, respecting the life and character of a lady, who has so long and so deservedly been the admiration of the world of letters, is a singular evidence in her favor. Even during her lifetime she was the subject of much curiosity, and her name was mentioned in the pages of the literary world; but her correspondence nor by personal acquaintance was she known to any contemporary authors. It is probable that she never was in company with any person whose talents or celebrity equalled her own; so that her powers never could have been sharpened by collision with superior intellects, nor her imagination aided by the suggestions of others. Even during the last two or three years of her life, when her works were rising in the estimation of the public, they did not enlarge the circle of her acquaintance. Few of her readers know even her name, and none know more of her than her name. It is almost impossible to mention any other author of the time, whose personal obscurity is so complete. Fanny Burney, Madame de Arbury, was at one time mentioned by Dr. Johnson, and introduced to the wife and scholars of the day at the tables of Mrs. Thrale and the Jonsons. Anna Seward, in her self-consecrated shrine at Litchfield, would have been miserable, had she not treated the eyes of all lovers of poetry were devotedly fixed on her. Joanna Baillie and Maria Edgeworth were the most popular of the day; they loved the privacy of their own families, one with her brother and sister in their Hampshire hills, the other in her more distant retreats in Ireland; but fame pursued them, and they were the favorite correspondents of Sir Walter Scott. The chief part of Charlotte Brontë's life was spent in a world solitude compared with which St. Helena might be considered to be the gay world; and yet she attained to personal distinction which never fell from her. Austen's lot, when she visited her kind publisher in London, literary men and women were invited purposely to meet her; Thackeray bestowed upon her the honor of his notice; and once in Willie's Rooms, she had to walk shy and trembling through an avenue of lords and ladies, drawn up for the purpose of gazing at the author of "Jane Eyre." Miss Mitford, too, lived quietly in "Dear Village," devoting her spare time and talents to the benefit of a father severely afflicted with the gout; and she lived five years in London. She numbered Millman and Talouff among her correspondents; and her works were a passport to the society of many who would not otherwise have sought her. Hundreds admired Miss Mitford on account of her writings for one who ever connected the idea of Miss Austen with the press.

It was not till toward the close of her life, when the last of the works that she saw published was in the press, that she received the only mark of distinction that was ever bestowed upon her; and that was remarkable for the high quarter whence it emanated rather than for any actual increase of fame that it conferred. It happened thus. In the autumn of 1815 she nursed her brother Henry through a dangerous fever and slow convalescence at his house in Hans Place. He was attended by one of the Prince Regent's physicians. All attempts to keep her secret had at this time failed, and though it had never appeared on a titled page, yet it was pretty well known; and the friendly physician was aware that his patient's nurse was the author of "Pride and Prejudice." Accordingly he informed her one day that the Prince was a great admirer of her novels; that he read them often, and kept a set in every one of his residences; that he himself therefore had thought it right to inform his Royal Highness that Miss Austen was staying in London, and that the Prince had desired Mr. Clarke, the librarian of Carlton House to wait upon her. The next day Mr. Clarke made his appearance, and invited her to Carlton House, saying that he had the Prince's instructions to show her the library and other apartments, and to pay her every possible attention. The invitation was of course accepted, and during the visit to Carlton House Mr. Clarke declared himself commissioned to say that if Miss Austen had any other novel forthcoming she was at liberty to dedicate it to the Prince. Accordingly such a dedication was immediately prefixed to "Emma," which was at that time in the press.—*Harper's Magazine for July.*

### ANECDOTE OF DANIEL WEBSTER.

A Boston correspondent assures us that the following one of the many funny anecdotes that Portsmouth, New Hampshire, people tell of Mr. Webster, has not appeared in print:

During Mr. W.'s residence in that city in his younger days, there was a furniture-dealer named Jenkins doing business in the town, who was a very well informed as well as ambitious man. He was patronized by Mr. Webster, who often dropped into the shop to order or superintend the making of some piece of furniture. These opportunities of conversing with a man so learned as Mr. W. were the delight of Mr. Jenkins's life; and on the removal of the former to Boston, the payment of a considerable debt due Mr. J. was willingly left for future settlement. Attempts were made at various times to collect the debt—always in vain. Finally, Mr. Jenkins determined to go to Boston and see Mr. Webster himself. He reached the city after a long and fatiguing stage-ride, and making a Sunday toilet, proceeded to the large house on the corner of High and Sumner streets. "Is Mr. Webster in?" asked he of the servant who answered the bell. "Yes, but he cannot possibly be seen." "But I must see him." "No; he is entertaining some Washington gentlemen—they are dining." Mr. Jenkins had heard of subterfuges, and believed not the serving man. "Well, I will come in and wait till dinner is over." The puzzled servant, needed below stairs, decided to take the important stranger's name to his master. Fanny the surly of Mr. Jenkins, as seeing Mr. Webster rushing up stairs and insisting upon the poor man's joining him at the dinner-table! He would take no denial, and carried him forcibly almost, introducing him as "my old and dear friend, Mr. Jenkins, of Portsmouth," and seating him between a distinguished Bostonian and the Secretary of the Navy; and to use the words of the worthy cabinet-maker, "I was for four mortal hours just as good as any body; my opinion was asked on a good many subjects, and they all seemed to think I knew a good deal. I invited to visit them, and to go to Washington, and every body asked me to drink wine with them; and, by George! I made up my mind never to ask for my bill again. I was a poor man, and needed my money, but I had been treated as I never expected to be treated in this world, and I was willing to pay for it."—*Editor's Drawer, in Harper's Magazine for July.*

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