

Living Barometers.

THEY SURPASS THE MOST INGENUOUS INVENTIONS OF CIVILIZED MAN.

Civilized man is the only animal that does not possess a high degree of sensitiveness to atmospheric conditions. Whether the human race has ever possessed this attribute, it would not be easy to say; but, from the fact that brutes possess this faculty in direct proportion to their wild or natural condition, it may be inferred that, through attaining a sheltered and perfectly housed condition, human beings have lost the useful faculty of foretelling the weather, according to the law of nature that removes any attribute after the necessity for it has ceased. Thanks to Moricelli, this deficiency has been to some extent supplied; but the fact remains that other living creatures have the power of making forecasts that are far more trustworthy than any the ingenuity of man has been able to devise.

The spider is a good example of a living barometer. He is constantly making alterations in his web to suit the weather; and, by watching closely, considerable skill in weather prophecy may be acquired. In fair weather he runs out long filaments of guy ropes for his web. The coming storm causes him to shorten these; and if the storm is to be long and severe, these guy ropes are strengthened as well as shortened. For the benefit of those whom nothing could induce to study the spider, it may be remarked that the common domestic animals evidence coming changes in the weather. Cats and dogs are given to scratching and other restless movements, and their fur looks dull when a storm is approaching. It is a sure sign that the barometer is falling when a flock of sheep become quarrelsome; when goats bleat incessantly and seek sheltered spots; when pigs begin to carry straws into the sty; when the barnyard fowls huddle together and fill the air with their cackling. An observer of the wilder animals will soon realize that they are still more demonstrative when a storm approaches. The hedgehog is very distinguished as a weather prophet, for he always begins to strengthen and fortify his house when he feels an unpleasant change in the weather coming. The wild birds are, probably, the best objects for observation. The low-flying swallow has become proverbial. Other birds generally remain grouped together, and do not venture from their homes in the face of coming rain or wind. There have been several successful attempts to make profitable use of this remarkable and unerring instinct. In many parts of Germany the "frog barometer" is a common object in the home. They have a small green frog in that country which always comes out of the water when cold or wet weather is approaching. These frogs are kept in half filled jars in which is a tiny ladder; and some hours before a storm the frog will come out of the water and sit on the top of the ladder, where he will remain until the storm has broken. There is a story of an old meteorologist who used leeches for the same purpose. He arranged his barometer in such a way that when the leeches crawled up the side of the jar a bell would ring, and this gave warning of the storm. The little creatures would gather round the top as long as the storm was in progress.

About Earthworms.

A discussion on the subject of earthworms and vegetable mould appeared in a recent issue of Longman's Magazine. The writer, Grant Allen, states that it was Gilbert White of Shelborne who first of all pointed out the importance of earthworms as producers and maintainers of living layers of vegetable mould. It was the patient investigations of Darwin, however, which fully established the fact, and raised it to the rank of a scientific discovery; his first writing on the subject appearing in the Gardeners' Chronicle. Later he issued an entire book on this interesting subject. Darwin showed that earthworms act upon the soil in three ways. In the first place they open up and loosen the ground for the roots to penetrate, more perfect aeration of the soil being thus obtained. The acids they secrete also act chemically upon the layer of rocks beneath in a way that assists the disintegration of the latter. In the second place they crush in their gizzards small fragments of stone, and liberate their component elements. In the third place they drag down into their burrows countless numbers of leaves, which they eat, and carry up the refuse to the surface. It is computed that no fewer than 53,000 worms inhabit an acre of garden soil. These worms pass through their bodies ten tons of material in a year, and throw it up as mould at the rate of one inch in depth every five years. The greater part of the mould is composed of the refuse of vegetable matter, and is teeming with millions of bacteria. Even after allowing for other co-operating causes, earthworms are responsible for the formation and renewal of this layer of vegetable mould.

How Archie Convinced Her.

PROOF THAT SHE WAS ALWAYS READY TO ADMIT WHEN SHE WAS WRONG.

"No," said the girl who prides herself on being determined, "I didn't give in to Archie just because I'm engaged to him, and you needn't think it girls. He simply convinced me that I was mistaken, and I'm always ready to be shown when and where I'm wrong, only—"

"You never are wrong," interrupted the sarcastic girl, grimly; "You're like the Old Country woman who said she was always open to conviction of sin, but she'd just like to see anyone convince her that she was wicked."

"I'm not like that at all," snapped out the determined girl, with an angry glance, "but I do think things out for myself, of course. I always have done, and I haven't any use for people who let others make up their minds for them, and then I've got a certain quality of mind—"

"I know," broke in the sarcastic girl again, as the other hesitated momentarily, "You think it's a strong will. Your mother calls it obstinacy, and your father says it's nothing but downright, sheer pig-headedness; but never mind, my dear, tell me about Archie. How did he finally convince you that you'd made a mistake in regard to that quarrel?"

By way of response the determined girl blushed vividly.

"Well," she said finally, after making two or three false beginnings, "he was very sensible about it. We both decided, when he gave me my engagement ring, that we'd be sensible whatever else we were, and we never acted foolish, as some people do. So he just talked to me sensibly, and to show me that he wasn't angry he brought me some lovely Jack roses. Then—then—well, perhaps he did put his arm around me, but not all the way, I'm sure. So you needn't laugh, you idiot! and then, well, I think I let him kiss me just once or so. And then—"

"Well?" queried the sarcastic girl mercilessly, as the other paused to smile to herself and go off into a castle of dreams, "What happened then? How did you make up the quarrel at last?"

"Oh," said the determined girl, blushing again and still more vividly. "I don't quite know, dearie. We had a lovely time, I know that, and when it was over—mamma called me to come to bed before I thought we'd been talking a minute—I just knew I'd been wrong. And honestly, dearie, I don't want you to think I'm bragging because I'm engaged to Archie, but really I do think, even if I wasn't going to marry him, that he's the handsomest and most gentlemanly, and the nicest boy I ever met."

"And the most sensible," added the sarcastic girl, with a manner that challenged dispute, but the determined girl refused to take up the challenge.

"So," she finished quietly, "I've always told you that I was willing to be shown where I was in the wrong, you know, and now, perhaps, you'll believe it."

A Disappointment.

"Col. Bibbles didn't stay long at the seashore," remarked one of the men who was sitting in front of the drug-store.

"No. He left his family there, but he got insulted and came home."

"Didn't he like it there?"

"He says the place was very nice and comfortable, and he could have stood their habit of closing all the saloons on Sunday if they hadn't played a practical joke on him."

"He was always a sensitive man."

"Yes. And this time his feelings are hurt worse than I ever knew them to be before. He says it was the meanest trick that was ever played on anybody. He was feeling quite thirsy and gloomy, when some of the family chanced to say something about a bar that was located a little way out in the ocean. The Colonel didn't lose a minute. He went out and got a bathing suit and waded about a quarter of a mile in the blistering sun, only to discover that it was a sandbar.—*Detroit Free Press.*

Warming Up.

There had been a quarrel, and they sat rather far apart on the verandah without speaking. At last he said:

"You are rather cold toward me."

"I?" she queried, with a little laugh.

"It is more likely the change in the weather you are feeling."

"Don't jest with me," he returned very earnestly.

"I'm not joking," she said with big-eyed ingenueness. "I really feel a little chilly myself. I wish I had something around me."

As he moved his chair close to hers she realized that the quarrel was over, and as he put something around her the moon very considerably hid behind a cloud to give them a chance to make it up.

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