THE NATIONAL ERA.

G. BAILEY, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR; JOHN G. WHITTIER, CORRESPONDING EDITOR.

VOL. VI. WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, JULY 15, 1852. NO. 289.

THE NATIONAL ERA IS PUBLISHED WEEKLY, ON SEVENTH STREET, OPPOSITE ODD FELLOWS' HALL.

TERMS.

Two dollars per annum, payable in advance.

Advertisements not exceeding ten lines inserted three times for one dollar; every subsequent insertion, twenty-five cents.

All communications to the ERA, whether on business of the paper or for publication, should be addressed to G. BAILEY, *Washington, D. C.*

BUELL & BLANCHARD, PRINTERS, Sixth street, a few doors south of Pennsylvania avenue.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

RANK AND NOBILITY.

A STORY—BY JEANNE MARIE.

Translated for the Era, by Dr. Edwin A. Atlee.

THE BROTHERS.

In a room as much out of order as only that of an artist and lover can be, sat two young men.

"Dost thou not find mother much altered?" said Adrian to the painter, who sat meditating on a picture, that having taken from a green enclosure, he had placed opposite the bust of Albrecht Durer. "Dost thou not find that in a constant excitement and feverish restlessness she is become indifferent to what formerly was of highest interest to her?"

"The death of father," answered Edmund, "must have shaken her deeply, and she cannot yet overcome the consequences of that mournful event.

"When *I* left her, it was after father's death; and though but a short time had elapsed since she laid him in the grave, still, she was more collected, more calm, than I now find her. Thou knowest that she has a pious, believing soul, and that the hope of meeting him again had power to raise her above the sorrows of temporary separation. Religion had never until now denied her its consolations, its strengthening tranquillity. I have never seen her desponding or distracted until now, when her silence, the restless look of her eye, the trembling motion of her lip when she forces a smile, the transient change of color in her face, are too expressive. She conceals from us a secret, and it must be a sad one, that imposes on her so unnatural a silence."

Edmund, who since his return had neither eye nor heart for the requirings of others—he, the tender, childlike Edmund, who had loved his mother with enthusiasm, but in the present moment felt almost indifferent, was painfully moved by Adrian's words. His stupidity as to the whole world, except one animating object, he now suddenly thought to be a crime, and as if awaking from a dream, thoughtfully asked—

"And hast thou, whose sharp psychological eye penetrates the soul, not yet discovered the source of her secret distress?"

"I doubt not that self-reproach corrodes her peace; and though thoroughly convinced that in her past life no action slumbers that she would make of little account to our observation, there is, notwithstanding, something that she has reason to hide from us. It were indelicate and uncharitable to be urgent, and compel her to a confession that ought only to be made from pure necessity, in order to restore her former equilibrium. Does she not care for and love her children enough to warrant her unbidden confidence in them? Therefore she may keep silence in order to merit our esteem and love, notwithstanding our uneasiness. Thou, Edmund, wast ever nearer to her heart than I. To thee were unlocked the secret depths of her soul, more freely than to the childlike, innocent Lucie. How comes it, then, that thou art so distant and indifferent towards her? It is impossible for me to ascertain the cause in a separation of three years, filled with the exchange of letters; for when once love and confidence between mother and child take root, no power on earth can eradicate them. The sanctity of this feeling grounded in nature is untainted by the world or fate. Discords may arise, but cannot set bounds to the free effusions of the heart. There may, at most, occur times of lukewarmness, when the soul of one or the other, controlled by a strange power, finds itself enchained by passion, in which great affliction or great happiness absorbs all natural feeling, and man sees himself placed in a condition of comfortless dependence, without the power of volition. God grant that neither of you may be under the dominion of this state, and that no merciless disappointment may follow the sudden fit of delusion."

A blush overspread Edmund's face, whose glance was directed to the picture opposite, which was the same that Sternhof's imprudence had spoiled, and which was left with him. Adrian followed with his eyes the direction of this glance, and as his brother was silent, calmly proceeded:

"Let me be candid, Edmund; thy blush tells me that I have rightly delineated thy position. I comprehend it, do not blame thee, but hold it as my duty to warn thee. Thou art an artist; thy imagination is used to deal in ideals, and thy judgment confounds the misty forms of thy dreams with the corporeal ones of reality. To thee there is no boundary of distinction, for thy ideal is too closely interwoven with thy real life—one, as it were, flows into the other. Therefore trust me, thy brother, who have lived in the world, observed its practices, and compared them; while the painter's atelier was thy world, colors and pencils thy society. Skilfully as thou knowest how to manage the latter, thou must have remarked, in mixing thy colors, that the union of one with another is not always agreeable to an experienced eye; that in reality a harsh tone is occasioned as soon as a hand unacquainted with the materials and rules undertakes the combination and execution. This example applies to the world, and to every one who is strange and unacquainted with its laws, uninitiated in its mysteries, and with blind confidence casts himself into its arms. Such a blind and uninitiated one art thou, Edmund, and I notice with pain how one glowing flame is consuming not only thy present but thy future peace. Thou art in embryo, as it were; thy gains are yet too small, thy reputation is not yet so well established as not to need all thy powers, all thy earnings, in order to succeed in the strife for that goal which thou hast marked out for thyself. In place of which, thou givest thyself up without reflection to a phantom, sacrificest thy best powers to a wrong notion, and languishest in thy vocation in the indulgence of an unhappy passion. Interrupt me not, dear Edmund; I know all. Thou canst not describe to me in measured expressions the eternity of thy feelings; but I know as well that it is not too late to break the chains that are dragging thee to endless embarrassment, in which thy highest, fairest aim, thy art, must be sequestered. Thou must seek to keep thyself free, if anything genuine is to be achieved by thee, at least now, so long as circumstances forbid the entering into closer connection. Thou revellest in the thought of marrying a young lady of distinguished family, and thou hast hardly means sufficient for thy own existence. Independently of the Duke, thou owest these friends and patrons of our father the highest gratitude. That thou art unmindful of this, I forgive the phantasy, inseparable from the life of an unacquainted artist, but make a demand on the man, on his character, that he conquer himself, that he return into the right track."

Edmund, who till now had believed his feelings safe from observation, suffered indescribably under the treatment of Adrian. That which like something purely spiritual and heavenly hovered over him, which himself could hardly account for, he must now be content to see handled and torn by a powerful hand. If Adrian had even the prudence not to mention a name, yet his glance on Seraphine's picture made up for the deficient word. Edmund revolted, like a spoiled child, against the scrutiny of his elder brother, and with bitterness replied—

"As one born blind can have no idea of light and colors, so the cold stone can have no conception of love."

"It would pain me to be esteemed by thee incapable of love—that love, in a strict sense, which enables the weak to perform so much, while to the strong it imparts a new element of power and new spur to eloquence—if I were not convinced that the agitation of the moment extorted from thee the utterance. But even the desire of friendship, at least for the present, is not of sufficient weight when thy happiness is concerned. Bear in mind, that thou mayest devote a second human life to want and wretchedness, that hitherto was used to splendor and abundance, and to whom nothing is more strange than anxiety for daily bread; to whom nothing would be more difficult than to forego conveniences and habits in which she has lived from childhood. The state of her health, perhaps, would hardly withstand the claims and rough concerns of limited frugality, of laborious housewifery, that would present a constantly tormenting object to one unpracticed, sickly, and much too high in rank for thy condition in life."

"Didst thou not say that love is a new element of power?" asked Edmund.

"I admit that the wife, in fulfilment of her duties, from love to the husband, can undergo much; but would the husband feel easy therewith? And now, finally, thou, an artist, and spoiled, indulged man, thou wilt meet with vexations, poverty at the outset: of this I am certain, and where would remain thy art in conflict with cares? Genius, in order to display itself, must be free; if it is to achieve anything great, must not waste labor for the daily support of life, must not be forced to work under the pressure of want. While the balance is in oscillation, it moves but slowly, but soon sinks enfeebled."

"Enough," said Edmund, "enough of the sad picture. Why dost thou so obstinately disturb my paradise, why nip the blossoms of my joys, why strip of tenderness a state whose purity ought to be sacred to thee?"

"In order to preserve thee in this holy tenderness, to guard thee from bitter remembrances. There is yet time, all is yet but a dream, a web of fancy. Tear asunder the weak threads, lest they become chains. Save thyself from disgrace and slavery, for thou wilt disgrace thyself if thou proceedest further."

"I disgrace myself!" said Edmund; and a pride, never before felt, shot from his otherwise mild and placid eyes. "I will exalt her whom I love to be an object of envy, admiration, and adoration. Like the poet in his songs, will I illustrate my beloved, create her anew, and lift her up as the idol of the multitude."

"I know of few poets whose wives have had their domestic cares and joys celebrated in lyric inspirations. Much oftener some unhappy propensity, some renunciation, remembrance, or longing, has been the source of their excellent productions. The purity of resignation, not the contentment of possession, has elicited the sweet notes of their song."

Edmund looked silently dejected. The blood moved more languidly through his veins—he felt himself too weak to resist.

"Forgive me, Edmund, if to-day I have given thee a severe lesson. It pains me to see thee suffer; but in anticipation of thy future gratitude, I can bear thy present coldness. Believe not that I have taken this step from a desire to judge and find fault, which appears to thee so nearly allied to my station, and requiring me, according to thy idea, to act untenderly, perhaps roughly. I speak not, as you suppose one blind might speak of light and colors, but in the spirit of one equally dear to thee and me—of our departed father. His principles are mine, and the inharmonious note in his life, and which he never could avoid hearing, ought not to agitate thine also."

Edmund looked with surprise at his brother. "What meanest thou?" said he, searchingly.

"Urge me not; my lips are sealed. It is oft oppressive to be the keeper of a secret. Desire not the burden. Believe only that much lies heavily and painfully on me. The last will of a father, the error of a brother, the passionate ardor of Hyppolith, the innocence and happiness of a sister, and my own serious life, which thou believest free from agitation, but which oft sheds tears under an iron mask."

"Adrian, my brother, my friend!" cried Edmuud, powerfully affected by the last words themselves, and the wonderful tone of expression. "Forgive, if I misunderstood thy fidelity, if in my blindness I believed thou couldst unfeelingly blame what thou hadst never known."

"Let it suffice," answered Adrian, cordially pressing the hand of his brother, "and let us now go to our mother. I have not seen her to-day; she is now so much alone, we must seek to mitigate the severity of her separation from Lucie."

"And should not anxiety for sister undermine mother's peace?" asked Edmund, as he prepared to go out.

"I believe her situation affects her agreeably, notwithstanding she knows the inflammability of Hyppolith, and that his passion overleaps all accumulated objections. This causes her to feel somewhat solicitous for Lucie's fate. As preliminary, we must keep sister retired at a distance, till we have persuaded mother to leave the city—this over-populous mass of stone—that only oppresses and adds to her solitude."

The brothers now left the house, and betook themselves to the street where Mrs. Müller dwelt. They found her alone, and she met them with the wish to visit the theatre that evening. Overcome with delight, Edmund immediately hastened to the theatre to secure seats; and, being acquainted with the caterer, desired him to reserve the box opposite Glöben's for his use.

AT THE THEATRE.

When Mrs. Müller with her sons entered the box set apart for them, the house was already very full; and she was obliged occasionably to look for well-known faces from between thickly crowded heads. Being quite a stranger in the city, she was interested chiefly for one object, to whom her anxiety and love were confined. Her glances over the assembly were consequently hasty in search of him. Baler had answered her invitation to an interview in the appointed house, merely in these words:

"Not to-day, dear mother; I am engaged the whole day in attendance on the Duke, and in the evening with company at the theatre. Another time, as soon as you may wish it, I will be ready. B."

Mrs. Müller thought that a hint was given in these lines, and her conclusion was fixed to go to the theatre also, and see him, if only at a distance, surrounded by the glittering, distinguished world; and with throbbing heart she sought out the radiant central point of the company.

It is wonderful, how in the most crowded rooms our eye feels magnetically attracted by those who interest us most, and falls upon them without being aware of any other object. Edmund had hardly entered the box, ere he perceived the figure of Seraphine; and Mrs. Müller had but just began to send abroad her looks, when she too fastened them on a young man, who bowed over the shoulder to the lovely Baroness, and appeared to whisper some flattering words, at which Seraphine blushed and smiled.

Edmund believed he knew the cause of her smile. Baler now stood erect, laid the opera glass to his eye, and accidentally directing its aperture to his *vis-a-vis*, the figure of his mother was the first that pressed in distinct outlines upon the frame of the glass. Quickly withdrawing it, the Count changed its direction, and as if something dimmed his view, and he had no wish to fix it on any object, he proceeded with apparent indifference to review the company, as one sometimes looks over the pages of a book without knowing their contents.

Adrian leaned behind his mother's seat, in close observation. Neither Edmund's uneasiness, Seraphine's movements, nor the Count's behaviour, escaped him; but he sought in vain to bring these in harmony with the visibly excited manner of his mother. Besides, he was in deep thought, and the first tact of the music had begun, when the side box, till then empty, and which was close to that of the Müller's, began to fill.

A lady in a simple dark dress, attended by two gentlemen, entered. The lady nodded a salutation. Adrian was not deceived; it was Countess Eisheim, who took a seat near him. For a moment they looked at each other with surprise, and a beam of pleasure shot from the eyes of both. But a mute, polite bow of Adrian, and a slight motion of Erika's head, were cold signs, foretelling a setting sun, or rather hindered his rising. Erika saluted those in Glöben's box, and began to look over the bill. Emil Devrient appeared for the first time as Richard Savage, and all were full of expectation to witness the performance of one whose applause in this part was afterwards universally read in the pamphlets.

The music—they played the overture to Beethoven's Fidelio—exercised its beneficial influence on many agitated minds, calmed their tumults, mellowed their dissonance, and melted their hardness. But how awfully did the purport of the piece seize on the soul of Mrs. Müller! Richard, the poor forsaken son of an unnatural mother, with unabating love for her, which no injury or abuse could abate, still clings to her. And though she had from some unworthy motive disowned him for half a lifetime, he is content with the name of mother, to conciliate all her faults, and forget all her cruelties. He strives only for her love, and intoxicated with the thoughts of winning it, heedlessly plunges overhead into the most frantic prodigality. Everything is indifferent to him without her; he desires but to move her heart to gentleness, to awaken in her the voice of nature, labors for the happiness of being acknowledged and received by her. What a contrast does Richard present, to one who, instead of a cold, repulsive lady of rank, has found an ardently loving mother, who comes to embrace him, to indemnify him. Mrs. Müller's agitation increased every moment, and fixing her look on Baler, it seemed as if every word spoken from the stage was directed to him by her mouth.

Count Sternhof found himself in a most tortured condition. He felt his mother's sad, reproachful glance entering like a glowing arrow into his breast, and feared, moreover, that others would notice the language of her eyes, and that all would be betrayed. But, like some Lady Macclesfield he played the indifferent in a masterly manner, sensible of the shame of an open recognition of his mother. The humiliating nature of such a scene alarmed him, and for obviating any possibility of it, he maintained a heartless coldness in his manner, notwithstanding his increasing uneasiness of mind.

"Very unnatural, highly overwrought," said he to the Minister's lady, who was near him. "A visionary and bedlamite is this Richard."

"We must not forget that a poet and phantast is struggling with poverty and ambition, and, on suddenly seeing his mother, cannot but seem elevated to the highest degree on the consummation of all his wishes," remarked Seraphine.

"It would certainly have been otherwise, had he found his mother poor, miserable, and desolate," observed Baler. "Then, perhaps, the voice of blood would not have spoken so loudly within him."

"I believe that with a character like Richard's, worldly glory and wealth would have no influence," said the Minister's lady, "and that his poetic soul would only love with passion the MOTHER, but not the lady of high rank and glowing sentiment. They must be altogether dried-up egoists, who, with trembling fear for a life such as we lead here, have an eye solely to self-interest."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

For the National Era.

OUR MINISTER'S SECOND WIFE.

BY MARY IRVING.

CHAPTER I.

Our minister had "gone South." It was the first time he had left us within fifteen years; for so long had he been pastor of the village church. I say *the* church; for our village, unlike many others, had only one heaven-pointing steeple. True, there were a few little schoolhouses in the outskirts of the town, where the Methodists and Baptists met to worship God according to the dictates of their consciences. But in the very centre of the village stood the church, a white, massive building—curtained off from the common world neither by waving trees nor green lawn—yet separate and solemn, towering above all, and marking off the hours of the children of men with its silent clock-finger, or warning them by its deep, hidden voice, that those hours were numbered in heaven.

Our minister seemed to have grown almost one with the church before disease came to separate him from it for a while. We should as soon have thought of exchanging its white, angular walls for the turreted stone of Gothic architecture, or its mammoth pulpit cushion for a leaning desk of modern manufacture, as of putting any one else, permanently, in the place of good Pastor Young. Not that we worshipped him; our villagers were not slower than others to spy out mortal failings, and Pastor Young was by no means perfect. But though they meted out due measure of gossiping disapprobation to the faults, as they termed them, into which a too impulsive temperament sometimes beguiled our minister, still, in the depth of their hearts, they perhaps loved him all the better for these; for they did not look up to him as an unapproachable pattern of perfection, an angel incarnate—but sat with him, talked with him, on their hearths and at their tables, as a fellow-mortal, treading *with* them the road of this pilgrimage of life, yet gifted with wisdom from above to guide their feet aright—for Parson Young's very failings had a "leaning to virtue's side." His impulses were as warm and generous as they were quick and burning; and never a hasty reproof dropped from his lips uncalled for by some act or word of meanness in some of his fellow-beings.

But these words made deep wounds sometimes, as hasty words are likely to do. She who was always ready to pour the balm of winning gentleness into these wounds, was his meeker half, the matronly "wife of his youth," whose unerring judgment, tireless energy, and impartial kindness, made her indeed a dearly-beloved "mother" to our villagers, old and young.

We had rejoiced with them; had wept with them, too—for they had seen much affliction. They had laid down in the graveyard one after another of the blossoms Heaven drops upon a mother's breast, until six little mounds, side by side, had grown green in the parents' tears. The father's heart had bled under these repeated strokes, until the life of its youth seemed to have oozed away. His once upright form began to bend earthward, as though he were seeking his children's graves. His cheeks lost all healthful color; his high forehead grew cavernous; and the thick locks that overhung it blanched prematurely to almost the whiteness of an old man's hair.

Still he bore up, and cheerfully moved among us, until she on whom he leaned for all earthly support sunk away from beneath him. The mother went to her band of little cherub children, almost at an hour's warning, and left our minister *alone*.

How much of the life of the soul a *friend of friends* takes to another world, he only can know who has *felt the void!* Our minister felt it not less in body than in soul. The doctors shook their heads over him, and talked of unsound lungs; for they knew no remedy for a bruised heart. However, they did the best that could be done. They ordered him to go South—a better remedy for his actual disease than for the one under which they supposed him laboring. There is nothing like change of scene and change of companions to make an uprooted heart cast out its fibres afresh.

So news came back to us every month, that our good Mr. Young was gaining flesh and spirits. The old ladies who had nursed him in his illness, and crooned doleful dirges over him after his departure, prophesying that he was going to his death directly, were the loudest to echo the good news, with the chorus—

"Didn't we say so? Nothing else would have brought him around, you may be sure!"

He had gone from us in the early autumn. When the buds of the beach-trees began to swell with the sap of another spring, we heard that he was coming home again. Vague sorts of rumors floated to us in company with this gratifying report, hardly referable to any certain source. Somebody—nobody knew who—had said that it had been reported that our minister had been very much courted in the circles of the Southern city where he had been sojourning; that his preaching had drawn great crowds; and that he, in return, had been drawn from his seclusion, to mingle freely with his hospitable friends. But all these whispers were soon swallowed up by a tornado of a report, which came near oversetting the equanimity of the parish. Let me preface a little, however, before I let it loose upon you.

The head woman of our parish, after the deceased Mrs. Young, was the "Widow Ray"—or, as she was punctilious in calling herself, *Mrs.* Ray. She was tall, dark-featured, and critical; kind to her inferiors—owning none as superior—and merciless to her equals, wherever they chanced to cross her track of manœuvring. She had prided herself on being the minister's chief adviser; indeed, she did not seem to feel that anybody had a right to advise him, but herself; and the mysterious air and low tone with which she always spoke of him, after his departure, had given some reason for the conclusion to which half the villagers had come—that she was to be his adviser *for life*.

Into this lady's house rushed, one evening, in hottest haste, the greatest gossip of the country about—one of those "birds" forever on the wing, whose chief business it is to "carry a matter" far and wide. No carrier *dove* was "Aunt 'Liph," (as she was styled, from the Christian name of her quiet spouse, Eliphalet Brown.) Yet this time she bore a message of love, though not to loving ears.

"Look ye here, Miss Ray!" she screamed, almost breathlessly, before she had half opened the sitting-room door—"look ye here! It's the wondrousest turn-up that ever you *did* see! What d'ye think? Our Parson Young has been and *got married* away off down there!"

Mrs. Ray gave a slight galvanic start, drew up both elbows, and drew down both eyebrows, involuntarily, while her forehead flushed purple for an instant. She was herself again the next moment. But she was not a little puzzled how to receive the news; especially as there was another visiter in the room, into whose kindly credulous ears she had been pouring hints of her influence over, and intimacy with, the good man himself. This visiter, Miss Polly Little, was one of the kindest creatures that ever wore the name of "old maid." She always believed everything that every one told her—at least, if it was to the advantage of any being; and if statements would sometimes conflict with each other, the most that she would say was—

"Well, it's very queer I can't see through that!"

"You don't tell so!" she exclaimed, with the broadest of believing smiles, the instant after Aunt 'Liph had ended her say. "Why! well, well! it's a queer world, and queer folks in it! Now, I *had* a kind of thinking he was looking over *this* way—eh, Mrs. Ray?" and she looked good-humoredly at her hostess for her assent to this very unwelcome home-thrust.

Mrs. Ray repaid her by a vinegar glance, scarcely sugared by common politeness. She had resumed her needle-work, for a moment interrupted; and now she said, with more dignity than ever—

"I should like to know what authority you have for that report, Mrs. Brown?"

"Why! it's a fact, I tell you, as sure as you're living, Widder Ray!" replied the astonished gossip-monger.

"Who told you?" interrupted Mrs. Ray, looking up curtly, in spite of herself.

"Why, I was just now down to Deacon Johnson's—you know, Polly, *her* child'en's just over the whooping-cough, and I was fetching Benny a bag-full of onions to roast nights—they're the sovereignest cure for the hanging-on hack of a cough! Well, as I was saying, I went down there, being out o' sewing-work, and down I sits, to be a bit sociable. Says I to Deacon Johnson, 'Well, what's the news, Deacon?' Says he, 'You 'mind me that I hain't been to fetch any news yet; it's office day;' and so off he goes."

Mrs. Ray had laid down her work, and was listening attentively.

"So there I sat with Miss Johnson, a waiting for him to come back; and Miss Johnson, says she"——

"Never mind Mrs. Johnson. What was"——

"That's just what I'm going to tell you! Miss Johnson, says she, 'It's getting spring-like.' 'Yes,' says I. 'I suppose our minister 'll be thinking so pretty soon, may be. When do you expect him?' for, you know, the Deacon has the keys of the house and barn. 'I don't know,' says she; 'I guess likely the Deacon will get a letter to-day.' And sure enough, five minutes after, he came trudging up the steps with a letter open in his hand. His face was in a kind of a pucker; and down he sat, with his hat on, to read it. Now, it's my opinion Deacon Johnson ain't much of a scholar-larnt man"——

Mrs. Ray frowned and hemmed impatiently; but there was no hindering the digression.

"Because, though I don't set up for much extra learning myself, I was always brought up to read writing; that I was! You can't stump *me* on the crookedest word! and Mr. Young writes a readable hand, for sure. For all that, I got tired waiting for the Deacon to finish; and he wipes his specs, and fusses his forefinger along the lines like a snail, till at last I gets out of patience; and says I, 'Bless me, Deacon, he might have writ three while you've been reading the one! Here, let's help you along a bit!' Up I jumps, and makes a catch at the letter. Deacon Johnson looks up over his specs; then he takes them off kind of slowly, and lets go the letter, with, 'Well, I dare say—it's no pr-privacy!' (you know how he sticks in his words.) So I read it with my own good eyes—they are as good as they were at sixteen, this day, without specs; and there it was, in black and white!" she exclaimed, triumphantly.

"And he said he was going to get married?" put in Miss Polly, who had been placidly and patiently listening to this long, shallow flow of words.

"*Got* married, I tell you! done-for—fixed—clear finished up the business! in a hurry, too, I'm thinking! It puts me out of breath to think on't! Why, there's his blessed wife that was, hasn't laid still in her coffin more than a year! And he must take a bout after a new one—and a furriner at that!"

"A foreigner!" repeated Mrs. Ray, quickly and sharply. "What do you mean?"

"Why, it's furrin to *us*, to be sure, away down South there, where they live among the niggers! I don't mean she ain't an English woman, [Mrs. Brown, somehow, dubbed all Anglo-Americans *English*,] but such an one as she's likely to be, had better have stayed away from *these* parts. Such as hasn't been used to brush a fly off their little finger, wont go any great ways with us hard-working women!" said she, with a sort of bitter emphasis.

"You don't say she's a *Southerner?*" said good-hearted Polly Little, for the first time seeming slightly disturbed. I must explain, that, in Polly's vocabulary, "Southerner," and "slaveholder," were synonymous.

"What else could she be?" retorted Mrs. Ray; then suddenly putting on an air of indifference, she added, "I suppose he didn't mention the time of coming?"

"Yes, he did, though, along about the last paragraph; and it's right upon us, too, for he's to be here this very day week. The Deacon is going to get the house fixed right up; and seems to me he said something or other about getting you to help him. But he speaks so slow, and I was so all flustered up with the news, that I didn't rightly take the sense of his talking. Bless me! how I'm wasting my time with you! I can't stay a bit longer. All I've got to say is"—she jumped up and tied her green calash—"that if any *slaver woman* has set up to come here and lord it over us farmer folks, she'll find herself pretty much mistaken; hey, Miss Ray?"

"I shall form no opinion of the second Mrs. Young," said Mrs. Ray, freezingly. "I would not wish to say anything to the prejudice of a *minister's wife*, whatever her faults may be."

This speech was delivered with an air of sublime impartiality, somewhat counteracted by the sarcastic curl of the lips which uttered it.

"Hem! well, folks will make up their own minds, and you can't help it! I *must* be jogging. Good day!" and with a shuffle of elbow, feet, and head, she took herself out of the doorway.

"Well, really!" soliloquized cheerful little Miss Polly, after the door had banged. "It's the queerest thing I've heard this many a day. I wonder how old she is."

"You'll know soon enough," shortly replied Mrs. Ray, who stood in no great awe of the penetrating powers of her present company.

"And a Southerner, too," went on Polly. "I hope—may-be she won't bring her slaves, will she?" she said, in a tone of inquiry.

"Nobody knows!" returned Mrs. Ray, stitching with tremendous vehemence at the pillow-case she was making. "We shall have to put up with her, whatever she does, that's certain!" said she, biting her lip in suppressed mortification and vexation.

"Well, now, that's the way I reason," said the charitable little spinster, in a pleased tone. "You see, we must make allowance for her bringing up, and her being used to all sorts of outlandish ways. Maybe she's no ways worse than many another might be, after all. I hope she's a good, pious woman. You don't suppose the minister would fetch us a right dressy creature, like what they say of the Southerners, do you?"

"I cannot answer for any freak Mr. Young may have taken into his head! He has changed his views, that is very certain," she replied, emphatically. "Not that it concerns me in the least, my dear; for you very well know I meddle with nobody's business but my own. Live and let live, is my motto. But when a man once gets flighty, there is no telling what he may do; and Mr. Young has sometimes been called—well, I won't say anything to his disadvantage. I *hope* he has found a suitable help-meet!" said she, formally, straightening herself up in the consciousness that he *might* have found one much *more* suitable, without having journeyed so far.

Aunt 'Liph, meanwhile, was going her round, spinning out the news, and interspersing it with various remarks upon the Widow Ray's vexation in receiving it.

"And it's my mind," said she, "the Widder Ray was dead in love with the parson, and thought to catch him for herself; and she half-a-dozen years older than he, too! Well, well; if worst comes to worst, I'd about as lief be lorded over by a stranger, as by that proud woman of a widder! But there aint *nobody* going to tread upon me!"

The villagers listened, exclaimed, and wondered. Some blamed; a few smiled approvingly. But most seemed to hold their judgment suspended, in intense curiosity. Several of the women, headed by Mrs. Ray and Mrs. Deacon Johnson, formed a "bee" to clean up the house. Others brought substantials for the bride's pantry—bread, dough-nuts, butter, cheese, and the like. Their husbands stowed away barrels of beef, pork, and flour, in the cellar. One, a quiet, lady-like invalid personage, who seldom crossed her own threshold, ventured out, on a damp morning, too, to arrange the "bride's chamber." This had been left to her, by common consent; for everybody, except Mrs. Ray, was accustomed to think and say, "Nobody has such *tasty ways* as Mrs. Seba Stephens!" Really, the bride-chamber *did* look "tasty," in its drapery of pure white, festooned with evergreens from the woods, and myrtle from Mrs. Stephens's house boxes; for not a flower was up in the gardens. A white satin toilet-cushion was laid on the whiter dimity cover of the dressing-table; and a wreath of artificial orange flowers—Mrs. Stephens's own wedding wreath—fastened the blonde veil of the little mirror in its place. There seemed to be a general wish that the minister's new wife should think well of everybody, whatever everybody might choose to think of *her*.

Such were the preparations made in our village for "our minister's second wife."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

DEMOCRACY OF SCIENCE.—No. 4.

BY JOSIAH HOLBROOK.

Ten minerals have been called the "GEOLOGICAL ALPHABET." They are quartz, feldspar, mica, hornblend, lime, slate, gypsum, serpentine, talc, and chlorite. Separate and combined, they form mountains, rocks, and soils. They are also the depositories of ores, crystals, and minerals, furnishing materials for industry, the arts, commerce, wealth, science, refinement, comfort, and progress.

The alphabet of Geology can be learnt by any child of six years in a day: many of the specimens being collected by *his own hands*, giving employment, instruction, amusement, and materials for "SELF-INSTRUCTION" in his future progress. Every pupil in a New York school—five hundred in all—on returning home at night, took with him six letters of the geological alphabet, all collected, broken, labelled, and arranged by the pupils themselves, as their amusement for that day. Thousands upon thousands of similar cases have occurred within a few years past, in almost every section of the country. This fact gives the secret of the unparalleled progress recently made in geology, and for the immense developments of our natural resources in all parts of the country, alike for wealth and for science. The reduction in the price of crome yellow, from fifteen dollars to twenty-five cents a pound, within a short time, is among the results of amusement in "Geological Excursions."

The work of "Progress" in the Democracy of Science now proposed is to have the alphabet, better, a "Cabinet of Geology," collected by the members of each of the hundred thousand schools and six millions of families in our country, *the work of their own hands*. Aided by the progress already made, this great step is as simple and easy as it is important. It can be commenced any moment, anywhere, when a teacher or parent shall request a pupil or child to step out of the door and pick up the first pebble he can find. That pebble, in nine cases out of ten, will be quartz; furnishing probably as rich and as far reaching a lesson of instruction as ever was or ever can be given to any pupil. A highly distinguished geologist has written a volume on "The Pebble," a book equally fraught with instruction and entertainment.

To "Cabinets of Nature," both for schools and families, numerous aids are at hand. Such collections are already made, by hundreds and thousands, all over the country. By their aid they can be easily increased to millions. Members of Congress and other public functionaries have taken to their respective districts very numerous cabinets of labelled specimens, designed especially as guides to their young friends in collecting and labelling specimens by their own hands—a process indispensable for any available knowledge on this and many other subjects. If all the functionaries of our Government would render similar aid to their young friends, the "Democracy of Science" would soon stand on an immovable basis; and with it, perhaps, the perpetuity and harmony of our Union, and success of our republican institutions, be better secured than by party discussions, hitherto not entirely successful.

There are $45,000,000 worth of railroads in progress or about to be constructed in the West.

For the National Era.

DARK HOURS.

BY CAROLINE A. BRIGGS.

Oh, my tired soul, be patient!—Roughest rinds
Fold over sweetest fruitage; heaviest clouds
Rain the most ample harvests on the fields;
The grass grows greenest where the wintry snows
Have fallen deepest, and the fairest flowers
Spring from old, dead decay. The darkest mine
Yields the most flashing jewels from its cell,
And stars are born of darkness, day of night.
Oh, my tried soul, be patient!—Yet for thee
Goes on the secret alchemy of life;
God, the One-Giver, grants no boon to earth
That He withholds from thee; and from the dark
Of thy deep sorrow shall evolve new light,
New strength to do and suffer, new resolves,
Perchance new gladnesses and freshest hopes!
Oh, there are times when I can no more weep
That I have suffered, for I know great strength
Is born of suffering; and I trust that still,
Wrapt in the dry husk of my outer life,
Lie warmer seeds than ever yet have burst
From its dull covering; stronger purposes
Stir consciously within, and make me great
With a new life—a life akin to God's—
Which I must nurture for the holy skies.
Help me, thou great All-Patient! for the flesh
Will sometimes falter, and the spirit fail;
Add to my human Thy diviner strength,
When next I waver; rouse my faith as now,
That out of darkness I may see great light,
And follow where it ever leads—to Thee!

[From the Friend of Youth.]

A VISIT TO THE STATE PRISON AT W.

BY MARY IRVING.

"Are you ready to go to prison this morning?" asked a friend of me, one sunshiny day of last winter.

"Why," said I, laughing, "I don't know whether I am ready to give up my liberty, or not, just now. Have you been appointed constable?"

"No, but I have appointed myself leader of an exploring party for the day. So, if you have a fancy for a fine sleigh-ride, and a peep at the inside of a prison, you have only to put on your bonnet and cloak."

So, in the course of an hour, we, well wrapped in cloaks, veils, and muffs, and tucked in snugly with buffalo skins, were sliding along over the smoothly-worn track. The bells jingled, the ponies pranced, the sleigh-riders laughed and talked—and a merry party it was.

After riding several miles, we came within sight of the high bleak walls of a huge stone building, so constructed as to surround a large open square. Two towers were raised at corners of this square court, and in each of these a sentinel, with loaded gun over his shoulder, paced to and fro, overlooking the open space all the long day, to see that no one made any attempt at escape. Sadly and drearily enough the grated windows frowned on us, seeming to defy the strongest arm.

"That is the prison!" said one; and suddenly we were all silent, looking up at the grim stones. We could not help thinking what feelings must shake the heart of one who was condemned to be shut within those walls of granite and iron, when his eye, like ours, first lighted on them. It seems as though the sweet angel Hope would certainly fold her wings, and shrink down into the deepest corner of his heart, leaving him to remorse and despair!

It was but a short time before the dinner hour when we entered the warden's office. A man with a huge bunch of formidable keys stood ready to take us over the building. Opening the first door, he led us into an immense room, ceiled and paved with stone. In the centre of this room a double row of cells had been built up, three stories in height. Narrow stairways led up to each story. Every cell had an iron door, half solid, half grating, to permit the light and warm air to pass in. There were no windows in the cells; the doors of most were open, as the men were then at work in other parts of the building, and we looked into them as we passed along. There was a hammock swinging from the roof of each, and a stool beside it, that was all. The cell itself was scarcely large enough for two men to pass each other in. Oh, sad enough it was to feel that two hundred human creatures were *at home* there! Why could they not have obeyed the laws of God and man, and have kept their right to Heaven's free air and sunshine!

In one of these sat a man, with his hat slouched over his eyes, trying to read some book by the dim light that fell through the barred window. He was unable to go into the work-room; so our guide said; and all who are not in the shops must be in their cells. Every evening the warden takes his great key, marches them all into this great room, sends them to their several cells, and locks them in, like caged beasts. It is quite as necessary as it would be to lock in tigers or wolves, for many of these prisoners are men who have committed very great crimes, and who would not shrink from killing or wounding any of the officers, if they hoped by that means to be able to escape. But, poor fellows! perhaps some will have more to answer for than *they*, after all! Those who lead others into evil are surely less pardonable than those who are led into evil almost unconsciously. They will be punished, when justice is done, before the universe. All that men can do, is to cage up the offenders against their laws—those who steal and murder on a small scale.

"Surely, nobody can ever escape from this place!" exclaimed one of our party. "Do the prisoners ever try to get out?"

"Sometimes—not very often, though," said our leader. "There *are* men so cunning that bolts and stones, all that you see here, won't keep them in. Twenty years ago, two of them got out of their cells in the night. The sentinel happened to be a little deaf, and did not hear them until they rushed out upon him and murdered him. They had made a number of false keys, with which they succeeded in opening every door, until they came to that strong one yonder, which leads to the women's prison. The key wouldn't fit; and while they were pounding upon it, and working it about, they awoke the matron. She, suspecting that something was wrong, got up softly and went through that long gallery to one of the towers, where she awoke the guard. They came down with arms, and seized the murderers. Since that time, no one has escaped."

"You spoke of the women's prison—have you many women here?"

"Not many, fortunately for the credit of the sex. Come this way."

He led us into the women's apartment. There sat seven or eight sad-looking creatures, with their faces turned to the wall, and their backs toward us, mostly engaged in coarse sewing. They did not look up, nor lift their heads. It is a rule of the prison that the convicts shall take no notice of strangers who come to visit them, but appear as if they had neither eyes nor ears. By the side of the long table stood a young woman, with folded arms, and an open, frank face, looking pleasantly at us, as much as to say, "*I* am no guilty one." She was the superintendent of the needlework.

A little child, almost as small as a large doll, sat on a stool in the middle of the room, lifting up its smiling eyes, but scarcely moving at all. It looked as though it never had stepped outside of those bleak walls, nor ever known what a frolic on the green grass was, poor thing!

From this part the guide led us, along the inner court, to the first of the workshops. It would never do to keep so many men shut up, idle, all the while; they would soon become sick, or very unhappy. So the State has provided workshops for them, furnished with all kinds of useful tools, and persons to teach them how to make shoes, chairs, knives, forks, &c. We went first into "the chair room." Here thirty or forty men were sitting on benches, with their faces turned away from us. Each was dressed in a coat, not of "many colors," like Joseph's of old, but of two colors, half of one, and half of the other; the pantaloons were of the same color as the coat—one side of each leg black, the other drab. Can you think of any reason for this singular way of dressing? It is to mark the prisoners, so that if one should by any means get away from the building, he would be known and seized by the first honest man who should see him. Those who were not bare-headed wore little caps of brown paper on their heads. Some were braiding or plaiting the rushes and canes for the seat of a chair; some were fitting together the frame, or turning the rounds out by the lathe. Going into another room, we found another set painting the chairs which their companions had finished. They had done their work finely; but as we praised it, not one of them looked up, or made the least sign to any of his fellows. It was prohibited by the rules. I thought to myself, if so many *children*, instead of grown men, were shut up together for six hours, I fancy we should see some whispering and turning of heads, rule or no rule! What say, children?

Next, we went into the shoemakers' shop. Here we found all kinds of shoes and boots, from the fairy baby-shoe and the little satin bride-slipper, to the heavy cowhide boot. In this room the faces of the workers were not all turned away from us, and we could study the different expressions of countenance. Some looked stupid and unconcerned; others evidently felt ashamed to have the eye of a stranger rest a single moment upon them in *that* place. One—a young negro—seemed to have a sort of delight and pride in showing how nimbly and neatly he could turn off his work. He did not dare to look up, but he was very plainly trying to show off.

By this time we had passed nearly around the court. We came to the last shop—the machine shop. Whizz! whizz! went the wheels, little and great, as we stepped over the threshold. The room was filled with smoke and sparks, and the workmen looked grim enough in the lurid light of the furnaces. There was a glass case before us, containing specimens of their workmanship. Many a little fellow of my acquaintance would have given more than a "sixpence" for a good look at the host of jack-knives!

There was a bright-faced boy in this room, who, from his looks, could not have been much over twelve years of age. We asked the guide for what crime he had been sent there. "For setting fire to a house," was his reply. Ah! poor boy! he probably little thought, when he slyly put the brand under the house, either in mischievousness or revenge for some supposed ill-treatment, that he should so soon be found out, and caged in the State prison. He will not be there many years; but when he goes out, and mingles with the free world again, he can never make people forget that he has been a *convict*. The disgrace will cling to him like a stain. If he conducts himself well for a number of years, he will be considered a respectable man by his neighbors and acquaintance; perhaps dearly loved by his friends. But he will always wish to shrink from the eye of a stranger—will always feel as though he still carried something of those parti-colored clothes about him, and would at once be known as a prisoner. Oh, boys! be careful of the *beginnings* of revenge and lawlessness. They lead to a sad end!

In cells cut in the wall, near this place, were confined two men, whose wicked passions had made them insane, and who were too violent to be trusted out of chains. One of them had murdered his own beautiful little boy! No wonder, if he had the least consciousness of what he had done, that he kept raving and shrieking so incessantly.

We now went into the kitchen, where they had just finished cooking the prisoners' dinner, and were dishing it out into large tin cups. It was a kind of thick pudding, with a piece of bread added to each dish-full. A man walked along the row of cells, and tossed onions into a number of them, to serve as seasoning.

The guide here told us that the great dinner-bell was going to ring, and we must go back into the warden's office. We asked whether we could not see the prisoners march in. "Oh yes," said he, "you can look through the window."

Now this said window had just four panes of glass; and when we went into the room, we found it nearly filled by men, women, and children, more than twenty of them. We cast longing looks back toward the great hall from which we came, knowing that we should see nothing from that crowded room. We asked permission to stay in the hall. The guide hesitated. "The gentlemen may stay," he replied, "but I can't let the ladies."

Not very gallant this seemed, certainly. But we soon found that it was intended for our best good; as, on a former occasion, the prisoners had taken advantage of the presence of ladies in that place to rush upon their officers, and endanger their lives.

As soon as the bell rang, there was a rush to the little window. Twenty-five heads, some with bonnets, some without, pushed, jostled, and crowded each other most selfishly and unceremoniously. Those of us who would neither push nor jostle, were obliged to turn away unsatisfied, and sit down, to wait for our companions.

The gentlemen came in presently, quite amused by what they had seen. The prisoners, as they reported to us, came in in separate divisions, of twelve each, if I rightly remember. Each division was headed by one of the prisoners, promoted to that office for correct behaviour, who stamped hard with his heavy-soled shoes, in walking, to keep step for the small gang behind him. It seems that the negro whom we had seen was at the head of one division. He threw back his head, lifted his feet a yard from the stones, in order to stamp the harder, and looked so much like a proud officer at the head of a band of infantry, that one could not keep from laughing.

Each gang marched along to the end of the hall, where its dishes of dinner were turned out by a revolving wheel, and then each prisoner went to his own cell, and was locked in by the warden, to eat his dinner in solitude.

We had seen all that could be seen, and prepared to leave. Before going, we inquired what was the most common offence which had sent men there. "*Theft*," was the answer. Will every child who reads this, *remember* this answer, and think, whenever tempted to lay hands on the merest trifle which is not his or her own, "This is opening the gate of the State prison, perhaps, for *me!*" For every man who steals a hundred dollars' worth, stole a cent's worth when he was a boy; depend upon that.

"Oh, what a place to fancy a brother in!" I said, as we looked up at the strong walls, while gliding swiftly away from them. Yet every one of those men has probably been *some one's* brother—certainly he has been some one's son. He was once a little innocent baby, and his mother loved him, as your mother loves her youngest darling. He was a little guiltless boy; and companions tempted him to lie, or steal, or swear, or to some wickedness of that kind. He thought nobody would find him out, and he did the wrong thing. He forgot that God was always looking upon him; so he went on, and there he is now, in his stone cell in the State prison.

AFFECTING INSTANCE OF ATTACHMENT IN A DOG.—A little girl, the only and well-beloved child of her parents, died a few weeks since, and was interred in the private family burying-ground. A large Newfoundland dog, the private companion and playmate of the child, was frequently missing from the house after the funeral. When seen, he was observed to be crest-fallen and drooping; he refused his food, moped, and lost flesh every day. These circumstances exciting curiosity, the animal was watched and followed in his stealthy excursions, and it at length appeared that he went daily to the grave of his former friend and playmate, deposited, at each visit, some of the child's playthings obtained secretly from the house on the grassy mound that covered her remains, in the vain hope of alluring her to his side again, and then lay down, and passed hour after hour, moaning and whining piteously. His master was obliged finally to chain up the animal to put an end to his melancholy vigils, the continuance of which would have cost the faithful mourner his existence. A more touching instance of devotion and attachment has rarely fallen beneath our notice.