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Selected Miscellany.

From Washington Irving's Sketch Book.

THE WIFE.

I have often had occasion to remark the fortitude with which women sustain the most overwhelming reverses of fortune. Those disasters which break down the spirit of a man, and prostrate him in the dust, seem to call forth all the energies of the softer sex, and give such intrepidity and elevation to the character that at times it approaches to sublimity. Nothing can be more touching than to behold a soft, tender female, who has been all weakness and dependence, alive to every trivial roughness, while treading the prosperous paths of life, suddenly rising in mental force to be the comforter and support of her husband, under misfortune, and abiding with unshrinking firmness, the bitter blasts of adversity.

As the vine which has long twined its graceful foliage about the oak, and been lifted by it into sunshine, will, when the hardy plant is rified by the thunderbolt, cling around it with caressing tendrils, and bind up its shattered boughs; so it is beautifully ordered by Providence, that woman, who is the mere dependant and ornament of man in his happy hours, should be his stay and solace, when smitten with sudden calamity, winding herself into the rugged recesses of his nature tenderly supporting the drooping head, and binding up the broken heart.

I was once congratulating a friend, who had around him a blooming family, knit together in the closest affection. "I wish no better lot," said he, with enthusiasm, "than to have a wife and children.—If you are prosperous, there they are to share your prosperity; if otherwise; they are to comfort you." And, indeed, I have observed that a married man falling into misfortune is more apt to retrieve his situation in the world than a single one, partly because he is more stimulated to exertion by the necessities of the helpless and beloved beings who depend upon him for subsistence, but chiefly because his spirits are soothed and relieved by domestic endearments, and his self-respect kept alive by finding that, though abroad all is darkness and humiliation, yet there is still a little world of love at home, of which he is the monarch.—Whereas a single man is apt to run to waste and self-neglect; to fancy himself lonely and abandoned, and heart to fall to ruin, like some deserted mansion, for want of an inhabitant.

The observations call to mind a little domestic story of which I was once a witness. My intimate friend, Leslie, had married a beautiful and accomplished girl who had been brought up in fashionable life. She had, it is true, no fortune, but that of my friend was ample; and he delighted in the anticipation of indulging her in every elegant pursuit, and administering to those delicate tastes and fancies that spread a kind of witchery about the sex. "Her life," said he, "shall be like a fairy tale."

The very difference of their character produced an harmonious combination; he was of a romantic and serious cast, she was all life and gladness. I have noticed the mutual rapture with which he would gaze upon her in company, of which her sprightly powers made her the delight; and how in the midst of applause her eye would still turn to him as if there alone she sought favor and acceptance. When hanging on his arm her slender form contrasted finely with his tall, manly person. The fond, confiding air with which she looked up to him, seemed to call forth a flush of triumphant pride and cherishing tenderness as if he doted on his lovely burden for his helplessness. Never did a couple set forward on the flowery path of early and well suited marriage with a fairer prospect of felicity.

It was the misfortune of my friend, however, to have embarked his property in large speculations; he was not married many months, when by a succession of sudden disasters it was swept from him and he found himself reduced almost to penury. For a time he kept his situation to himself and went about with a haggard countenance and breaking heart. His life was but a protracted agony; and what rendered it more insupportable was the necessity of keeping up a smile in the presence of his wife; for he could not bring himself to overwhelm her with his news. She saw, however, with the quick eye of affection, that all was not well with him. She marked his altered looks and stifled sighs, and was not to be deceived by his sickly and vivid attempts at cheerfulness. She tasked all her sprightly power and tender blandishments to win him back to happiness; but she only drove the arrow deeper into his soul. The more he saw cause to love her, the more torturing was the thought that he was soon to make

her wretched. A little while, thought he, and the smile will vanish from that cheek—the song will die away from those lips—the lustre of those eyes will be quenched with sorrow; and the happy heart which now beats lightly in that bosom will be weighed down like mine, by the cares and miseries of the world.

At length he came to me one day and related his whole situation in a tone of deep despair. When I heard him through, I inquired, "Does your wife know all this?" At the question he burst into an agony of tears. "For God's sake!" cried he, "if you have any pity on me, don't mention my wife; it is the thought of her that drives me almost to madness."

"And why not?" said I. "She must know it sooner or later; you cannot keep it long from her, and the intelligence may break upon her in a more startling manner than if imparted by yourself; for the accents of those we love soften the harsher tidings. Besides, you are depriving yourself of the comforts of her sympathy and not merely that, but endangering the only bond that can keep hearts together—an unreserved community of thought and feeling. She will soon perceive that something is secretly preying upon your mind, and true love will not brook reserve; it feels undervalued and outraged when even the sorrows it loves are concealed from it."

"Oh! but my friend to think what a blow I am to give to all her future prospects.—How am I to strike her very soul to the earth, by telling her that her husband is a beggar! that she is to forego all the elegancies of life—all the pleasures of gay society—to shrink with me into indigence and obscurity! To tell her that I have dragged her down from the sphere in which she might have continued to move in constant brightness—the light of every eye—the admiration of every heart! How can she bear poverty?—she has been the idol of society. Oh, it will break her heart, it will break her heart!"

I saw his grief was eloquent; and I let it have its flow! for sorrow relieves itself by words. When the paroxysm had subsided, and he had relapsed into moody silence, I resumed the subject gently, and urged him to break his situation at once to his wife. He shook his head mournfully but positively.

"But how are you to keep it from her? It is necessary that she should know it. You may take the steps proper to the alteration of your circumstances. You must change your style of living—may, observing a pang to pass across his countenance, "don't let that afflict you. I am sure you have never placed your happiness in outward show—you have yet friends—warm friends, who will not think the worse of you for being less splendidly lodged; and surely it does not require a palace to be happy with Mary—"

"I could live with her," he cried, convulsively, "in a hovel! I could go down with her into poverty and the dust. I could—I could—God bless her," cried he, bursting into a transport of grief and tenderness.

"And believe me, my friend," said I stepping up, and grasping him warmly by the hand, "believe me, she can be the same with you, ay, more, it will be a source of pride and triumph to her—it will call forth all the latent energies and fervent sympathies of her nature; for she will rejoice to prove that she loves you for yourself. There is in every true woman's heart a spark of heavenly fire which lies dormant in the broad day light of prosperity; but which kindles up, and beams and blazes in the dark hour of adversity. No man knows what a wife of his bosom is—no man knows what a ministering angel she is—until he has gone with her through the fiery trials of the world."

There was nothing in the earnestness of manner and the figurative style of my language that caught the excited imagination of Leslie. I knew the auditor I had to deal with; and following up the impression I had made, I finished by persuading him to go home, and unburden his sad heart to his wife.

I must confess, notwithstanding all I had said, I felt some little solicitude for the result. Who can calculate on the fortitude of one whose life has been a pleasure? Her gay spirit might revolt at the dark downward path of low humility suddenly appointed out before, and might cling to the sunny regions in which they had hitherto revelled. Besides, ruin, in fashionable life is accompanied by so many galling mortifications to which in other ranks it is a stranger. In short, I could not meet Leslie the next morning without anticipation. He made the disclosure.

"And how did she bear it?" "Like an angel. It seemed rather to be a relief to her mind, for she threw her arms around my neck, and asked if this was all that made me unhappy. But poor girl," added he, "she cannot realize the change we must undergo. She had no idea of poverty but in the abstract; she only read it in poetry, where it is all to love. She feels as yet no privation; she suffers no loss of accustomed convenience or elegances. When she comes practically to experience its sordid cares, its paltry wants, its petty humiliations—then will be the real trial."

"But," I said, "now that you have got over the severest fate, that of breaking it to her, the sooner you let the world into the secret the better. The disclosure may be mortifying; but then it is a single misery, and over; whereas you otherwise suffer it in anticipation, every hour in the day. It is not poverty so much as pretence, that harasses ruined men—the struggle between

a proud mind and an empty purse, the keeping up a hollow show that must soon come to an end. Have the courage to appear poor, and you disarm poverty of its sting. On this point I found Leslie quite prepared. He had no false pride himself, and as to his wife, she was only anxious to conform to the altered circumstances.

Some days afterwards he called upon me in the evening. He had disposed of his dwelling house and taken a small cottage in the country a few miles. He had been busy all day in sending out his furniture. The new establishment required few articles, and those of the simplest kind. All the furniture of his late residence has been sold except his wife's harp. That, he said, was too closely associated with the idea of herself, for some of the sweetest moments of their courtship were those which he had leaved over that instrument, and listened to the melting tones of her voice. I could but smile at this instance of romantic gallantry in a dotting husband.

He was now going out to the cottage, where his wife had been all day superintending the arrangements. My feelings had become strongly interested in the progress of this family story, and as it was a fine evening, I offered to accompany him.

He was wearied with the fatigue of the day, and as he walked out, fell into a fit of gloomy musing. "Poor Mary," at length broke, with a heavy sigh, from his lips.

"And what of her?" asked I; has anything happened to her?"

"What," said he darting an impatient glance, "is it nothing to be caged in a miserable cottage—to be obliged to toil almost in the menial concerns of her wretched habitation?"

"Has she repined?" "Repined: she has been nothing but sweetness and good humor. I have ever known her: she has been to me all love, and tenderness and comfort!"

"Admirable girl!" exclaimed I. "You call yourself poor, my friend, you never were so rich—you never knew the boundless treasures of excellency you possess in that woman."

"Oh! but my friend, if the first meeting at the cottage was over, I think I could then be comfortable. But this is the first day of real experience; she has been introduced into a humble dwelling—she has been employed all day arranging its miserable equipments—she has for the first time, known the want of books and newspapers; so when shut from the great volume of animate nature, we still have the thoughts and fancies of master minds at our disposal. Winter buries much that in summer claims our attention; can there be a more appropriate time for reading or study?"

There was a degree of probability in this picture that I could not gainsay, so we walked on in silence.

After turning from the main road up a narrow lane, so thickly shaded with forest trees as to give it a complete air of seclusion, we came in sight of the cottage. It was humble enough in its appearance for the most pastoral poet; and yet it had a pleasing look. A wild vine had overrun one end with a profusion of foliage; a few trees threw their branches gracefully disposed about the door, and on the grass plot in front. A small wicket gate opened upon a foot path that wound through some shrubbery to the door. Just as we approached, we heard the sound of music. Leslie gasped my arm; we paused and listened. It was Mary's voice singing, in a style of the utmost simplicity, a little air of which her husband was particularly fond.

I felt Leslie's hand tremble on my arm. He stepped forward to hear more distinctly. His step made a noise on the gravel walk. A bright, beautiful face gleamed out of the window and vanished—a light footstep was heard—and Mary came tripping forth to meet us; she was in a pretty rural dress of white, a few wild flowers were twisted in her hair; a fresh bloom on her cheek; her whole countenance beamed with smiles—I had never seen her look so lovely.

"My dear George," she cried, "I am so glad you have come, I have been watching for you; and running down the lane, and looking for you. I've set out a table under a beautiful tree behind the cottage, and I've been gathering some of the most delicious strawberries; for I know you are fond of them—and we have such excellent cream—and still here—O!" said she putting her arm within his and looking up brightly in his face. "O, we shall be so happy!"

Poor Leslie was overcome. He caught her in his bosom—he folded his arms around her—he kissed her again and again—he could not speak, but the tears gushed into his eyes; and he has often assured me, that though the world has since gone prosperously with him, and his life has indeed been a happy one, yet never has he experienced a moment of more exquisite felicity.

HABITS.—Like flakes of snow that fall unperceived upon the earth, the seemingly unimportant events of life succeed one another. As the snow gathers together, so are our habits formed; no single flake that is added to the pile produces a sensible change; no single action character, however it may exhibit, a man's character; but as the tempest hurls the avalanche down the mountain, and overwhelms the inhabitant and his habitation, so passion, acting upon the elements of mischief, which pernicious habits brought together by imperceptible accumulation, may overthrow the edifice of truth and virtue.

The bachelor has to look out for number one—the married man for number two—sometimes for number twelve.

Talkers and Scriblers.

How in the world we should all get on without some safety-valve by which to let our surplus steam—social and intellectual—escape, we are sure we cannot tell.—What would become of the poor dogs who have to spout and write all the time just to relieve themselves, if the rostrum and the press were interdicted to their use, it puzzles our closest and most patient thought to understand. No doubt that a large part of our talkers and teachers are such, and continue such, merely because they could not exist in any other way. When men get just "a little learning," as St. Paul said, they are much more like to go mad than after taking on board a larger stock. After their half-thoughts have at length evaporated in words, they are more apt to settle down upon a course of actual experience, which causes them spells of silence and protracted thinking fits; and we all know that thinkers are not talkers, proverbially, and will never be likely to so exchange their vocation. The press affords a very convenient means of relief to these overcharged individuals, and they have improved it, as a general thing, without stint or measure. As for politics, and reformatory projects of a vague and airy nature, they have hitherto served an excellent turn for these genies; indeed, we think there must have been a great loss of life but for just these ready resources. But we hope the days of mere scribbling and spouting are gone by. There is no reason why society should suffer itself to be afflicted with a class of vociferations, whose ultimate result, at the best, is as questionable as any other thing can be.—What we need is, that those who talk to us shall talk something besides words.—Wide World.

The Season.

How different are the scenes of winter from those of summer, and how different are the thoughts they suggest. The happy companionship of birds and flowers is gone; the bright summer landscape has lost its verdure, and lies buried from the sight.—But we have no need to complain—there is still left us a world of beauty for thought.

The spotless snow, as it falls noiselessly down, or is whirled in wild eddies by the ruthless wind, is worthy a passing thought. How like ourselves in its destiny—pure as the mind at its advent, to be tossed about by storms, to go back to earth and reappear in a different form, even as we are promised.

In the land of knowledge, of books and newspapers; so when shut from the great volume of animate nature, we still have the thoughts and fancies of master minds at our disposal. Winter buries much that in summer claims our attention; can there be a more appropriate time for reading or study? There is a pleasure about the home circle at this season of the year that it possesses at no other. The associations of long winter evenings tend to make us sociable, and under their genial influence, whatever we may be at other times, we can but be friendly, and wish happiness to those about us. We cannot cherish animosities if we would; we forget the cares and disappointments of the day, and kindness rules the hour.

Popping the Question.

Fair Sally and her lover Mat. Close by the fire in silence sat. A dish of apples, rosy-faced, Was 'twixt them on the table placed. In vain poor Mat essayed to speak, While blushes mantled Sally's cheek; For well she knew what Mat would say, If he could only find the way. To him she cast a side-long look, Then from the dish an apple took, And deftly slicing it in twain, She passed half to the silent swain, Mat looked confused, then brightened up, And said, as he the apple took: "Now, Sally, dearest, unto me, As kind as to this pippin be— You've halved the apple—pray have me!"

POPULAR RETRENCHMENT.—Children are often sagely told, that "they don't know what is good for them." The saying is as true when applied to large folks, and their conduct proves the fairness of the application. When hard times, or a fear of hard times, come over a land, on what do they begin retrenchment and economy. On the back?—No, madam: you clothe yourself with the finest and rarest still. With the stomach?—No, sir: you pamper it with every delicate meat as usual. On luxuries? No, Mr. Sybarite: you drink the choicest, and smoke the most exquisite, in vouted profusion. No, no, deluded big children: you begin with the printer: you cut off books as if they were a pest, and you either stop your paper or refuse to pay for it. You seem to imagine that you are merely animal, without a soul or intellect. Your action indicates this, anyhow.

Verily, the public has been spoiled.—Books and papers have been furnished at so low a rate, and with so little recompense to author and printer, that they are highly esteemed, when they should be held above all price; and the consequence is, that the printer, who makes but a scanty living at the best of times, is left to crumbs or starvation when a real or fancied necessity for retrenchment exists. Out upon such retrenchment! Wear less costly gear—eat plainer food—drink less and smoke less, or none at all, rather than cheat your soul and mind of their due portion. Buy good books, and take and pay for an honest and decent newspaper; and as upright, God-created beings, you will be the better and richer for it.

Why are young ladies kissing each other like an emblem of Christianity? Because they are doing unto each other as they would men should do unto them.

Agricultural.

From the Prince Georgian.

TO THE TOBACCO PLANTERS OF MARYLAND.

Messrs. Editors:—I desire, through the medium of your columns, to call the attention of the Planters of Maryland to the prospective prices of their great staple this season, and to suggest to their consideration a few reasons why, for once, they have it in their own power, supposing army and political affairs to remain in *status quo*, to fix their own price at which they will sell. I mean of course by their own price not an exorbitant or unreasonable one, but such as commercially, they have a right to expect; and if, for instance, I should suggest an average of \$10 for fair crops, as against, say \$6, which some agents now put the price, it would only be what they obtained in 1857; when there were no reasons, as compared with those now existing, why these high prices should prevail.

The reasons existing then, it is not necessary to enumerate. We have the fact that all tolerable crops brought an average of \$10, and many sold as high as \$12. Why should they not do so now? The production of the whole country in 1861 was the shortest crop for many years. Virginia soil being occupied by contending armies and herself struggling for a National existence, the attention of her agriculturists was turned to raising grain instead of the "weed." What little was grown is kept within her confines, her ports being hermetically sealed against its export. Almost all that was grown in this State will be manufactured therein for home and army consumption.—The same state of affairs produced the same result in North Carolina.

For the same reasons the crop in Kentucky, Tennessee and Missouri was doubtless very materially reduced, and as what was grown in these States must be shipped from New Orleans, the whole stock from this second largest Tobacco shipping port, (I have not the statistics by me to say whether she is not the largest. If not the very largest, she is second only to Baltimore,) is entirely shut out from competition, and exercises as great an effect upon the market as if these large producing States had grown absolutely none.

The Ohio crop is greatly shortened for several reasons. A bad season there, and prices were protracted, the scarcity of labor, so many of her "farmers' boys" having "gone to the wars," and the increase in the area of land cultivated in grain, because of the war.

The Tobacco from that State, a little from Kentucky and the Maryland crop is all that can come to Baltimore, which, with New York, are the only Tobacco ports open, or judging from the recent European news, likely shortly to be opened. The quantity to be sent to New York from all quarters must perforce this year be so small that it cannot interfere with the Baltimore market, in which all the great Tobacco business of this country, or better still, for the increase in prices, what little it can be done, must be transacted.

The stock to come to Baltimore from Ohio and Kentucky being, as I have said, necessarily small, and so ascertained to be, we have only the Maryland crop to supply the immense demand for foreign shipment and home manufacture which must result in Baltimore. The Maryland crop we all know to be the shortest made for several years, the crop planted having been, upon light soils, and in many neighborhoods, very unfavorable. In Prince George's, the large Tobacco-Growing County, the crop is confessedly short, and in the other counties, I am credibly informed, still shorter.

Where, then, is the supply to come from to satisfy the ordinary demand? But the demand will be extraordinarily large.—Europe, owing to small shipments last year, will require more than ever, and the home consumption will be much larger. With a million or more men in the armies, receiving, those in the Federal Army, besides the "relief" voted them by the different State Legislatures, and which I may remark, *en passant*, is to come principally from the pockets of the Farmers, much the largest pay given to any army in the world, and with most of them, officers and men alike, much more than they were accustomed to, the increase of consumption here alone must be enormous; and all familiar with armies know that nothing so helps to while away the tedious and monotony of camp life as the quid and the pipe, and the quantity used by each man in the camp is probably double what he had been previously accustomed to consume. The writer, for instance, knows that in the Mexican War parties on a pay of \$11 a month, constantly paid the sutlers 25 cents a pound for uncut and unmanufactured Leaf Tobacco. The price was great on account of the transportation. Now, with the armies right in the Tobacco-Growing Region, and in the Federal Army, besides the "relief" of from \$6 to \$12 a month to each man from his State, their pay \$13 instead of \$11, (why the difference, except that the Mexican War was fought principally by Southern men,) how much greater will the consumption be?

And there will be also another large and annual demand for Maryland crop. Vast quantities of it, and of the commonest kinds fortunately again, are now being manufactured in Baltimore and the Northern cities, in place of Virginia and Kentucky, that has always been previously used for these purposes, but which can now no more be got to these cities than to Europe. And here

it must be recollected that they alone will have to furnish the whole supply of manufactured and cut Tobacco, which used to come in such large quantities from Virginia and other States named. Any one taking the trouble to enquire in Baltimore will be astonished to find the increase in this business there alone.

Again, there is no old stock on hand. In first hands there is absolutely none, and the warehouses are nearly cleaned out, so much of their purchases have shippers and speculators (who have made one hundred per cent. on their purchases of six months ago) sent their stocks off.

Then, too, as every Tyro in the cultivation of Tobacco knows the crops of some years are very much more "approved" on the other side than of others; and I have the authority of large shippers and agents for saying that already about 500 hhd. of new have been sent over as samples, and all heard from have been more liked than any crop for many years.

Did time and space admit, I might go on to enumerate other reasons why Tobacco must be much higher than present quotations, but these are certainly sufficient to attract the attention of planters. While there are so many causes for a rise in price, there is nothing but a war with England and France (unless it be that the long continued spell of wet weather shall have the same effect upon the market that it is said to have had upon the Federal army) to prevent an "advance." This may do so early in the season to precipitate their crops upon the market. This, and the undue anxiety to realize, is all we have to fear. But fortunately here again circumstances favor the ability of the planters to hold, the recent crisis in monetary affairs having forced them, to use a vulgarism, to "draw in their horns," and they having very little paper out for which their agents are immediately responsible; so that this important incentive to them to realize immediately at a sacrifice to the grower is removed.

For these, and other reasons, we cannot but believe that if the planters, as they send their crops in, will restrict the sales of average ones to \$10, and better proportionately higher, they will have no difficulty in obtaining it. In these war times of taxation, population, and donations, State and National, of deterioration of property, of abduction, seduction and fugation of "contrabands," it is not worth the effort on the part of the grower to have his tobacco sold at a price which he has had to submit to. Let the instructions to the agents be positive and direct,—\$10 or no sales. The writer will himself do what he suggests to others. B.

A BLESSED DAY.—What a blessed day is Sunday to the weary man who necessarily catches but brief glimpses of home during the toiling week; who is off in the morning while little eyes are closed in slumber, nor back at night till they are sealed in sleep. What would he know of the very children for whom he toils, were it not for the blessed breathing respite of Sunday? What honest working man's child ever forgot this day? When clean and neat, it is his privilege to climb papa's knee, and hang about his neck, and tell him all the news which goes to make up his narrow little world.—"Narrow," did we say? We recall the word; for it widens out into the boundless ocean of eternity. Sunday for the working man's children! So we would have it—a day hallowed by sweet influences; when the little hand, quite complete, shall rest from labor, and love shall write it down the blessed day of all the seven.

"I had always in my life," says Caesar Hannibal, "found no gals to be fast in lub, fast in a quarrel, fast in de dance, fast in de ice-cream saloon, and de fast best and de last in de sick room! What would we poor fellers do without dem? Let us be born as young, as ugly, and as helpless as we please, and woman's arms am ready to receive us; she it am who puts close pon our helpless, naked limbs, and courts up her footless and toes in long flannel petticoats; and it am she who, as we grow up, fills our dinner basket wid doughnuts and apples as we starts to school, and licks us when we tear our trousers."

HURRAH!—A great many people have shouted "Hurrah!" "many a time and oft," but comparatively few know its derivation and primary meaning. It originated among the Eastern nations, where it was used as a war cry—from the belief that every man who died in battle for his country went to heaven. It is derived from the Slavonic word "Hurrah!" which means "To paradise."

COUGH MIXTURE.—Take one teacupful of molasses; add two tablespoonfuls of vinegar; simmer this over the fire; then, when taken off add three teaspoonfuls of paregoric, and as much refined nitre as can be put upon the point of a small breakfast knife. Of this mixture, take two or three teaspoonfuls on going to bed, and one or two during the day when you have a disposition to cough.

SIX ON THE EYELID.—An exchange says: Put a teaspoonful of black tea in a small bag; pour on it enough boiling water to moisten it, then put it on the eye pretty warm. Keep it on all night, and in the morning the sty will most likely be gone; if not a second application is certain to remove it.

It would be well if we had less medicine and more cures; less profession and more pity; less law and more justice.