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Select Poetry.

From the Home Journal.

INTIMATIONS OF SPRING.

BY W. L. SHOEMAKER.

How beautiful are the signs of the season,
The wind among the withered leaves, when spring
brings the expected work of an unseen wing,
And breathes a promise of soon-coming cheer;
To greet her first pale herald that forth peer
From the damp earth: to list the carolling
Of the glad mocking-wren, and murmuring
Of the freed brooklet flowing crystal-clear;
To walk in the warm air on sunny slope,
And let the memory muse on what has been,
But sending forward my feet counter-tide,
While Fancy paints the world in living green,
And the night of the azure sky serene,
And older and more beautiful, earliest eye.

Our Olio.

Chinese Customs.

A dinner party in China is a most methodical affair as regards precedence among guests, the number of courses, and their general order and arrangement. We shall endeavor to give a detailed and accurate account of such a banquet as might be offered to half a dozen friends by a native in easy circumstances. In the first place, no ladies would be present, but men only would occupy seats at the square, four-legged "eight fairy" table. Before each there will be found a pair of chopsticks, a wine-cup, a small saucer for soy, a two-pronged fork, a spoon, a tin plate, divided into separate compartments for melon seeds and almonds, and a pile of small pieces of paper for cleaning these various articles as required. Arranged upon the table, in four equidistant rows, are sixteen small dishes, or saucers, which contain four kinds of fresh fruits, four kinds of dried fruits, four kinds of candied fruits, and four miscellaneous, such as preserved eggs, slices of ham, a sort of sausage, pickled cabbage, etc. These four are in the middle, the other twelve being arranged alternately around them. Wine is produced the first thing, and poured into the small porcelain cups by the giver of the feast himself. It is polite to make a bow and place one hand at the side of the cup while this operation is being performed. The host then gives the signal to drink, and the cups are emptied instantaneously, being often turned bottom upward as a proof that there are no lead-pipes. Many Chinamen, however, cannot stand even a small quantity of wine; and it is no uncommon thing when the feast is given at an eating-house, to hire one of the theatrical singing-boys to perform vicariously such heavy drinking as may be required by custom or exacted by force. The sixteen small dishes above-mentioned remain during the whole dinner, and may be eaten of promiscuously between courses. Now we come to the dinner, which may consist of eight large and eight small courses, six large and six small, eight large and four small, or six large and four small, according to the means or fancy of the giver, each bowl of food constituting a course being placed in the middle of the table, and dipped into by the guests with chopsticks or spoon, as circumstances may require. The first is the commonest, and we append a bill of fare of an ordinary Chinese dinner on that scale, each course coming in its proper place:—

- I. Sharks' fins with crab sauce;
- Pigeons' eggs stewed with mushrooms;
- Sliced sea-slugs in chicken broth with ham.

II. Wild duck and Shantung cabbage; (3) Fried fish; (4) Lumps of pork fat, fried in rice flour. III. Stewed lily roots; (5) Chicken mashed to pulp, with ham; (6) Stewed bamboo shoots. IV. Stewed salt fish; (7) Fried slices of pheasant; (8) Mushroom broth. *Remarque*—Two dishes of fried pudding, one sweet and the other salt, with two dishes of steamed puddings, also one sweet and one salt. [These four are put on the table together, and with them is served a cup of almond tea.] V. Sweetened duck. VI. Strips of boned chicken, fried in oil. VII. Boiled fish (of any kind) with soy. VIII. Lumps of parboiled mutton, fried in pork fat. These last four large courses are put on the table, one by one, and are not taken away. Subsequently a fifth, a bowl of soup, is added, and small basins of rice are served round, over which some of the soup is poured. The meal is then at an end. A *rice-bouche* is handed to each guest, and a towel, dipped in boiling water, but well wrung out. With the last he mops his face all over, and the effect is much the same as half a noggin of Xshaw, qualified with a bottle of Schweppes. Pipes and tea are now handed round, though this is not the first appearance of tobacco on the scene. Many Chinamen take a whiff or two at their bubble-bubbles between almost every course. Opium is provided when dinner is over for such as are addicted to the fatal luxury; and, after a few minutes, spent perhaps in arranging the preliminaries of some future banquet, the party, which has probably lasted from three to four hours, is no longer of the present, but in the past.

Of all their cherished ceremonies, there are none the Chinese observe with more scrupulous exactness than those connected with death and mourning. We have just heard of the Governor of Kiangsu going into retirement because of the decease of his mother, and so he will remain, ineligible to any office, for the space of three years. He will not shave his head for one hundred days. For forty-seven nights he will sleep in a *hempen* garment, with his head resting on a brick and stretched on the hard ground, by the side of the coffin which holds the remains of the parent who gave him birth. He will go down upon his knees and humbly *to-tou* to each friend and relative at their first meeting after the sad event—a tacit acknowledgment that it was but his own want of filial piety which brought his beloved mother prematurely to the grave. To the Coolies who bear the coffin to its resting-place on the slope of some wooded hill or beneath the shade of a clump of dark-leaved cypress trees, he will make the same obeis-

ance. Their lives and properties are at his disposal day and night; but he has no favor to ask which no violence could secure, and pleads thus that his mother's body may be carried gently, without jar or concussion of any kind. He will have her laid by the side of his father, in a coffin which costs perhaps two hundred *taels*, and repair thither periodically to appease her departed spirit with votive offerings of fruit, vegetables, and pork.

Immediately after the decease of a parent, the children and other near relatives communicate the news to friends living farther off by what is called an "announcement of death," which merely states that the father or mother, as the case may be, has died, and that they, the survivors, are entirely to blame. With this is sent a "sad report," or, in other words, a detailed account of deceased's last illness, how it originated, what medicine was prescribed and taken, and sundry other interesting particulars. These friends reply by sending a present of money to help defray funeral expenses, a present of food or joss-stick, or even a detachment of priests to read the prescribed liturgies over the dead. Sometimes a large scroll is written and forwarded, inscribed with a few such appropriate words as, "A hero has gone!" When all these have been received, the members of the bereaved family issue a printed form of thanks, one copy being left at the house of each contributor, and worded thus:—"This is to express the thanks of—, the orphaned son, who weeps tears of blood and bows his head; of—, the mourning brother, who weeps and bows his head; of—, the mourning nephew, who wipes away his tears and bows his head."

It is well known that all old and even middle-aged people in China like having their coffin prepared ready for use. A dutiful son will see that his parents are thus provided, sometimes many years before their death, and the old people will admire relatives or friends to examine and admire both the materials and workmanship, as if it were some beautiful picture or statue of which they had just cause to be proud. Upon the coffin is carved an inscription with the name and titles of its occupant; if a woman, the name of her husband. At the foot of the coffin are buried two stone tablets, face to face; one bears the name and titles of the deceased, and the other a short account of his life, what year he was born in, what were his achievements as a scholar, and how many children were borne to him. Periods of mourning are regulated by the degrees of relationship to the dead. A son wears his white clothes for three years—actually for twenty-eight months; and a wife mourns her husband for the same period. The death of a wife, however, calls for only a single year of grief; for, as the sacred edicts point out, if your wife dies you may marry another. The same time suffices for brother, sister, or child. Marriages contracted during these days of mourning are not only invalid, but the offending parties are punished with a greater or lesser number of blows, according to the gravity of the offence. Innumerable other petty restrictions are imposed by national or local custom, which are observed with a certain amount of fidelity, though instances occur not wanting where the whole thing is shirked as inconvenient and a bore.

Cremation, once the prevailing fashion in China, is now reserved for the priest of Buddha alone—that self-made outcast from society, whose parting soul relies on no food breast, who has no kin or kin to shed "some pious drops on the cinder, eye requires," but, who, seated in an iron chair beneath the miniature pagoda erected in most large temples for that purpose, passes away in fire and smoke from this vale of tears and sin, to be absorbed in the blissful unconsciousness of an eternal Nirvana.

The Roman Campagna.

There is something fitting as well as affecting in Garibaldi devoting the close of his eventful and stormy life to the draining of the Roman Campagna, so as to convert that pestilential waste into a healthy and productive agricultural district. The tract was once healthy and well peopled, but even in the days of the Roman Emperors the dread miasma was at work. Deficiency of drainage and the volcanic nature of the soil have both been held responsible for the fever-breeding characteristics of the section. The removal of the former trouble, however, will do much toward improving its sanitary condition. The chief difficulty lies in the flatness of the territory. It is now contemplated to make a new channel for the Tiber, and lay the foundations of a new city at Ostia, once a famous port, but now diminished to a poor village. The enterprise will cost some millions, but if successful, will more than pay for itself in a few years.

Typhoid Fever.

Dr. E. B. Wood and Dr. Henry Kennedy, English physicians of distinction, contend that there is, in many persons, an inherent predisposition to typhoid fever. They instance the attack under which Prince Leopold suffered last spring, the sickness of the Prince of Wales at Sandringham, and the death of the Prince Consort, as a proof that typhoid is quite a family disease in the Royal House of England. The *Lancet* attributes typhoid, in frequent cases, to high living and great intestinal activity. Typhus is a disease of the poor. Typhoid of the wealthy. Typhoid is endemic in Paris; it ravages year by year the large, ill-ventilated, old-fashioned and badly-constructed country-castes of the rich English landowner. And irrespective of peculiar susceptibility to it, the cause is in both cases defective sanitary precautions.

Fine sensibilities are like woodlens—delightful luxuries of beauty to twine around a solid, upright stem of understanding; but very poor things if, unsupported by strength, they are left to creep along the ground.

Foreign Travel.

Curtis Guild, author of "Over the Ocean," in his new sketches, entitled "Abroad Again," makes the following sensible remarks on travelling and those who travel abroad:

To one fond of travel, or to a person of any degree of education and culture, the European tour is a source of never-ending enjoyment, months and years after it is over. With how much more interest do you read of events that transpire in the Old World that are enacted in the very streets or in the historic buildings that you have visited, and fixed in your mind while sight-seeing! With what new beauty do copies of statues, pictures, and busts become imbued after you have seen the grand originals! With what fresh attraction is history invested, or even novels, the scenes of which are laid in those countries, cities, or very spots that you have crossed the ocean to see!

What a fund of conversation you have to interchange with others who have gone over the same ground, who have had eyes to see and heads to understand, and how amusing it is to hear those who, having both the eyes and heads of ordinary mortals, appear to have travelled abroad for the sole purpose of showing

"How much the sea that's sent abroad to roam
Exceeds the sea that has been kept at home."

Enthusiasm in the returned tourist should never be mistaken for snobbishness, as it sometimes is by those who have never been abroad. I confess, before having travelled abroad, to have sometimes thought of those who had and who were eloquent over the artistic beauty of foreign pictures, the magnificence of ancient architecture, and the grand conception that created celebrated statues, which they expatiated most eloquently upon, over some wretched and familiar plaster model, that their admiration might be affectionate, and their expansion but a parade of where they had been and what they had seen more than their less travelled listeners.

On the other hand, there are foreign travellers who are as amusing to sensible persons as the home travelled members of the same genus. The latter will be readily recognized as those who are continually telling when they were last at Saratoga, or that General Buxteh is married to them in Washington, or that "our carriage was ordered in season for Skunk Swyddell's reception." They ask you if you don't think Saratoga Springs a prettier (!) place than the White Sulphur, and (if you are a native of Maine) if you have many friends at Long Branch, "Clawing place, Newport; but, if you'll believe it, we took a cottage at Niagara Falls last season." And it turns out that these airy purveyors of small talk "took a cottage" at hotel rates for four days to oblige the landlord of the Clifton House, whose rooms were full, and said cottage was a little three-roomed edifice a dozen rods from the house, built to accommodate family parties when the hotel itself was overcrowded with visitors.

The foreign traveller snob is fond of referring to when he is in Vienna, or Paris, or London; and how much it costs for the opera; and of his having a courier, or being in Rome with the Highbreds, or "Came down to Geneva with the Finifines," or of the ride he took on the "Bower des Bolons" with Colonel Throdice. He never refers to libraries, statues, museums, or pictures, except that he may halt opposite one perhaps in your drawing-room, squint knowingly at it through his closed fist, and ask where you "picked that up." This class of snob, male and female, travels and visits celebrated places as it does at home, not to perfect itself in knowledge, nor from a desire to see localities and historic places of which it has read and studied, nor from any admiration of sculpture, painting, fine arts, or natural scenery, but because it is the fashion, or, rather, it thinks it out of fashion not to have been to Europe.

The lady snob of this class is better posted on dressmakers and milliners in Paris than she is on the natural scenery of Switzerland, and will be better able to tell you of her reception at a royal "drawing room," for which she obtained tickets through the moneyed influence of her husband, and which cost her no end of expense, than to describe an Alpine mountain pass that she has journeyed over, an Italian picture gallery that she has sauntered through, or cathedral that she only remembers from having lunched with a party with whom she went to see it.

Another class of travellers are those whom you would say, and who are not questioning the inalienable right of the universal Yankee, had no right to be abroad, and, indeed, it might be better for our country if they had never been permitted to travel. This is a class of people practically ignorant of their own country and its institutions, and whose only knowledge about others is that they are in "foreign parts," that "Queen Victoria lives in a palace and the Pope of Rome in St. Peter's," and who are amazed to find that the people of Italian cities are not dressed like the brigands in the picture books, and those of Switzerland like the characters they have seen represented in the circus or on the theatrical stage.

Foreign travel is doubtless a most valuable instructor, and few Americans of average common sense can travel to any extent, either at home or abroad, without adding to their stock of knowledge and receiving a certain amount of practical instruction of real value. But, certainly, I have met American parties abroad as unprofitable as foreign travel, and who would receive as little intellectual benefit from it, as a student in mathematics who has advanced no farther than simple addition would from a week's instruction in a calculation of logarithms.

SELF.—Say nothing respecting yourself either good, bad, or indifferent—nothing good, for that is vanity; nothing bad, for that is affectation; nothing indifferent, for that is silly.

A Handicraft.

We have frequently urged upon young people the importance of acquiring some useful trade, as a part of their education. It has long been a matter of much wonder among thoughtful persons that, while so many departments of manual industry are offering permanent and remunerative employment to diligence and skill, there is yet so much reluctance among the youth of both sexes to prepare for and enter them. The absurd notion that, in some vague and unexplained way, the work of the hands is degrading, or at least inglorious, has gained so firm a hold upon the minds of a certain portion of the community, that it will take time, experience and all the influences that can be brought to bear to dislodge it. Yet there is hardly a word of reform that is deserving of more strenuous effort than this. We talk fondly of the dignity of labor and make loud professions of the honor we entertain for industry in all its forms; yet, when we come to apply the principle to particular cases and think of teaching our sons and daughters to employ their hands to some useful end, we too often shrink back in cowardly terror, lest the shallow and superficial may point at them a scornful finger.

Nothing contributes more to this most injurious fallacy than the profound ignorance which so generally exists concerning the educating influences which manual exercise exerts over the individual. There are two main objects of pursuit in all education—use and discipline. What is acquired is valuable, either for its immediate and practical result, or else for its power in giving strength, vigor and development to the faculties of the student. There is always some discussion as to which of these objects should preponderate in education, some claiming that the chief purpose should be to prepare the youth by direct means for his practical duties in life, and others insisting that his personal culture and developments should occupy the more prominent place. Hitherto, manual work of almost every kind has been placed exclusively in the former category. Those who have urged its importance have done so mainly on the ground of its immediate use and profit. It is necessary to the comfort and prosperity of humanity; it is usually largely in demand, and secures good remuneration. Such are the arguments adduced in its favor, and sound and logical they are; but they are by no means all. Few persons believe that manual work has any direct and beneficial action on the individual, or any tendency to develop or augment his faculties or to elevate his nature. It is good to teach a boy to work, they argue, because work must be done, but to teach him to work as a direct means of improving him seldom enters into their consideration.

Probably, this is one cause of the habit so common among all of us of looking down upon manual labor as a disagreeable necessity, instead of looking up to it as a potent instrument in our own culture. A close investigation will, however, dispel this error, and reveal to us the benefits which we may ourselves reap from the patient and skillful use of our hands. Any one who has observed little children in their play must have noticed how instructive and pleasurable to them is manual exercise. From the time when they become conscious of their power their hands are scarcely idle a single waking moment. Engaged continually in constructing, dissecting and altering, their unceasing activity is a source of infinite delight and improvement. They at least do not despise handwork, nor have they yet learned to see in it a shadow of anything that is degrading. Some of the most successful teachers of children have testified to the powerful effects which the use of the hands produce on all the faculties. Describe, for instance, a cube to a child in words ever so well chosen, and if any impression is made it is too slight to dwell in the memory for a single day. Show him a diagram, and one step has been gained, but give him blocks, and induce him to construct a cube for himself, and the lesson is learned. His powers of observation, of comparison and of memory are thus all brought into exercise, and when the impressions he receives through his own handwork are indelible.

Such culture does not cease with childhood. What we see or hear affects us to a certain degree, but what we do we appreciate and comprehend to a much larger extent. We may be surrounded on every hand by beauty, and yet remain insensible to it, but the beauty that we create, enters into, and becomes a part of ourselves. A cultivated lady, who lately visited Rome, describing her sensations on witnessing the magnificent architecture and wonderful carvings of the Cathedral, and contrasting them with the stolid, heavy and dull inhabitants who lived in the midst of such grandeur, said that it seemed to her it was the walls that were living, and the people that were dead. It was a past generation who designed and constructed this exquisite beauty, and who were truly educated by it, while those who had merely witnessed it all their lives had never partaken of its loveliness nor been inspired by its sublimity. If, then, the hands play so important a part in our development, let us regard their office with reverence rather than contempt. Let us forever banish that silly vanity which would slight or scorn those who labor with them; let us rather endeavor to put our ourselves into such harmony with nature in this respect, that while we gladly contribute our part to the material needs of humanity, we also feel ourselves not sacrificed or injured, but educated, developed and elevated by the process, and let all our influence tend to honor skillful, patient labor of every kind, not for its practical use, but also for its power to invigorate and strengthen human faculties, and thus increase human happiness.—*Philadelphia Ledger*.

The heart, love reposes, and the soul contemplates, but the mind needs action.

Original Poetry.

IN CENA DOMINI.

Written for the Democratic Advocate.

BY C. H. V., OF PHILADELPHIA.

Grant me Thy love, dear Lord, to-day,
When crushed by doubt and sin,
Before Thy cross my heart I lay,
For Thee to enter in.

I cannot ask especial grace,
I've wandered far from Thee;
But do not turn away Thy face
From my humility.

I see the Altar robed in white,
Thy Priests the Preface sing;
I envy them the blessed light
Of Faith's pure offering.

My frozen lips refuse a prayer;
Let me, adoring Thee,
But bow before Thee hidden here
In Thy Great Mystery.

O Blessed Saviour, loving Lord,
Have mercy upon me!
O Mother, pierced by a sword,
Keep me in purity!

The Mass is ended! Grant me now
Not to be heard in vain;
The careless crowd with formal bow
Pass to the world again.

The incense rising fingers yet,
And still I love the knee;
O let me never, Lord, forget
The Mass in Cena Domini.

Annunciation B. V. M. 1875.

Miscellaneous.

From the New York Observer.

First Shot in the Revolution.

Through the kindness of a friend, I have the first weapon that was discharged in the war of the American Revolution. The brace of pistols, preserved in a handsome casket and covered with glass, had a history so brief and direct, so romantic and remarkable, that they are identified with the first blood shed in that war which resulted in the independence of the United States of America.

As we have now entered upon the month which witnessed the opening of that long drama, and as the State of Massachusetts has declared the 19th day of this month a legal holiday, that all her sons and daughters may participate in the celebration of the centennial of the battle that inaugurated the war, it is a fitting time to tell the story, and present the pistols.

The vigilance of Gen. Gage, in Boston, was very great, but not sufficient to prevent the intelligence of his movements from leaking out and being sent over the country. It was known to the committees of safety in Lexington, Concord and other towns, that the British General was preparing an expedition to destroy the warlike stores that patriotic prudence had accumulated in these places, and preparations were speedily made to give the expedition a warm reception.

April 19, 1775, at the early hour of two in the morning, 130 militia men of Lexington were assembled on the common, but when word was brought that no troops were coming, they separated to their homes, to return at the sound of the drum. At half-past four, by order of Capt. Parker, the signal was given of the approach of the enemy, and the brave men of Sargent Monroe's company, some of whom were in a few minutes to die, took their posts near the church. Here they awaited the moment to begin the struggle that is still in progress over the world, to determine the right of a people to have their own form of government. Please keep in mind the names of Parker and Monroe, as they will appear again.

The British were on the ground: Major Pitcairn commanding, and on horseback. He shouted an order to the Americans to lay down their arms and disperse. This order producing no effect, he drew his pistol and fired it, at the same time giving to his soldiers the command to fire. The events that followed form the familiar history of the war of Independence. The British, having compelled the retirement of the militia after many had been killed or wounded, went to Concord: the news of the morning's work spread over the surrounding country: the minute men rushed to the scene of action: and when the British, at noon, began their return march to Boston, they were in the midst of an enemy's country, and every inhabitant an armed soldier. Major Pitcairn's horse was wounded, and with his equipments fell into the hands of the Americans. Confusion spread through the ranks. "They were exhausted with the fatigue, their tongues hanging out of their mouths like dogs after a chase." Reinforcements were sent out from Boston and the remnant was saved.

Israel Putnam, the hero of the wolf-den and Horseneck Hill, who had won honors in the French war, and had been made a brigadier-general at a special meeting of the Connecticut Legislature, having heard of the explosion at Lexington, unyoked the team with which he was ploughing, and rode on horseback sixty-five miles, in one day, to Cambridge, Mass., and put himself immediately into contact with the American leaders. To him was assigned the command of the militia, and his dash, daring and skill, as displayed at Bunker Hill two months afterwards, form brilliant passages in the early history of the war. It was very proper that the pistols which belonged to Major Pitcairn should be committed to his hands.

His grandson was John P. Putnam, Esq., a graduate of Williams College, Mass., a citizen of Cambridge, Washington county, N. Y., which was afterwards divided into three towns, of which White Creek was one. He was a gentleman of great culture and worth, and a very special friend of my childhood. He had in his possession, and received from his father, and his grandfather, Gen. Putnam, a brace of pistols which he preserved with the greatest care, and exhibited to his friends as interesting relics of the Revolutionary war.

They are now the property of his widow, and she has very kindly acceded to my request, to permit them to go to Lexington, to be exhibited there at the approaching centennial. As I have said, they were the pistols used by Major Pitcairn in giving the command to the British soldiers to fire upon the Americans on the morning of April 19, 1775, and one of them is therefore the first weapon discharged in the war of the American Revolution. The following certificate, by John P. Putnam, recites the facts and the evidence that these are the pistols that were in the hands of Major Pitcairn on that day:

I am a grandson of the late Major-General Israel Putnam. I have a distinct recollection of these pistols for more than sixty-three years. My first recognition of them was seeing them on the drapery of the General's coffin as he was borne to the grave. They were then the property of my father, a gift of his father, and have remained in the possession of my father and myself down to the present day.

From my uncles, Colonel Israel Putnam and Colonel Daniel Putnam, who were both aide-de-camp to the General, and from my father, I have often heard the following statement, namely, "that at the commencement of the war of the American Revolution, these pistols were the property of Major Pitcairn, of the British army; that on his retreat from Concord and Lexington, to Boston, on the 19th of April, 1775, his horse was shot under him, and fell near a party of pursuing Americans; that the Major narrowly escaped capture, leaving his horse and equipments; that his pursuers stripped the horse of his furniture, of which these pistols formed a part; and brought them into the American camp, and a few days after, on his arrival at camp, they were presented to General Putnam, who carried them through the residue of his active service, 'till at the year 1827, I spent a short season at Lexington, had these pistols with me, and was there introduced to three of the members of Captain Parker's company of militia that was attacked by the British forces, at that place, and that one of them, a Mr. Monroe, I think, stated it as his firm belief, from recollection of something unusual in construction, that he saw one of these pistols, that morning, in the hand of the commander of the detachment, who he afterwards learned was Major Pitcairn, and saw him discharge it before any other shot was fired at said camp."

JOHN P. PUTNAM.
(Signed) Dec. 8, 1855.

CERTIFICATE OF COL. AARON BURR.
I certify that, from inspection of a pair of steel-mounted pistols now in possession of Mr. John P. Putnam, and this day shown to me by him, I believe them to be the same pistols which were carried and used by Major-General Israel Putnam in the war of the Revolution. That I was the aide-de-camp to General Putnam, and believe I often saw said pistols in his possession.

(Signed) A. BURR.
Dated September 29, 1855.

Witness present,
ALEXANDER S. TUTTLE.

TO-MORROW.—To-morrow may never come to us. We do not live in to-morrow. We cannot find it in any title deeds. The man who owns whole blocks of real estate and great tracts on the sea does not own a single minute of to-morrow. To-morrow! It is a mysterious possibility not yet born. It lies under the seal of midnight, behind the veil of glittering constellations.

Enjoy the present, whatever it may be, and be not solicitous for the future; for if you take your foot from the present stand, and thrust it forward to to-morrow's event, you are in a restless condition. It is like refusing to quench your present thirst by fearing you will want to drink the next day. If to-morrow you should want your sorrow would come time enough though you do not hasten it. Let your trouble tally till its own day comes. Enjoy blessings this day, if God sends them, and the evils of it bear patiently and sweetly, for this day is ours. We are dead to yesterday and not yet born to to-morrow.

EFFECT OF DAMP AIR ON COAL.—Mr. Varrentrass finds by recently conducted experiments on this subject, that the loss in weight, due to a slow oxidation and to the disengagement of gases which form the richest part of the coal, may equal one-third of the original weight. The heating power in such coal was lowered to 47 per cent of its former capacity. The same coal exposed to the air, but in a closed receptacle, did not lose more than 25 per cent of gas and 10 per cent of heating power. Bituminous coals alter most rapidly.

This shows the disadvantage of damp cellars, and of leaving coal uncovered for long periods and subject to bad weather. Judging from the large loss incurred, it would seem the better economy to provide suitable receptacles for the fuel, the saving in the latter being sufficient to compensate for the extra expense.—*Scientific American*.

NO SONGS HEARD THERE.—A recent traveler says:—"What always impresses more than anything else in Egypt and Palestine has been the entire absence of cheerful and exhilarating music, especially from the children. You never hear them singing in the huts. I never heard a song that deserves the name in the streets or houses of Jerusalem. One heavy burden of voiceless sadness rests upon the forsaken land. The daughters of music have been brought low. The mirth of the tablet ceased, the noise of them that rejoice ended; the joy of the harp ceased!"

If you desire to enjoy life avoid unpalatable persons; they impede business and poison pleasure. Make it your own rule not only to be punctual, but a little beforehand. Such a habit secures a competence which is essential to happiness. For want of it many persons live in a constant fever, and put all about them in a fever too.

In Queen Victoria's crown there are 1363 brilliant diamonds, 1273 rose diamonds and 147 table diamonds, 1 large ruby, 17 sapphires, 11 emeralds, 4 small rubies and 217 pearls, a total of 2380 precious stones.

Fatal Duels of Distinguished Men.

Colonel Thomas H. Benton fought several duels, and in one of them killed Mr. Lucas.

General Jackson had several affairs, and killed Mr. Dickinson in a duel, described at length in "Parton's Life of the Iron President."

General Alexander Hamilton was killed in a duel by Aaron Burr, 1804, under circumstances reflecting great discredit upon the latter.

David C. Broderick was killed by D. S. Terry, of California, September 16, 1869, in consequence of a difference on the Leocompton question.

George C. Dromgoole, of Virginia, fought and killed Mr. Dugger, a gentleman of the same State, in 1837, in a border county of North Carolina.

The causeless and fatal duel between Jonathan Cilley, of Maine, and William J. Graves, of Kentucky, was fought near Washington in 1838. Mr. Cilley was killed after having first previously said that he entertained "the highest respect and most kind feelings" for his adversary.

The mortal combat between two post captains in the navy, Stephen Decatur and James Barron, at Bladenburg, on the 22d of March, 1820, will never be forgotten. At the first shot both fell.

"They fired so near together," says an eye-witness, "that but one report was heard." Decatur was killed, and Barron severely wounded.

General J. W. Denver, a member of the State Senate of California, had a controversy with Hon. Edward Gilbert, ex-member of Congress, in 1862, in regard to some legislation, which resulted in a challenge from Gilbert that was accepted by Denver. Rifles were the weapons. Gilbert fell at the second shot, and expired in a few minutes.

Among many memorable duels and challenges some of the most famous were those of Daniel O'Connell, the illustrious Irish "Liberator." For using the phrase "a beggary corporation" in relation to the city of Dublin he was challenged by D'Este, a member of that body, who would take no apology. O'Connell killed him at the first fire. This was in 1815.

A great duel took place near Washington in 1819 between Gen. Armstrong, a Mason, Senator in Congress from Virginia; and the celebrated John M. McCarty. They were brothers-in-law, and fought with muskets. McCarty did not want to fight, but Mason pressed him. McCarty proposed to fight on a barrel of powder or with dirks. Both modes were objected to, and finally McCarty accepted the cartel.

Colonel McCarty killed Gen. Masou at the first fire, the ball passing through his breast.—*Forney's Miscellany*.

BLOOD COLORING MATTER FREE FROM IRON.—MM. Paquelin and Jolly announce that they have obtained the hematic pigment in a state of perfect purity and free from iron. Hematosis, as it is termed, burns without ash, similar to resinous substances. It is insoluble in pure water, and dissolves in small proportion in ammoniacal water, to which it gives a light yellow tinge. It is altered by potash and caustic soda solutions, to which it gives a brown color, and is lightly soluble in alcohol. The solvents of hematic are ether, chloroform, benzine, and bisulphide of carbon. With these bodies the weak solution is amber-colored; when concentrated, red.

LAUGH AND BE HEALTHY.—The physiological benefit of laughter is explained by Dr. E. Hecker in the *Archiv für Psychiatrie*: The comic-like tickling causes a reflex action of the sympathetic nerve, by which the caliber of the vascular portions of the system is diminished, and their nervous power increased. The average pressure of the cerebral vessels on the brain substance is thus decreased, and this is compensated for by the forced expiration of laughter, and the larger amount of blood thus called to the lungs. We always feel good when we laugh, but until now we never knew the scientific reason why.—*Scientific American*.

How to Wash.

A London paper says:—In Belgium and Holland, linen is prepared beautifully because the washerwomen use borax, instead of soda, as a washing-powder. One large handful of borax is used to ten gallons of water, and the saving of soap is said to be one-half. For laces and cambrics an extra quantity is used. Borax does not injure the goods, and softens the hardest water. A teaspoonful added to an ordinary kettle of hard water in which it is allowed to boil, will effectually soften the water.

It is said in France that the quarries of lithographic stone in Bavaria are exhausted as regards the best kind, and that the only fine stones are now obtained by the Paris lithographers from Bruniquel, Tarn, Garonne, in France. These stones are said to be well appreciated in the United States. There are quarries of the same stone at Vigan, France, but these are of an inferior description.

The entire alphabet is found in these four lines. Some of the children may like to learn them:

God gives the grazing ox his meat,
He quickly hears the sheep's low cry,
But man who tastes his finest wheat,
Should joy to lift his precious high.

There are fears expressed that the great Salt Lake of Utah will soon grow too large for its confines. Since 1861 there has been a steady rise, and it is eating under the land on both sides at a tremendous rate.

Red, used on a railroad, signifies danger, and says stop. The same color displayed in a man's nose may well be interpreted to give a similar warning.

A Rajpootana chief possesses a solid silver table, at which fourteen people may dine comfortably.

Electrical Countries.

Certain interesting phenomena have recently been noticed by the Hayden Expedition in the mountains of Colorado, showing the high electrical state of the elevated position known as Station 9, Uncompahgre Peak, during the passage of a storm. Although the indications of the change in the weather could be seen at a distance, the electricity at the point of observation did not become plentiful until a characteristic buzzing was heard.

Painful sensations followed, and at the back of the head and at the elbows a sharp pricking, like that of needles or a sharp knife, was felt. By this time the party came to the conclusion that they were standing on dangerous ground. Those standing on the sharp ridges leading from it experienced the severest shocks. After beating a heavy retreat, and remaining on the sides of the mountain to continue observations, it was noticed that after each discharge or flash of lightning a short rest ensued until a sufficient quantity of electricity had again accumulated. Those nearest the point struck would feel a heavy shock pass through them. These same phenomena were noticed during three days of continuous storms. At many places the rocks were glazed where the electric current had passed. The formation of tubes in sand from the same cause is well known.

A French meteorologist, M. Fournet, has suggested that it would be an interesting question for Science to determine whether certain countries or regions are in a higher electrical condition than others, and whether meteorological reactions do not result from the unequal distribution of the electricity. Similar phenomena to those detailed above have been noted upon the elevated plateaus of Mexico, and nearly a century ago Volney recorded remarkable noises occurring during thunderstorms in the neighborhood of Philadelphia. In South America, at Popayan, province of Granada, Boussingault says that