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Poetry.

My Creed.

BY ALICE CARY.

I hold that Christian grace abounds
  Where charity is seen; that when
We climb to heaven 'tis on the rounds
  Of love to men.

I hold all else, named piety,
  A selfish scheme, a vain pretense;
Where center is not—can there be
  Circumference?

This I moreover hold, and dare
  Affirm where'er my rhyme may go,
Whatever things be sweet or fair,
  Love makes them so.

Whether it be the lullabies
  That charm to rest the nursing bird,
Or that sweet confidence of sighs
  And blushes, made without a word.

'Tis not the wide phylactery,
  Nor stubborn fast, nor stated prayers,
That make us saints; we judge the tree
  By what it bears.

And when man can't live apart
  From works, on theologic trust,
I know the blood about his heart
  Is dry as dust.

Miscellany.

From Every Saturday.

The Signal-Man.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

"Halloa! Below there!"

When he heard a voice thus calling to him, he was standing at the door of his box, with a flag in his hand, furled around its short pole. One would have thought, considering the nature of the ground, that he could not have doubted from what quarter the voice came; but, instead of looking up to where I stood on the top of the steep cutting nearly over his head, he turned himself about and looked down the Line. There was something remarkable in his manner of doing so, though I could not have said, for my life, what. But, I know it was remarkable enough to attract my notice, even though his figure was foreshortened and shadowed, down in the deep trench, and mine was high above him, and so steeped in the glow of an angry sunset that I shaded my eyes with my hand before I saw him at all.

"Halloa! Below!"

From looking down the Line, he turned himself about again, and, raising his eyes, saw my figure high above him.

"Is there any path by which I can come down and speak to you?"

He looked up at me without replying, and I looked down at him without pressing him too soon with a repetition of my idle question. Just then, there came a vague vibration in the earth and air; quickly changing into a violent pulsation, and an oncoming rush that caused me to start back, as though it had force to draw me down. When such vapor as rose to my sight from this rapid train had passed me and was skimming away over the landscape, I looked down again and saw him refurling the flag he had shown while the train went by.

I repeated my inquiry. After a pause, during which he seemed to regard me with fixed attention, he motioned with his rolled up flag toward a point on my level, some two or three hundred yards distant. I called down to him all, "All right!" and made for that point. There, by dint of looking closely about me, I found a rough, zigzag descending path notched out, which I followed.

The cutting was extremely deep, and unusually precipitate. It was made through a clammy stone that became oozier and wetter as I went down. For these reasons, I found the way long enough to give me time to recall a singular air of reluctance or compulsion with which he had pointed out the path.

When I came down low enough upon the zigzag descent to see him again, I saw that he was standing between the rails on the way by which the train had lately passed, in an attitude as if he was waiting for me to appear. He had his left hand at his chin, and that left elbow rested on his right hand crossed over his breast. His attitude was one of such expectation and watchfulness, that I stopped a moment, wondering at it.

I resumed my downward way, and, stepping out upon the level of the railroad and drawing nearer to him, saw that he was a dark, sallow man, with a dark beard and rather heavy eyebrows. His post was in as solitary and dismal a place as ever I saw. On either side, a dripping wet wall of jagged stone, excluding all view but a strip of sky; the perspective one way, only a crooked prolongation of this great dungeon; the shorter perspective in the other direction terminating in a gloomy red light, and the gloomier entrance to a black tunnel, in whose massive architecture there was a barbarous, depressing and forbidding air. But little sunlight ever found its way to this spot, and it had an earthy, deadly smell; and so much cold wind rushed thro' it, that it struck chill to me, as if I had left the natural world.

Before he stirred, I was near enough to him to have touched him. Not even then removing his eyes from mine, he stepped back one step and lifted his hand.

This was a lonesome post to occupy (I said), and it had riveted my attention when I looked down from up yonder. A visitor was a rarity, I should suppose; not an unwelcome rarity, I hoped? In me, he merely saw a man who had been shut up within narrow limits all his life, and who, being at last set free had a newly awakened interest in these great works. To such purpose I spoke to him; but I am far from sure of the terms I used, for, besides that I am not happy in opening any conversation, there was something in the man that daunted me.

He directed a most curious look toward the red light near the tunnel's mouth, and looked all about it, as if something were missing from it, and then looked at me.

"That light was part of his charge. Was it not?"

He answered in a low voice, "Don't you know it is?"

The monstrous thought came into my mind as I perused the fixed eyes and the saturnine face, that this was a spirit, not a man. I have speculated since whether there may have been infection in his mind.

In my turn, I stepped back. But in making the action I detected in his eyes some latent fear of me. This put the monstrous thought to flight.

"You look at me," I said, forcing a smile, "as if you had a dread of me."

"I was doubtful," he returned, "whether I had seen you before."

"Where?"

He pointed to the red light he had looked at

"There?" I said.

Intently watchful of me, he replied (but without a sound) "Yes."

"My good fellow, what should I do there? However, be that as it may, I never was there, you may swear."

"I think I may," he rejoined. "Yes, I am sure I may."

His manner cleared, like my own. He replied to my remarks with readiness, and in well chosen words. Had he much to do there? Yes, that was to say, he had enough responsibility to bear; but exactness and watchfulness were what was required of him, and of actual work—manual labor—he had next to none. To change that signal, to trim these lights, and to turn this iron handle now and then, was all he had to do under that head. Regarding those many long and lonely hours of which I seemed to make so much, he could only say that the routine of his life had shaped itself into that form, and he had grown used to it. He had taught himself a language down here—if only to know it by sight, and to have formed his own crude ideas of its pronunciation, could be called learning it. He had also worked at fractions and decimals, and tried a little algebra; but he was, and had been as a boy, a poor hand at figures. Was it necessary for him, when on duty, always to remain in that channel of damp air, and could he never rise into the sunshine from between those high stone walls? Why, that depended upon times and circumstances. Under some conditions there would be less upon the Line than under others, and the same held good as to certain hours of the day and night. In bright weather, he did choose occasions for getting a little above these lower shadows; but, being at all times liable to be called by his electric bell, and at such time listening for it with redoubled anxiety, the relief was less than I would suppose.

He took me into his box, where was a fire, a desk for an official book in which he had to make certain entries, a telegraphic instrument with its dial face and needles, and the little bell of which he had spoken. On my trusting that he would excuse the remark that he had been well educated, and (I hoped I might say without offense) perhaps educated above that station, he observed that instances of slight incongruity in such wise would rarely be found wanting among large bodies of men; that he had heard it was so in work-houses, in the police force, even in that last desperate resource, the army; and that he knew it was so, more or less, in any great railway staff. He had been, when young, (if I could believe it, sitting in that hut; he scarcely could), a student of natural philosophy, and had attended lectures; but he had run wild, misused his opportunities, gone down, and never risen again. He had no complaint to offer about that. He had made his bed, and he lay upon it. It was far too late to make another.

All that I have here condensed, he said in a quiet manner, with his grave, dark regards divided between me and the fire. He threw in the word "Sir" from time to time, and especially when he referred to his youth, as though to request me to understand that he claimed to be nothing but what I found him. He was several times interrupted by the little bell, and had to read off messages and send replies. Once he had to stand without the door and display a flag as a train passed, and make some verbal communication to the driver. In the discharge of his duties I observed him to be remarkably exact and vigilant, breaking off his discourse at a syllable, and remaining silent until what he had to do was done.

In a word, I should have set this man down as one of the safest of men to be employed in that capacity, but for the circumstances that while he was speaking to me, he twice broke off with a fallen color, turned his face toward the little bell when it did not ring, opened the door of the hut, (which was kept shut to exclude the unhealthy damp) and looked out toward the red light near the mouth of the tunnel. On both of those occasions he came back to the fire, with the inexplicable air upon him which I had remarked, without being able to define, when we were so far asunder.

Said I, when I rose to leave him, "you almost make me think that I have met with a contented man."

(I am afraid I must acknowledge that I said it to lead him on.)

"I believe I used to be so," he rejoined, in the low voice in which he had first spoken; "but I am troubled, sir—greatly troubled."

He would have recalled the words if he could. He had said them, and I took them up quickly.

"With what? What is your trouble?"

"It is very difficult to impart, sir. It is very, very difficult to speak of. If ever you make me another visit, I will try to tell you."

"But I expressly intend to make you another visit. Say, when shall it be?"

"I go off early in the morning, and I shall be on again at ten to-morrow night, sir."

"I will come at eleven."

He thanked me, and went out at the door with me. "I'll show you my white light," he said, in his peculiar low voice, "till you have found the way up. When you have found it, don't call out! And when you are at the top, don't call out!"

His manner seemed to make the place strike colder to me, but I said no more than "Very well."

"And when you come down to-morrow night, don't call out! Let me ask you a parting question. What made you cry 'Halloa! Below there!' to-night?"

"Heaven knows," said I. "I cried something to that effect——"

"Not to that effect, sir. Those were the very words. I know them well."

"Admit those were the very words. I said them, no doubt, because I saw you below."

"For no other reason?"

"What other reason could I have possibly had?"

"You had no feeling that they were conveyed to you in any supernatural way."

"No."

He wished me good night, and held up his light. I walked up the side of the down Line of rails (with a very disagreeable sensation of a train coming behind me), until I found the path. It was easier to mount than to descend, and I got to my inn without any adventure.

Punctual to my appointment, I placed my foot on the zigzag next night, as the distant clocks were striking eleven. He was waiting for me at the bottom, with his white light on. "I have not called out," I said when we came close together; "may I speak now?" "By all means, sir." "Good night, then, and here's my hand." "Good night, sir, and here's mine." With that we walked side by side to his box, entered it, and sat down by the fire.

"I have made up my mind, sir," he began, bending forward as soon as we were seated, and speaking in a tone but a little above a whisper, "that you will not have to ask me twice what troubles me. I took you for some one else, yesterday evening. That troubles me."

"That mistake?"

"No. That some one else."

"Who is it?"

"I don't know."

"Like me?"

"I don't know. I never saw the face. The left arm is across the face, and the right arm is waved. Violently waved. This way."

I followed his action with my eyes, and it was the action of an arm gesticulating with the utmost passion and vehemence: "For God's sake clear the way!"

"One moonlight night," said the man, "I was sitting here, when I heard a voice cry 'Halloa! Below there!' I started up, looked from the door, and saw this some one else standing by the red light near the tunnel, waving as I just now showed you. The voice seemed hoarse with shouting, and it cried, 'Look out! Look out!' And then again, 'Halloa! Below there! Look out!' I caught up my lamp, turned it on red, and ran toward the figure, calling, 'What's wrong? What has happened? Where?' It stood just outside the blackness of the tunnel. I advanced so close upon it that I wondered at its keeping the sleeve across its eyes. I ran right up to it, and had my hand stretched out, to pull the sleeve away, when it was gone."

"Into the tunnel?" said I.

"No. I ran on into the tunnel, five hundred yards. I stopped, and held my lamp above my head, and saw the figures of the measured distance, and saw the wet stains stealing down the walls and trickling thro' the arch. I ran out again, faster than I had ran in (for I had a mortal abhorrence of the place upon me,) and looked all around the red light with my own red light, and I went up the iron ladder to the gallery atop of it, and I came down again, and ran back here. I telegraphed both ways: 'An alarm had been given. Is anything wrong?' The answer came back both ways, 'All well.'"

Resisting the slow touch of a frozen finger tracing out my spine, I showed him how that his figure must be a deception of his sense of sight, and how the figures, originating in disease of the delicate nerves that minister to the functions of the eye, were known to have often troubled patients, some of whom had become conscious of the nature of their afflictions, and had even proved it by experiments upon the nerves. "As to an imaginary cry," said I, "do but listen for a moment to the wind in this unnatural valley while we speak so low, and to the wild harp it makes of the telegraph wires."

That was all very well, he returned, after we had sat listening for awhile, and he ought to know something of the wind and wires, he who had so often passed long winter nights there, alone and watching. But he would beg to remark that he had not finished.

I asked his pardon, and he slowly added these words, touching my arm:

"Within six hours after the appearance, the memorable accident on this Line happened, and within ten hours the dead and wounded were brought along through the tunnel over the spot where the figure stood."

A disagreeable shudder crept over me but I did my best against it. It was not to be denied, I rejoined, that this was a remarkable coincidence, calculated to deeply impress the mind. But it was unquestionable, that remarkable coincidences did continually occur, and they may be taken into account in dealing with such a subject. Though to be sure, I must admit, I added (for I thought I saw that he was going to bring the objection to bear upon me,) men of common sense did not allow much for coincidences in making the ordinary calculation of life.

He again begged to remark that he had not finished.

I again begged his pardon for being betrayed into interruptions.

"This," he said, again laying his hand upon my arm and glancing over his shoulder with hollow eyes, "was just a year ago. Six or seven months passed away, and I had recovered from the surprise and shock, when, one morning, as the day was breaking, I, standing at that door, looked toward the red light, and saw the spectre again." He stopped with a fixed look at me.

"Did it cry out?"

"No; it was silent."

"Did it wave its arms?"

"No; it leaned against the shaft of the light, with both hands before the face. Like this."

Once more I followed his action with my eyes. It was an action of mourning. I have seen such an attitude in stone figures on tombs.

"Did you go up to it?"

"I came in and sat down, partly to collect my thoughts, partly because it had turned me faint. When I went to the door again, daylight was above me, and the ghost was gone."

"But nothing followed? Nothing came of this?"

He touched me on the arm with his forefinger twice or thrice, giving a ghastly nod each time:

"That very day, as the train came out of the tunnel, I noticed at a carriage window on my side, what looked like a confusion of hands and heads, and something waved. I saw it just in time to signal the driver, Stop. He shut off, and put his brake on, but the train drifted past here a hundred and fifty yards or more. I ran after it, and as I went along I heard terrible screams and cries. A beautiful young lady had died instantaneously in one of the compartments, and was brought in here and laid down on the floor between us."

Involuntarily I pushed my chair back, as I looked from the boards at which he pointed to himself.

"True, sir. True. Precisely as it happened so I tell it to you."

I could think of nothing to say, to any purpose, and my mouth was very dry. The wind and the wires took up the story, with a long lamenting wail.

He resumed. "Now, sir, mark this, and judge how my mind is troubled. The spectre came back, a week ago. Ever since, it has been there now and again, by fits and starts."

"At the light?"

"At the Danger light."

"What does it seem to do?"

He repeated, if possible, with increased passion and vehemence, that former gesticulation of for God's sake clear the way!"

Then he went on. "I have no peace or rest for it. It calls to me, for many minutes together, in an agonized manner. Below there! Look out! Look out! It stands waving to me. It rings my little bell——"

I caught at that. "Did it ring your bell yesterday evening when I was here, and you went to the door?"

"Twice."

"Why see," said I, "how your imagination misleads you. My eyes were on the bell, and my ears were open to the bell, and if I am a living man, it did not ring at those times. No, nor at any other time, except when it was rung in the natural course of physical things by the station communicating with you."

He shook his head. "I have never made a mistake as to that, yet, sir. I have never confused the spectre's ring with the man's. The ghost's ring is a strange vibration that it derives from nothing else, and I have not asserted that the bell stirs to the eye. I do not wonder, that you failed to here it. But I heard it."

"And did the spectre seem to be there, when you looked out?"

"It was there."

"Both times?"

He repeated grimly: 'Both times.'

"Will you come to the door with me, and look for it now?"

He bit his under lip as though he was somewhat unwilling, but rose. I opened the door and stood on the step, while he stood in the door-way. There, was the danger-light. There, was the dismal mouth of the tunnel. There were the high wet stone walls of the cutting. There, were the stars above them.

"Do you see it?" I asked him taking particular note of his face. His eyes were prominent and strained; but not very much more so, perhaps, than my own had been when I directed them earnestly toward the same point.

"No," he answered. "It is not there."

"Agreed," said I.

We went in again, shut the door; and resumed our seats. I was thinking how best to improve this advantage, if it might be called one, when he took up the conversation in such a matter of course way, so assuming that there could be no serious question of fact between us, that I felt myself placed in the weakest positions.

"By this time you will fully understand, sir," he said, "that what troubles me so dreadfully, is the question what does the spectre mean?"

I was not sure, I told him, that I did fully understand.

"What is the warning against?" he said, ruminating, with his eyes on the fire, and only by times turning them to me. "What is the danger? There is danger overhanging, somewhere on the Line—Some dreadful calamity will happen. It is not to be doubted this third time, after what has gone before. But surely this is a cruel haunting me. What can I do?"

He pulled out his handkerchief, and wiped the drops from his forehead.

"If I telegraph Danger on either side of me, or on both, I can see no reason for it," he went on, wiping the palms of his hands. "I should get into trouble, and do no good. They would think I was mad. This is the way it would work:—Message: 'Danger! Take care!' Answer:—'What Danger? Where?' Message: 'Don't know. But for God's sake take care!' They would displace me. What else could they do?

His pain of mind was most pitiable to see. It was the mental torture of conscientious man, oppressed beyond endurance by an unintelligible responsibility involving life.

"When it first stood under the Danger-light," he went on, putting his dark hair back from his head, and drawing his hands outward across and across his temples in an extremity of feverish distress, "Why not tell me where the accident was to happen,—if it must happen? Why not tell me how it could be averted—if it could have been averted? When on its second coming it hid its face, why not tell me instead: 'She is going to die. Let them keep her at home?" If it came, on those two occasions, only to show me that its warnings were true, and so to prepare me for the third, why not warn me plainly now? And I, Lord help me! A mere poor signalman on this solitary station! Why not go to somebody with credit to be believed, and power to act? When I saw him in this state, I saw that for the poor man's sake, as well as for the public safety, what I had to do for the time was to compose his mind. Therefore, setting aside all question of reality or unreality between us, I represented to him that whoever thoroughly discharged his duty, must do well; and that at least it was his comfort that he understood his duty, though he did not understand these confounding appearances. In this effort I succeeded far better than in the attempt to reason him out of his conviction. He became calm; the occupations incidental to his post as the night advanced, began to make large demands on his attention; and I left him in the morning. I had offered to stay through the night, but he would not hear of it.

That I more than once looked back at the red light as I ascended the pathway, that I did not like the red light, and that I should have slept but poorly if my bed had been under it, I see no reason to conceal. Nor did I like the two sequences of the accident and the dead girl. I see no reason to conceal that, either.

But what ran most in my thoughts was the conviction how ought I to act, having become the recipient of this disclosure? I had proved the man to be intelligent, vigilant, painstaking and exact; but how long might he remain so, in his state of mind? Though in a subordinate position, still he held a most important trust, and would I (for instance) like to stake my life on the chances of his continuing to execute it with precision?

Unable to overcome a feeling that there would be something treacherous in my communicating what he had told me to his superiors in the Company, without first being plain with himself and proposing a middle course to him, I ultimately resolved to offer to accompany him (otherwise keeping his secret for the present) to the wisest medical practitioner we could hear of in those parts, and to take his opinion. A change in his time of duty would come round next night, he had apprised me, and he would be off an hour or two after sunrise, and on again after sunset. I had appointed to return accordingly.

Next evening was a lovely evening, and I walked out early to enjoy it. The sun was not yet quite down when I traversed the field path near the top of the deep cutting. I would extend my walk for an hour, I said to myself, an half an hour on, and half an hour back, and it would then be time to go to my signalman's box:

Before pursuing my stroll, I stepped to the brink, and mechanically looked down, from where I had first seen him. I cannot describe the thrill that seized upon me, when close at the mouth of the tunnel, I saw the appearance of a man, with his left sleeve across his eyes, passionately waving his right arm.

The nameless horror that oppressed me, passed in a moment, for in a moment I saw that this appearance of a man was a man indeed, and that there was a little group of other men standing at a short distance, to whom he seemed to be rehearsing the guesture he made. The danger light was not yet lighted. Against its shaft, a little low hut entirely new to me, had been made of some wooden supports and tarpaulin. It looked no bigger than a bed.

With an irresistible sense that something was wrong—with flashing of self-reproachful fear that fatal mischief had come of my leaving the man there, causing no one to be sent to overlook or correct what he did—I descended the notched path with all the speed I could make.

"What is the matter?" I asked the men.

"Signalman killed this morning, sir."

"Not the man belonging to that box?"

"Yes, sir."

"Not the man I know?"

"You will recognize him, sir, if you knew him," said the man who spoke for the others, solemnly uncovering his own head and raising the end of the tarpaulin, "for his face is quite composed."

"O! how did this happen, how did this happen?" I asked, turning from one to the other, as the curtain closed in again.

"He was cut down by an engine, sir. No man in England knew his work better. But somehow he was not clear of the outer rail. It was just at broad day. He had struck the light and had the lamp in his hand as the engine came out of the tunnel his back was towards her, and she cut him down. That man drove her, and was showing how it happened. Show the gentleman, Tom."

The man who wore a rough, dark dress, stepped back to his former place at the mouth of the tunnel.

"Coming round the curve in the tunnel, sir," he said, "I saw him at the end, like as if I saw him down a prespective glass. There was no time to check speed, and I knew him to be very careful. As he didn't seem to take heed of the whistle, I shut it of when we were running upon him and called to him as loud as I could call.

"What did you say?"

"I said, below there! Look out! for God's sake clear the way!"

I started.

"Ah! it was a dreadful time, sir. I never left off calling to him. I put this arm before my eyes, not to see, and I waved this arm to to the last; but it was no use.

Without prolonging the narrative to dwell on any one of its curious circumstances more than on any other, I may, in closing it, point out the coincidence that the warning of the engine driver included not only the words which the unfortunate signalman had repeated to me as haunting him, but also the words which I myself—not he—had attached, and that only in my own mind, to the gesticulation he had imitated.

Snakes at Dinner.

HOW REPTILES ARE FED AT THE LONDON ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

George Guyon, in the *Science Gossip*, gives a curious account of the feeding of the snakes in the London Zoological Gardens?

'As probably not many of my readers have witnessed the operation of feeding the reptiles at the Zoological Gardens, perhaps a short account of what was seen during a visit a few weeks ago may be interesting. It must be premised that the sight is not altogether an agreeable one; but, notwithstanding, it seemed to exercise a sort of fascination over the spectators, and some ladies, who kept expressing their horror and disgust, were nevertheless as eager as any to see all that was going on. One might go there many times without seeing the operation, as these creatures are only fed once a week; or, as the keeper said, 'all Fridays in the year except Good Friday.'

'It was quite by accident that I happened to enter the reptile house a few minutes before the feeding commenced, which was late in the afternoon. Before beginning, the keeper locked the door, apparently to prevent persons crowding in as not many can see well at the same time. He then brought supplies of the different kinds of prey, and cast them into the serpent's dens, the doomed animals being young rabbits, young mice, white mice, ducks, fowls, sparrows and frogs, which were distributed to suit the size of the various snakes, except the frogs which were provided for the aquatic species.

'The large boa constrictors, into whose case three rabbits, grown specimens, were introduced, seemed the principal attraction, but their mightinesses were in no hurry to dine. As is generally the case after long watching, I was looking at something else when there was an exclamation, 'He's got it!' and I found one of these large snakes was coiled round a rabbit. The latter, I thought, struggled a little, but it might be fancy; all remained quiet for a few minutes, and then the huge reptile uncoiled himself, and the rabbit lay perfectly dead. The boa showed no inclination to eat its victim, but glided about in a languid manner after the other rabbits, who showed little sense of their danger. It was curious to see them in happy ignorance sniffing at their dead companion, or putting up their noses to a hand held near the glass. Two ducks were introduced into the den of another large boa; or, rather, I believe it was a python, which is the boa constrictor of the old world, and similar in size and habits.

'He moved slowly after the birds, which showed more fear than the rabbits, but made no attempt to seize them. While leaning over the bar to observe better, two or three loud thumps sounded on the glass front, near my head, and some bystander expressed fear lest the glass should be broken. The attack was so sudden that it was only when the keeper requested me to keep further back that I was conscious that the big snake preferred me to the ducks. The blows sounded like those of a man's fist, and would probably throw a person down if they took effect. By the quick repetition of the strokes it seemed the reptile was slow to learn that the plate glass was too strong for its efforts. I regretted afterwards not having estimated the size of this python at the time, but from memory should imagine it to be nine or ten feet long.

"Next to these large snakes the venomous kinds seemed to attract most attention. Some rabbits, so young as to be helpless, were dropped into the cases of the rattlesnakes and puff adder. They were soon struck, but the venom was much slower in its actions than I should have expected. The bite of both of these species is said to be fatal to man, yet these small animals survived about twenty minutes. The bites were effectively given, as in one instance blood oozed from the punctures, and in another it flowed from the nose and mouth. I paid particular attention to the act of striking, having understood that our English viper does not, strictly speaking, bite—that is, does not close the jaws, but with the mouth wide open drives in the fangs by a downward stroke of the upper jaw, like the blow of a hammer. The puff adder, however, appeared to seize its prey with a momentary grip, leaving go immediately.

"A half-grown rabbit was given to another venomous species—I think a 'horned viper;' but, though the poor little animal was repeatedly pushed up against the reptile, the latter would not strike. Every effort was made to irritate it, and it frequently turned round vengefully, hissing like a small steam-engine all the time, but it would not use its weapons. The 'glass snakes' appeared more ready to feed than most of the others; mice were provided for their refection, and one of them disposed of two or three in rapid succession. Shortly after, happening to pass the python's den, a bang on the glass uprised me that my Ophidian friend was still bent on making closer acquaintance.

"A stout gentleman, who frequently expressed his antipathy to the whole serpent tribe, took occasion by this fresh attack to utter some words of warning, reminding me of the keeper's request to keep back from the case, and remarked that the glasses I had on at the time were probably the attraction. I replied that the reptile was apparently in a state to strike at anything that came within reach and two minutes had scarcely elapsed when my friend, with his little boy, crossed in front of the den, when the python made a similar blow at him. His alarm was ludicrous: with an exclamation of intense horror he staggered back half a dozen paces; but I fear his activity would have availed little but for the stout plate glass between. The evident desire of this monster to get a human victim, while it ignored the ducks within its reach, seemed to indicate a longing for larger prey. It was difficult to imagine that the snake could really swallow a man, but the peculiar structure of the jaws in the boa tribe and their immense power of expansion enable them to get down animals of a bulk much exceeding their own. When these creatures were gliding about their dens, great play of muscle was observable through the skin.

"During these performances a large box was brought in by two laborers. It had apertures for ventilation, and contained some large rock snakes. The keeper raised the lid and touched one of the reptiles, which were in a half-torpid condition. This excited the curiosity of one of the workmen, who inquired anxiously. 'They be'ant alive, sir, be they?' 'Alive! yes,' said the keeper; 'do you want to have one out?' 'Oh no, sir,' was the quick reply; and he and his companion were gone in an instant. The cobra appears to be one of the most irritable species; the glass front of its case is partially white-washed, to hide approaching objects from it, but notwithstanding it strikes against the glass so frequently that its muzzle was quite raw.

"I took the opportunity of asking the keeper if he had ever observed the boa lick their prey before swallowing it, as they are popularly believed to do. He replied as expected, that in several years' experience he had never seen it done. It is not improbable.

I think that, while the boa is examining its recently-killed prey to commence the swallowing operation in the most convenient manner, it may keep flickering its tongue in and out as most serpents are in the habit of doing, and this might give an inaccurate observer the idea that it was licking the prey. I fear this account may appear tediously minute, but I send it on the chance of interesting some who have never been present at the serpents dinner-house."

Hints About Health.

HOW TO KEEP THE FEET DRY.

We take the following suggestions from *Hall's Journal of Health*:

Various expedients have been devised to keep the dampness from the soles of the feet. Some advise that a piece of sail cloth or other woven material, should be cut in the shape of the sole, dipped in melted pitch or tar, and when cooled, placed between the layers of the shoe's sole and well sewed. If this is carefully done it is impossible for any dampness to penetrate to the soles of the feet by simply walking on damp ground; but in walking in wet grass or the slosh of snow deep enough to reach the upper leather, this device is no protection.

Another means of rendering the soles of shoes impervious to dampness, and to prevent their squeaking, is to set them in melted tallow deep enough to merely cover the soles, and let them remain a week; if it is in a mixture of equal parts of beeswax and tallow it is still the better.

A gentleman avers that from six years of experience and trial, the soles of shoes are not only made water-proof but will last three times as long if a coat of gum copal varnish is applied to the soles and repeated as it dries. until the pores of the leather are filled, and the surface shines like polished mahogany.

The soles of shoes may be made impervious to water by rubbing the following mixture into the leather, until it is thoroughly saturated: one pint of boiled linseed oil; half a pound of mutton suet; six ounces of pure beeswax; four ounces of rosin. Melt these over a slow fire, stirring well, and when the shoes are new, warm them and the mixture also, and use.

Or put a pound each of rosin and tallow in a pot on the fire, and when melted and mixed, apply while hot, with a painter's brush, to both soles and upper leather. If it is desired that the boots should take a polish immediately, dissolve an ounce of beeswax in a teaspoonful each of turpentine and lamp black a day or two after the boots have been treated with the rosin and tallow, rub over them this wax and turpentine, away from the fire. Thus the exterior will have a coat of wax alone, and will have a bright polish. Tallow and grease become rancid and rot the stitching, and the leather also; while the rosin mixture preserves both.

One pint of linseed oil, a quarter of a pint of turpentine or camphor, a quarter of a pound of beeswax, and a quarter of a pound of Burgundy pitch. Melt together with a gentle heat; warm it when it is used, and rub it into the leather before the fire, or in the sun.

Or, melt together beeswax and mutton suet, half and half, and rub it in where the stitches are.

Gutta percha soles are preferred by some. They may be attached thus: Dry the old sole, roughen it well with a rasp, and rub on with the finger a thin, warm solution of gutta percha: dry it, hold it to the fire, and then rub on a coat of a thicker solution. Take the gutta percha sole, soften it in hot water, wipe it, and hold both sole and shoe to the fire until warm; lay the sole on gradually, beginning at the toe. In half an hour, pare it neatly with a knife.

But it must be remembered that if you make the upper leather of a shoe water-tight, it is rendered measurably air-tight, and this occasions dampness on the inside, creating ill odors and coldness, while any kind of oily substance must not only rot the material but cause a noisome smell.

To those who are forehanded and have leisure, it is advised to purchase the shoes to be worn in winter six months beforehand, and wear them a little at a time in warm weather; thus they become hardened before winter sets in, and this hardening increases their durability. But before they are once worn in the wet, the soles should be held to the fire until warmed; then warm a little tar in a tin cup, and apply it with a swab to the bottom of the shoe, but not hot enough to burn the leather, then let it be well dried in before the fire. This will never work out while warming the feet; but this tar should be applied the first of each month until May, if the boots are worn much in the wet. This tar penetrates the sole to the eighth of an inch, and renders it almost as hard as horn. Grease of any kind will soften the leather and make it porous. Without this tar application, the first wetting of the soles will contract them and making them fit not so well, sometimes making them too small altogether.

If shoes are heated before the fire, they get hard and wear out very much sooner than if allowed to dry gradually in the upper part of the kitchen or family room, farthest from the fire, or on a shelf, or hung on a nail.

VARNISH FOR SHOES.

It is a bad plan to grease the upper leather of shoes for the purpose of keeping them soft; it rots the leather and admits dampness more readily. It is better to make a varnish thus:

Put half a pound of gum shellac, broken up in small pieces, in a bottle or jug, cover it with alcohol, cork it tight and put it on a shelf in a warm place; shake it well several times a day, then add a piece of gum camphor as large as a hen's egg; shake it well, and in a few hours shake it again and add one ounce of lamp black; if the alcohol is good, it will be dissolved in three days; then shake and use. If it gets too thick, add alcohol—pour out two or three teaspoonfuls in a saucer, and apply it with a small paint brush. If the materials were all good, it will dry in about five minutes, and will be removed only by wearing it off, giving a gloss almost equal to patent leather.

The advantage of this preparation above others is that it does not strike into the leather and make it hard, but remains on the surface and yet excludes the water almost perfectly. This same preparation is admirable for harness, and does not soil when touched, as lamp black mixtures do.

COLD FEET WHILE TRAVELING.

If boots are treated as above, and just before going out of doors the stockings are removed, and both feet and stockings are well dried before the fire, the feet will feel comfortably warm for several hours; it is the moisture or steam about the feet which often makes them feel cold by the out-door air condensing them. No one should travel in winter with tight-fitting shoes; they arrest the circulation; this induces coldness, causing a general feeling of discomfort all over the body, even making the mind fretful and irritable. A woolen stocking will alone keep the feet warmer than the same stockings and a pair of tight boots besides. If a person has a good circulation, the feet will get warm of themselves if the tight boots are removed. No one can go to bed with cold feet without doing themselves a positive injury; and it is always best in winter-time, even if the feet do not feel cold; at bed-time to draw off the stockings and hold the feet to the fire or stove, rubbing them meanwhile with the hand, until they are perfectly dry and comfortably warm in every part; it is a pleasant operation of itself, and ought not to be dispensed with for a single night from October to May; it is one of the best anodynes; it allows a person to fall asleep in five minutes, who, with cold feet, would have remained awake for half an hour or more, and even then the sleep would be unrefreshing and dreamy.

BURNING FEET.

If the soles are hot and dry at bed-time, rub patiently into each one of them, with the hand, half a teaspoonful of sweet oil, night after night, until the difficulty is removed.

Some persons always have cold feet on getting into bed; a robust person may remedy this in time by dipping both feet at a time in cold water just deep enough to cover the toes; let them remain in until thirty are counted, wipe dry, hold to the fire, and jump into bed.

Feeble persons and invalids should pursue a different course. Put both feet in hot water half leg deep; add hot water from time to time for fifteen minutes, so that the water shall be hotter when they are taken out than when they are put in, then dip them in cold water as before, while you count ten, wipe warm and get into bed.

As cold feet induces a number of diseases, aggravates others, and delays the cure of all, it is worth all the trouble one can take if thereby, even in the course of a month, the delightful condition can be brought about wherein the feet are in such a natural and healthful state, that the mind is never attracted towards them unpleasantly.

TIGHT SHOES.

Interfere with the pleasure of locomotion, cause corns, and even rheumatic gout; hence it is worth while to repeat what we have formerly recommended as an infallible and easy method of having a new foot-covering fit as easily as an old shoe—just put on two pairs of thick stockings before the measure is taken, or before fitting your feet with ready-made shoes; then when you get them, pull off both pair, put on one thin pair, wear them for a few days and then put on thicker. This simple expedient will prevent an incalculable amount of discomfort, irritation and loss in one year.

CLEANING SHOES.

To do this easily, harmlessly and well in winter, is worth knowing. Scrape off the mud or wet dirt with an old spoon handle, or, what is better, a wooden knife, then with a soft damp rag or sponge, remove what the knife failed to do, then set them back from the fire for five or six hours, or more; they will then take a polish as easily as before they were wetted, in this way they can be cleaned without scarcely soiling the fingers at all, and a great deal of extra brushing will be saved.

Boots and shoes for the winter should be large enough to admit of cork soles, which, if taken out every night and dried well, will keep the feet warm all the time, without which condition no person can possibly have good health, while there are many whose only obstacle to good health is cold feet.

A Sermon on Newspapers.

Newspapers often sermonize the great questions of the day, and discourse most ethically on the obligations of international law and the duties to each other of government and people, but they are seldom themselves the subject of a sermon. We have to record an instance of this nature in a discourse by the Rev. Brooke Herford of Manchester England. It is short, and would merit a transfer entire to our columns, but as this cannot be, we shall make, for the benefit of our readers, an abstract of some things said by the reverend gentleman. They exhibit a pleasant contrast to the ravings of Dean Alford on newspapers. "I cannot go," Mr. Herford begins, "with that celebrated saying of Richard Cobden, that there is more to be learned from a sheet of the *Times*, than from all the histories of Thucydides. Yet, for all that, I hold their reading—their earnest and intelligent reading, mark you—as one of the essentials of life. Newspapers deal primarily with the realms of humanity, and they tell us what is going on in that realm at the present time. Is not this the primary requisite for a well-instructed life? Surely it concerns us more closely to know about the world of man than to know about the world of matter—to learn what is doing in human history now than what has been done in former times. Of course there must be a great deal of triviality mixed up with the story of human life of to-day. This is simply inevitable. Time sifts out the petty details and leaves the large features more conspicuous; yet he is not a wise man who is impatient of all these details, and sneers at newspapers because of them. It does not seem to me to be a true and healthy culture which draws all a man's thoughts to abstract science and recondite learning, and leaves him ignorant of the great conflicts passing in the world around him, and impatient of the things which concern the practical welfare of the society in which he lives. The worst of it is that this contempt for newspapers is too often only a symptom of a deeper defect—a carelessness of the world and of man. I do not think this need be so. There is nothing necessarily incompatible between deep study in one special direction and a warm interest in what is going on in the living world. From this, as the centre, stretch out your thought, and interest, and learning, as far as you like, back to the childhood of our race, back into old geologic periods if you will, or away to the tiniest star that the telescope reveals, just glittering on the farthest verge of space. But first, and underlying all, are man and the world around you and the—newspaper.

And let me especially urge the reading of a newspaper as a distinct means of self-culture upon women. It may sound strange at first but I think it almost more important to women than to men, and for this reason: men going out into the world from day to day, are pretty sure to be swept up to the level of what is passing in it whether they read the paper or not, but it is not so with women. They, in their quiet, household life, may go on for weeks hardly hearing a word of what is passing in the great world outside, and the little they do hear conveying no living meaning to them. I think this is a great evil. It not only narrows the range of woman's life, but she loses a great deal of the happiness which would come of intellectual companionship and community of interest with men—with a father, brother, or a husband. Is it not too often the case that the wife and husband live, to some extent, in different worlds of thought and interest? Part of this may be attributed to man's incommunicativeness, but part of the cause lies deeper. It is because women are so seldom educated to take an interest in what is going on in the world around them, and so are unable, without tedious explanations, to enter into the news which each week brings from every quarter of the globe. I would put it to women not to depend on the explanations and comments of men, generally given, when at all, in brief phrases, but to read the newspaper as a distinct and to them especially an important part of self-culture. And read it aright, not by voting politics and foreign news a bore, but by keeping an open eye and an understanding mind for the passing history of nations and the great interests which are stirring the heat of the world. There are, on the other hand, things in the world, and they are related in newspapers, which are not calculated to enlarge the mind, but minister, instead, to gossiping, morbid curiosity, and sometimes indeed to arouse depraved feelings. But newspapers reflect like the world's light and its shade. To the pure, all things are pure, while the impure will find everywhere things which will make him more impure. There are some who go through the world like vultures, looking out for garbage and corruption; they will find it in newspapers, as they will find it everywhere." Here we would interrupt for a moment the reverend gentleman's discourse by the remark, that not a few of the newspapers of the present day are distinguished for their high standard of ethical proprieties and a studious avoidance of whatever would bring a blush to the cheek of modesty.

While speaking of the value of newspapers as agents in Christian civilization, the preacher is careful not to omit to mention their use as educators, teaching a homely, practical wisdom to whole classes, who, but for them, would be at the mercy of every clever demagogue or every gust of popular suffering or passion. Best, perhaps, of all the uses of newspapers in the general culture of society is that in which they keep alive and encourage a quick and wholesome sympathy among men. It is not the small gossip of a neighborhood, it is the joys and sorrows of the world, that are brought to our very doors from day to day in the newspapers. These thrills of sympathy come right athwart our daily life—an element of deeper and diviner feeling for which God be bethanked. Mr. Herford concludes his discourse by a recommendation to read newspapers discriminately, choosing their wisest lessons, gathering their largest use, and after a fashion they will come to be regarded as "scriptures, not without something sacred in them—an everchanging Bible, not indeed of some calm, venerable past, but of a present in which God is as near as He was in days of old, and whose slow changes are still the unfolding of his will."—*Philadelphia Ledger*.

CHINESE IDEAS ABOUT EUROPEANS AND THEIR RELIGIONS.—An English correspondent from Shanghae writes as follows:

"Some ill-feeling has been created at Pekin by the erection of a temple by the French missionaries at a spot where it could overlook the Emperor's grounds. They are, however, said to have allayed this annoyance by promising not to raise it sufficiently high to overtop the palace walls. Not only in the capital, however, are missionaries creating ill-feeling, which naturally extends to foreigners generally. A proclamation has been extensively posted throughout Hoonan and the adjacent provinces, denouncing at length their interference with established customs, and calling on all loyal subjects to rise and exterminate them. All foreigners are yclept "English" by Chinese who have not learned, at a treaty port, to distinguish between the different nationalities; so on the head of the English by name are the thunders invoked.

We come from a "contemptible mud bank in the ocean, are ruled sometimes by a female and sometimes by a male, and our specific character is half man and half beast." Allowed by the extreme kindness of the Emperor to trade at Canton, we have not been satisfied but have penetrated into every part of the Empire "giving free course to our wild and insane imaginations."

This sweeping denunciation having been delivered against the English—*i. e.* foreigners generally, the whole flood of the writer's wrath is directed against missionaries. "Those who have come to propagate religion, enticing and deluding the ignorant masses, print and circulate depraved compositions, daring, by their deceptive extravagance to set loose the established bonds of society, utterly regardless of all modesty. * * Although the adherents of the religion only worship Jesus, yet being divided into the two sets of Roman Catholics and Protestants, they are continually railing at each other. * * * Daughters in a family are not given in marriage, but retained for the disposition of the Bishop (nunneries), thus ignoring the matrimonial relations. A hundred other enormities, some with a certain foundation on fact, others existing entirely in the writer's imagination, are alleged against these teachers of a new creed; and in conclusion, the "Village Elders" are exhorted to assemble the population that the offenders may be hurled beyond the seas to take their place with the strange things of creation.

* * * * * Their country is 15,000 miles from China, beyond a triple ocean. How can the life or death of men be overruled at a distance of 50,000 le across the ocean? Whence the proclamation, emanates I have not been able to learn; probably from the gentry of some district where the missionaries have been more than usually forward. Of course, we know our strength sufficiently well to disregard its threats; but it is interesting, as showing the feeling with which missionary enterprise is certainly regarded by large masses of the people. A useful hint, too, is conveyed in the remarks about secterian teaching of Protestants and Catholics.

SCENE IN A MENAGERIE.—Wombwell's menagerie is now at Leeds, England, and the Yorkshire *Post*, in giving an account of it, says:

"A strange and dangerous accident happened last week, when Messrs. Cross, naturalist, of Liverpool, undertook to forward a huge black maned Sahara lion to Scarborough. On its arrival there the animal was at once taken to the menagerie. All went well until it was attempted to shift this untamed king of the forest from the cage in which he had been forwarded, into the den built to hold him at the exhibition. After many unsuccessful attempts had been made to move him out of one cage into another, it was at last determined to telegraph their difficulty, and request the assistance of Mr. William Cross, who, at once on receipt of the telegram, took train for Scarborough. Upon his arrival there another trial was made, and after a severe struggle, that lasted some hours, the noble brute was at last successfully and safely denned. But, strange to say, whilst Mr. Cross was receiving the congratulations of the people about him he inadvertently laid hold of one of the bars of the den.

In a moment the huge animal sprang from his crouching position, and to the consternation of all beholders, seized the hand of Mr. Cross in his mouth. It is impossible accurately to describe the scene at this juncture—fear seemed to possess every one present. Several strangers who had been specially invited to witness the shifting, magnified the accident to Mr. Cross into an escape of the lion out of his cage; thus, filled with fear, they rushed out of the menagerie in great trepidation. The lion still held Mr. Cross fast by his hand, nor could he be enticed to let go his hold, although tempting junks of beef and cows hearts were thrown into his cage; but the most surprising part of all was that, during the whole of the time each was trying to attract the attention of the lion from him, Mr. Cross appeared the least undisturbed, as, with his eyes fixed upon his captor, he seemed to be watching and waiting patiently for some expected opportunity.

Finding the lion determined to retain his hold, and the pain becoming very severe, Mr. Cross asked one of the keepers to hand him a small bar of iron he was holding ready for use. With this Mr. Cross succeeded in striking the brute a terrific blow between the eyes. The enraged animal sprang back with a snort, tearing away the flesh from the hand, and mutilating one finger so seriously that at first it was thought amputation was an absolute necessity, and was recommended; but Mr. Cross, with coolness in him characteristic, refused all surgical aid—he thought he was sufficiently cut up already, and wrapping his mutilated limb in wet clothes, walked out of the menagerie as if no accident had happened to him, and returned as soon as possible to Liverpool."

THE REACTION AGAINST THE ROBIN.—The robin has been for many years a favorite with sentimental people in the country, who have stood between him and gunshot wounds, and encouraged his increase in our orchards, until of late a reaction has begun against him. Cultivators of the vine denounce him as a greedy robber; orchardists complain that he has altogether too fine a taste for pears, and a chorus of farmers declare him a monstrous humbug, who spoils half a bushel of cherries for every curculio he swallows. Finally, that eminent philosopher, Josh Billings, speaks of him in these injurious terms.

"The red brestid robbing is a burd muchly doted onto by Seminary girls and poits.

"Gentlemen farmers also encurridge the robbing becos he swallereth insex when he cant get sno or anything else to eat.

"But practickle farmers and fruit growists begin to dont see it.

"I was onct a gentleman farmist.

"I am not so gentle as I was.

"I go in for real farming, making my pile of manoor and raisin things to eat.

"I usted to listen for the robbing's lay and his evening carol, but I found out that he singed only to seduce femail robbings, and that where he et five insex he et quarts of cherries, strawberries, currents, rastperries, and ostrer, and then pitch into the melleerest bartlett pairs.

"I found that my fruit crop agreed too well with Mr. Robbingses crop.

"His wobbling to his femail friends at evening didn't pay for his gobbling choice fruit all day.

"And so, my friends, when the swete red brest gets fat on the eggspensive producks of northern gardings, and flocks southward to fill unsentimental pot pies, I bid him adoo without regret."

This will go near to finish the robin, who really deserves no mercy, for he has been sailing these many years under false colors, he has been trading under a false name, but is a member of another family, an impudent imposter.

MINNESOTA THE COUNTRY FOR CONSUMPTIVES.—The St. Paul *Pioneer* has obtained from the State Department at Washington a copy of an interesting report by Dr. Leas, our consul in Madeira, upon the subject of "climate as a curative agent in consumption." The report will be published in the Commercial Relations for 1867. Its author is an educated physician, was for several years at the head of the Health Department of Baltimore, and has served as consul, in Central America, Russia and Sweden, and is now at Funchal. Madeira. He says that the long-established reputation of Madeira as a resort for consumptives is "disintegrating." This fact may be accounted for by the increase of consumption among the lower classes of the island by the vexation with which the stupid government surrounds invalids, and by the revolting system of begging which is allowed and encouraged in the streets of Funchal. Southern France and Algiers do not posess so fine a climate, but they are more accessible, the local authorities are polite and active in their care of visitors, and the current of invalid-travel has turned from Madeira to those countries and to Egypt. The climate of all these southern resorts, Dr. Leas thinks, is still to be recomended to invalids in the advanced stages of consumption, where the utmost that can be secured is the prolongation of life. But to persons "in the first or forepart of the second stage," he recommends a residence in the high northern latitudes, especially in Minnesota. The object to be attained is the thorough oxygenation of the blood.

YANKEE NOTIONS IN PALESTINE.—The Philadelphia *Inquirer*, noticing the arrival of the America colony at Jaffa, says:

"This emigration to the Holy City will be but a beginning of the hegira which will populate Jerusalem with a dreadfully smart people. They will introduce to the benighted Asiatics subsoil plows, mowing machines, steam engines, and the electric telegraph. They will transform the appearance of the Holy City. They may put up a cotton factory on Mount Moriah, and run a saw-mill with the waters of the brook Kedron. They will plant Indian corn on the Mount of Olives, and perhaps pumpkins in the Valley of Hinnom. Beanpoles will support their leguminous treasures in the Valley of Jehosaphat. The establishment of a Congregational Church on Mount Zion, and the erection of gas works opposite the Hebron Gate, may be reckoned among the possibilities of this strange emigration, which recompenses the world for the migration always hitherto from the East to the West, by sending a few pioneers back again."