

### AT WINTER'S END.

The weedy fallows winter-worn  
Where cattle shiver under sodden hay,  
The ploughlands long and lorn—  
The fading day.  
The sullen shudder of the brook,  
And winds that wring the withered trees  
In vain  
For drearier sound or look—  
The lonely rain.  
The crows that train o'er desert skies  
In endless caravans that have no goal  
But flight—where darkness flies—  
From pole to pole.  
The sombre zone of hills around  
That shrink in misty mournfulness from  
sight,  
With sunset aureoles crowned  
Before the night,  
—Cale Young Rice, in Lippincott's Magazine.

### The Poor Widow's Picture

From the French of Emil Travestre.

**P**oor Widow Pelegriano had just been dispossessed, and all their belongings were to be sold at public auction.

The goods were heaped up on the doorstep and the town crier was calling loudly for purchasers. A few passers stopped, but they had hardly glanced at the poor collection when they continued their way, and even the beggars went by without a sigh of envy.

At last the crier stopped to recover his breath, and after glancing up and down the street, he said doubtfully: "I am afraid, Master Caverdone, you will get but little for your pains. There seems to be no one in Rome poor enough to want these chattels. The whole lot will hardly bring three ducats."

"Three?" repeated the person addressed, a thin, little old man, striking the ground furiously with his walking stick as he spoke, "and the miserable woman owes me twelve ducats! Twelve, as I am a Christian, Jacobo. I had entire confidence in her husband. I supplied him with brushes and colors whenever he wanted them. How was I to know that he was going to die without paying me—the miserable dauber!—leaving me nothing but a heap of rubbish? I cannot sell the woman and her four babies."

"Hush!" said the crier, "she will ear you. It is not her fault that she ever carried him off."

"Attend to your business," cried the old man in a sharp tone, and then he stood looking sullenly around him. At a little distance sat the Widow Pelegriano, and whether because she had not heard her creditor's reproaches, or because she was incapable of being affected by anything, there was not the slightest sign of resentment in her attitude or expression. On her lap she held two young children, evidently twins, who were disputing with each other the possession of her disheveled locks; another child was rolling about at her feet, while the youngest was cooing to itself and playing with a wisp of straw pulled from its own cradle. The mother's face was perfectly calm, expressing the resignation or indifference of despair.

Suddenly, some persons chanced to stop and look at the wares of which the crier was announcing the sale. Imitation rules the world of men as attraction governs that of things. More passers joined the group, stopping merely because the others did, and in a few minutes there was a crowd. No one wanted to buy, but each seemed anxious to find out why the others stayed.

Two gentlemen walking together found their way impeded by the throng, and one of them asked in a brusque tone:

"What is the matter here?"

"If we were in my dear Paris, my lord," returned the other, "I would say it was probably a woman beating her husband, or a cat having its ears cut."

"It is even less than that, Sir Frenchman," interposed a Jew, who had overheard the question and reply. "The household effects of a poor painter who died last week are about to be sold by Master Caverdone."

"And who, may I ask, is he?" said the first speaker.

"A merchant, who can furnish you with paints and brushes at reasonable prices, Mr. Englishman," was the reply, upon which the Parisian exclaimed hastily:

"You are too familiar. I would have you know that you are speaking to Lord Pembroke and Monsieur de Vivonne!"

The Jew's face beamed as he listened.

"Lord Pembroke, the great English art amateur! I am so glad to meet you. I have some valuable works, by all the best Italian masters."

"What is your name?" asked his lordship.

"For my part, I spend three hundred thousand francs a year, and yet I am in need of everything. I have been obliged to cut down my forests; it is very humiliating. If I were rich, I would give the poor woman her twelve ducats, but cards have ruined me."

"And art ruins me," said Lord Pembroke with a sigh. "I have outrun my income again. A rascal in Rotterdam refuses fifty thousand crowns for Poussin's Seven Sacraments; I shall have to give him eighty thousand, perhaps more."

The Jew listened eagerly, scenting a good customer. On the other side of the two capitalists stood a middle-aged man, plainly dressed in black, who had also overheard the stranger's conversation.

The auctioneer now held up a small old painting in a cheap, shabby frame. "They have works of art, it seems," said the Parisian, with a mocking smile.

"Probably a signboard left on the painter's hands by some macaroni merchant," said the lord.

"Six paoli!" cried the auctioneer. "He'll never get it," whispered the Jew, and there was a pause.

"Three ducats," said the man in black suddenly, and a rustle of surprise swept through the crowd.

"Who is the bidder?" asked Lord Pembroke.

"Master Stella, the painter, one of our best authorities on art," replied the Jew with a puzzled air.

"Can it be of value?" asked his lordship, and De Vivonne answered gaily:

"Why not? Have we not heard of many such instances?"

"Three ducats, three ducats!" said the auctioneer; "who says four?"

"Four!" said the Jew.

"Five!" said the painter.

"Ten!" said the Jew.

"Twelve!"

"Fifteen!"

"Twenty!"

Amidst a buzz of excitement the Jew asked permission to examine the picture more closely.

"It is useless," said Master Stella, "for I bid twenty-five."

A London paper announces that the moon is covered with snow. It has always been generally understood, however, that the moon was cold and distant.

The true object of advertising is the development of commerce. The individual profit that accrues is merely an incident, observes Profitable Advertising.

Rhode Island has now a large population of French-Canadians in the manufacturing towns. The work of naturalization goes on unremittently, and Judge Blodgett of the Supreme Court in Providence recently objected to the appearance of some candidates for naturalization who were not properly attired. He says that American citizenship is a serious thing, and those who seek to acquire it in his court must come properly garbed and clean.

Japan has done surprisingly well in her efforts to keep abreast of other nations, yet Marquis Ito, who has just visited Europe, says she will have to redouble her endeavors in that direction in order not to drop behind and be counted out of the running. But the country is desirous to receive and take advantage from all useful lessons, and so instructed the chances are that it will hold its own in the international race with any of its competitors, dinks the New York Tribune.

The rapid introduction of electric railways in Great Britain is bringing about interesting economic changes, not only in London, Manchester, Liverpool, and other large towns, but in the heart of rural England, where it has resulted in shifting the masses of population, subdivision of great English country estates, and an increase in the growth of agricultural products. The congestion of the streets of London has become so serious a problem that its solution by the introduction of electric railways promises to be one of the most surprising developments of our time. This will do away with the hansom cab, which in many cases, with one passenger, takes up as much room as a street-car with sixty.

As to autobiography, the writer in the London Saturday Review thinks that it is even more difficult to distinguish it from fiction in its quality and character, because the egoism of one who writes his own life almost always introduces an element of imagination, or, at least, of disproportion. "That is the drawback of it; truth is sacrificed to pose. Otherwise autobiographies would be the most valuable of human documents; certainly the most interesting, for a man ought to know himself as no other person can know him. Whatever may be the difficulties in creating masterpieces of biography or autobiography which shall live with posterity, there is no branch of literature which is less dependent for popularity on artistic merit than this. It is enough that it deals with personalities, with vices and weaknesses, with peculiar phases of thought, with indiscretions and foibles, and if the person portrayed out anything of a figure in the world and has supplied copious matter, he may be sure of being remembered and read."

A writer in the Woman's Age thinks that woman's tears have been featured far more than they deserve. "The fact is," she says, "that women have overdone their crying, and have allowed any amount of health, courage and force to ooze from their tear-glands. Weeping in the old days was really as fashionable as fainting, and the poems of Moore and Byron dwell ecstatically upon the tears of the various Julias and Marys of their songs, so crying spells must have had their charm in those days, as well as ringlets and wisp waists. But the woman of the future will laugh, and will be all the better for it. Girls have never been allowed to cultivate a humorous sense as they grew up until within quite recent years, when intelligence is gaining such victories in the nursery. Boisterous conduct or loud laughter have always been reproved in little girls, while in a boy such exuberance is regarded as a natural and healthy sex attribute. This is one of the reasons that the humorous sense, which in children is usually evidenced in the love of frolic, is killed in the feminine nature. To laugh is rude. That constitutes the law for the woman-child in whose brain-cells mischievous fun is beginning to bubble. The result of all this is that few women know how to laugh. The laugh of the child is repressed, and it develops into the giggle of the girl. Then the giggle is criticised, and many women continue, in their efforts to be polite, to gurgle and gasp into their handkerchiefs until the end of the chapter.

### ETIOLOGY OF FOOD PLANTS

Evolution of Wheat, Cabbage and Potatoes From Weeds.

A large, ugly plant, with straggly, pale green leaves, grows here and there along the coast of England. It is nearly two feet high, has a tough woody stem and yellow flowers, which turn to pods filled with seeds. No one looking at it would give it a second thought, or consider it anything but a useless weed. Yet that weed is the ancestor, in a direct line, of the plump cabbage, the tender Brussels sprout and even of the dainty cauliflower. All this seemingly miraculous change has been wrought by the hand of the patient gardener, rolling from generation to generation, and always improving upon the original stock till nature herself would hardly recognize her offspring.

The gardener has done more for the world than the inventor, or even the shepherd. Wheat was once mere wild grass, but it is so long since gardeners took it in hand that its origin as a food plant is lost in the mists of antiquity. But within the last three centuries cultivators of the soil have worked a bigger miracle than turning grass to bread. Wheat is now no longer the world's biggest crop. It has been beaten by a weed Spanish explorers found near Quito, in the Andes, about the year 1520, and which was brought to England from Virginia in 1563.

The earth's annual potato crop is now four billions of bushels, wheat producing two and a half billions only, and maize about the same amount. It was the gardener who turned those little, watery, bullet-shaped roots to the great tubers of "white elephants" and "magnum bonums." A little plant with glossy, green leaves and a threadlike, reddish root, grows on the shores of the Mediterranean. Gardeners took it in hand, and the result is that the price of sugar has fallen from five pence to two pence a pound, and Europe, instead of importing all her sugar from the tropics, makes for herself two and three-quarter million tons a year from the root of the sugar beet.

The gardener does more than improve plants in size and color. He makes new ones. There are, for instance, nearly sixty varieties of orange, varying from the giant seedless habua to the delicate little kid glove or tangerine. There is also the immense pomelo, which is a cross between an orange and a lemon. Other fruit growers have succeeded in crossing the blackberry and raspberry, and producing a new delicacy, twice as large and succulent as either of the older fruits.

As for apples, there are said to be three hundred named varieties, and the gardener has evolved them all from the sour little hedgerow crab. In similar fashion he has changed the little black sloes which grew on the blackthorn to glorious great purple and yellow plums.

Perhaps it is in flowers that the amazing achievements of gardeners are most striking. Who could imagine that the massive, fragrant globe daisy was once the single-petaled, almost scentless dog rose; or that the tiny heartsease of the wheat fields could have been changed to the imperial purple pansy, with a blossom three inches across? It is an almost bigger miracle that has turned the common herb R. o. and crane's bill of our fields to blazing geraniums and gorgeous pelargoniums.

Farmers of to-day have a choice of thirty or more different grass seeds to sow for pasture or hay. All these tame grasses have been evolved from wild ones by the experimental gardener within the last 130 years. The result is that millions of acres, once considered useless, have now been brought into cultivation, and that the percentage of tilled ground in Europe has grown in a century from less than two acres in the hundred to nearly three times that amount.—Boston Herald.

### Outdoor Weddings in May and June.

It is a growing custom to celebrate country weddings, in May and June, out-of-doors. One of the prettiest of weddings took place last May in an orchard in full blossom, when nature seemed to have decked herself for a bridal. Garlands of foliage suspended from tree to tree marked off the aisle—those of white flowers indicating the place where the bride party was to stand. For a country wedding the invitations should give full information about trains, and carriages or carryalls be sent to convey the guests to and from the station.

After an hour given to their friends the bride and groom retire to dress for their journey, and the formal guests withdraw. The bridegroom awaits the bride at the foot of the staircase with the family and intimate friends. At her appearance she holds aloft her bridal bouquet and then throws it among the bridesmaids. The one to catch it will be the next bride—so say the Fates!—Ladies' Home Journal.

### Trolley to Mecca.

The Street Railway Review publishes the statement that American capitalists have secured concessions for extensive electric railways in Asia, the idea being to cater to the Mohammedan pilgrimage travel to Mecca, a journey made once a year by all good Moslems. The lines are to start at Cairo, Egypt, and run to Mt. Sinai, and thence through Syria and Arabia to Mecca. A branch is to connect Damascus with the system at Mt. Sinai. Trolley cars already cover the road from Jerusalem to Galilee. It is stated that the Sultan of Turkey has granted the greater part of the concessions for the proposed system.



Earth Roads.

**T**HE question of good roads is one that at present is receiving much attention, and under the direction of experts of the office of Public Road Inquiries of the United States Department of Agriculture sections of roads, as object lessons, are being built in different parts of the country. It is hoped that before many years all roads in the United States used for heavy traffic will be macadamized, graveled or otherwise improved. But the absence in many places of rock, gravel or other hard and durable substances with which to build good roads, and the excessive cost of such roads where suitable material is scarce, will necessitate the use of earth roads for many years to come. Under favorable conditions of traffic, moisture and maintenance, the earth road is the most elastic and most satisfactory for pleasure and light traffic.

The United States Department of Agriculture has in press and will soon issue Farmers' Bulletin No. 136, entitled, "Earth Roads." It was prepared by Maurice O. Eldridge, Assistant Director, Public Road Inquiries.

The bulletin states that the aim in making a road is to establish the easiest, shortest and most economical line of travel, and that it is therefore desirable that roads should be firm, smooth, comparatively level and fit for use at all seasons of the year. They should be properly located so that their grades shall be such that loaded vehicles may be drawn over them without great loss of energy; properly constructed, the roadbed graded, shaped and rolled, and surfaced with the best available material suited to their needs.

Attention is called to various errors in laying out roads, especially the common error of endeavoring to secure routes covering the shortest distance between fixed points. For this purpose the road is often made to go over a hill instead of around it. A road halfway around a hill or through a valley is sometimes no longer than a road over a hill or through a valley. The difference in the length even between a straight road and one that is lightly curved is less than many suppose.

The importance of proper drainage is pointed out and suggestions are given for the construction, maintenance and repair of earth roads.

The bulletin contains twenty illustrations. It is for free distribution, and copies will be sent to any address on application to Senators, Representatives and delegates in Congress, or to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

### Making a Good Highway.

A good road can be made by putting in a layer of large or medium-sized stone, then on that a layer of crushed stone, and on that a covering of gravel, and rolling the surface down hard and smooth. But that is not all that is needed. A part of the skill is like the old gentleman's rule for making good coffee: "When you make it put in some." We have been watching the work on a bit of road this season. There are about three inches in depth of the round cobble stones, one inch of crushed stone and one inch of gravel and loam mixed, which by wetting and rolling has been so pressed down into the stones that it is now less than a half inch. If it were whitewashed after it was rolled it could not look much better, but it might be more durable. We think before one winter passes the larger stones will be at the surface and the covering will have washed away or settled down below them. In close proximity to a strip built by the State as an example of how to build a good road, it is likely to furnish an equally good example of how not to make a good road. It is one of these cases, too common where the town thought to give employment to its own citizens, instead of hiring the work done by contract, when it would have been better to have employed a competent man, with able-bodied help, and supported its crippled from the town's poor fund, than to have paid them \$1.75 for eight hours' loafing, or trying to do that which some of them were unable to do by reason of old age, and others were utterly incompetent to do well, while few of them cared for or took any interest in any part of the work, excepting unrolling their pay.—American Cultivator.

### A Fat and Dirty Race.

Sir W. Martin Conway, a well known mountain climber and traveler, who has circled the globe and gone up and down it in search of heights that he might scale, came from England to the Albemarle, and told of the Patagonians. "They are not giants, as some have supposed, and as the geographies teach," he said. "They are large in comparison with the other South American natives—that is all. Everything is relative, you know. But they are very fat. That is why they can stand the cold so well. I have seen Patagonian men and boys running around unclad, while I was wrapped in warm garments, with the snow falling upon them in quantities and the wind blowing bitterly. They are kept warm by their fat—and dirt. Patagonia is one of the dirtiest places imaginable. Don't go there if you hate dirt. That is my advice to all who contemplate a journey to the jumping off place of South America."—New York Tribune.

### WHEN THE SNOW FALLS.

Drift Forms as Observed in the Adirondacks in Winter.

On a good drift-making day the snow comes, not in the star-shaped flakes that look so pretty when portrayed on a page of the dictionary, but in small pellets. These pellets are in shape like tiny white footballs, usually, and they come rolling and tumbling down-wind as if they had been "kicked for fair" by the half-back gods of the gale! And yet while they roll and tumble and bound they find lodging places, and as the idler gazes, he sees them pile up in a wall on the crest of the road cut. Higher and higher grows the pile, forming at first a vertical wall, but before this has risen three inches it is seen to overhang the gulch, says Scribner's Magazine.

Though round and easily rolled, these pellets in some way fit to each other as bricks would, until the overhang is perhaps a fifth as great as the elevation of the wall, and then, marvelous and impossible as it would seem to the unaccustomed observer, a lip forms on the crest of the wall, and soon it begins to droop and hang down. Wider and longer it grows, farther and farther it droops, until its shape is precisely like the lip formed on a huge ocean wave when it breaks on a shoal water beach. Lips that are ten feet wide and hang down three feet, clear of all, though but six or eight inches thick where they join the chin of the wall are not uncommon. By what magic is it that these frozen, oblong pellets that go bounding along as merrily as footballs form into such a shape as that? Of course, if the storm continues, a time usually comes when the lips break off because of their great weight. And then no new lip forms to replace the last one. The snow merely drops over into the lee of the wall and gradually fills the cutting.

### WORDS OF WISDOM.

It takes a great man to lead a small army.

He who parleys with principle is preparing for perdition.

Stolen thunder seldom brings down showers of blessing.

No man is so apt to fall as he who is over-anxious to rise.

The light that blesses the wise man burps the foolish moth.

Information does not make an education without inspiration.

The place is prepared for the man who is prepared for the place.

It's a poor policy to take your gun to pieces in the face of the enemy.

The great man may be sometimes mean, but the mean man can never be great.

The wealth of the world depends on the value of man and not on his possessions.

The great man is he who realizes the limits of his abilities and the possibilities of his capacities.

True riches must be measured by what is given to others instead of by what is gained from them.

It is a good idea to have some everyday virtues in your possession before you pretend to have any uncommon ones.—Ran's Horn.

### Forced to Enjoy It.

There is no doubt that most of us object, by instinct, to what is "for our good." H. Rider Haggard says, in his "Winter Pilgrimage," that he had, early in life, an opportunity for imbibing a knowledge for which he did not care. He continues:

"When I was 'a soaring human boy,' my father took me up the Rhine by boat, with the expectation that my mind would be improved by contemplating its lovely and historic banks. Very soon, however, I wearied of the feast, and slipped down to the cabin to enjoy 'Robinson Crusoe.'"

But some family traitor betrayed me, and protesting even with tears that I "hated views," I was dragged on deck again.

"I have paid six shillings," shouted my justly indignant parent, as he hauled me up the steeper stairs, "for you to study the Rhine scenery! And whether you like it or not, young man, study it you shall!"

### Royalty on the Stage.

King Edward was eight years old when he saw his first play, and the event is recorded in a royal diary of the time. "Used Up" and "Box and Cox" were chosen for that night," wrote the late Duchess of Teck. "The theater was well arranged and the decorations and lamps quite wonderfully managed. The four elder children appeared at the play, and the two boys wore their 'kilts.' The two little girls had on white satin, with pink bows and sashes. Princess Royal wears her hair in a very becoming manner, all twisted up into a large curl, which is tucked into a drk blue or black silk net, which keeps it all very tidy and neat." Of the four children who laughed that night at "Box and Cox" only one is living now, and he reigns over the British Empire.

### Racial Service Over a Rail.

The brother of a friend of mine was some few years since a curate in one of the iron working towns of Lancashire. One day a man in the parish of which he had charge fell into a furnace of molten metal, and of course vanished forever. The comrades of the poor fellow were greatly concerned, and did not rest until the curate had consented to bury with religious rites one of the rails into which the iron was run. The rail selected was inclosed within a wooden box, borne to the graveyard, and laid solemnly in the ground, though, I understand, it was not taken into the church.—Notes and Queries.