"THE REVIEW"

IS PUBLISHED

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Durham, - - Ont.

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Priceville, June, 1878. 19

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Rockville, Bentinck, March 6th, 1878.

The Grey Review.

Vol. I. No. 33. DURHAM, Co. Grey, SEPTEMBER 26, 1878. $1 per year in Advance.

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y7

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fm-7 HEAD OFFICE 11 Adelaide Street East, Toronto.

The Snow-Blossom.

There is a flower that grows only among st the snow of the Alpine mountains—as far as I know, only upon the Alps. It is white all over—stems, leaves and blossoms—white as the snow itself; and to have gathered one is to have proved oneself a rare climber. There are very few of these blossoms to be found; and as they grow in the most dangerous places as though they desired to hide themselves from all, lady tourists, who find themselves amongst the Alps, grow enthusiastic in regard to this flower, and we want to say that they would dare anything to get one; but when devoted husbands and well-paid guides have done their best for them, they still return to town without the blossom. No woman yet has ever picked one.

"Not many men either," says the landlady of the "Golden Dove," standing before her English guests, and chatting of the sun-flower; "few men. Now and then, one very much in love finds one for his sweet-heart. It is as though he said; 'I have risked my life for you.' A girl can never refuse such brave a fellow. Ah, you would not beleive it now, but my good man thought me worth winning with a snow-blossom. I wore it in my hair on our betrothal day."

"Oh Charles," whispered Lady Ida to her husband, as she clings closer to his arm, "how can a woman bear that the man who loves her shall risk his life to pamper her pride?"

"These Alpine hunters are real lovers," says lady Bertha, looking at the tall and elegant man beside her. "A girl could not say 'No' as the landlady says, to one who has proved himself so much in earnest. If I had a wear here, I should bid him bring me a snow-blossom if he would win me."

The man beside her, Sir Herbert Vane, was very much in love. Under such circumstances, both men and women lose their common sense.

"Will you send me to bring you the snow-blossom?" he whispered.

She looked at him, and smiled.

"They say it is at the risk of life," she answered.

"Life is valueless unless one has that which makes it happy," said he.

She answered, "Bring me the snow-blossom."

Late that afternoon, old Pierre, young Pierre, and Jean, the guides, stood with Sir Herbert on the wildest and most precipitous of the mountain heights. They had reached a yawning chasm, and had come to a halt.

"Sir," said old Pierre, "you are a good mountaineer, but you were not born to it. Up yonder, little Jean, declares, there is a snow-blossom. He alone of us four can take that leap in safety. Once, at his age, I could; but not now. His brother, never; you, impossible, although you have needed so little of our help. Jean will bring you the flower."

"I must pluck it with my own hands," said Sir Herbert.

"Then you will pay for it with your own life said the old man.

The Englishman laughed. He drew an opera glass from his pocket, and looked through it.

"I see the flower," he said.

The next instant, amidst the cries of the mountaineers, he had taken the leap. Contrary to their expectations, he did it in safety.

They saw him stoop and pluck the flower, hold it aloft, take it between his teeth, and turn toward them. Then their practised eyes saw that his foot slipped. He endeavored to regain his balance, but in vain. In an instant more he hung over the edge of the precipice, the stunted tufts of grass his only hold on life. There was no possibility of helping him. He was past aid. Cool and brave to the last, he cautiously endeavored to brace himself against the rock. Perhaps if he could not climb upwards, he could clamber down. His foot rested at last on a projection. It was just in time. His fingers were giving way.

"Hold on! Hold on, sir!" cried the guide. "In a few minutes we can give you a rope. For the love of the saints, don't look down."

"He holds the snow-blossom between his teeth, yet," said young Jean, a lover himself, and well aware why this flower was so eagerly sought. "Father, we must save that man."

Prepared to take the leap which would place him in a position whence a rope might be flung about the brave Englishman, he stood poised upon the rock; but at this instant the foothold to which Sir Herbert trusted gave way. His weight had forced the rock from its position—it fell, and he fell with it. The guides uttered a yell, and stood staring down into the abyss. Far below they saw a dark figure lying across the jagged rocks. And as it lay, a stray sunbeam flashed out on something white. It was the sun flower.

"We must take the dead body back to the hotel, and tell the horrible story," said the old man. "Ah, who would be a guide to men who will not be guided!"

Then no more was said. Scrambling, sliding, lowering themselves by means of the rope, father and son at last gained the spot to which Sir Herbert had fallen in an instant.

Hepless he lay across the rocks. While with agony, but not senseless. His eyes were wide open and his lips, drawn back in pain, showed, still held btween the broad, white teeth by its long stem, the snow-blossom which he had plucked at such fearful cost. The eyes turned towards Jean. He knew what the helpless hands would have done if they could, and took the flower.

"I have only a little while to speak," gasped the writhing man. "Jean, take this to Lady Bertha. Tell her I picked it with my own hand, and—and that I have gone on. Pierre, you two must take me elsewhere—not back to the hotel. Tell none of them of my fate—swear—tell no one that I am wounded. I have a friend in Borgen; he will see that you are well paid; take me there."

"But, monsieur, what shall I say—how explain?" sobbed Jean.

"No explanation," sobbed the wounded man. "Keep it from her. Give her the flower—and—my love." And he fainted.

It was not until the next morning that Jean, the guide stood before Lady Bertha, with the snow blossom in his hand. He found his task very hard.

"Mademoiselle," he said, "the gentleman, Sir Herbert, has sent you this flower with his love. He bade me declare to you that he picked it himself. He did. I saw him, mademoiselle."

"Why did he not bring it to me himself?" though Lady Bertha, taking the rare blossom in her hand.

Aloud she said: "My thanks to Sir Herbert. But he has also returned?"

"No, mademoiselle."

"He is coming."

"I think not, mademoiselle. He bade me say he had gone on."

"Gone on! You mistook."

Jean's task grew harder yet.

"No, mademoiselle. He said he has gone on, with my father and brother Pierre. I think he is not coming back."

Then he fairly turned and ran away.

The Lady Bertha became red as a rose, then pale as the snow-flower that she held.

"Ah, she understood now!" she said to herself. This was a punishment for her. She has permitted him to risk his life to win her love, and now he told her plainly that her love was not worth the risk, though he was to brave to shrink danger. It was a repetition of the old story of the lady who cast her glove into the lion's den, and bid her love to bring it to her; he brought it but only to fling at her. So Sir Herbert had, as she believed, punished her. In bitter wrath, Lady Bertha flung the snow-blossom upon the earth, and trampled on it.

Meanwhile, father and son, old Jean and young Pierre, bore the sad and nearly lifeless burden towards Borgen.

A year had passed. Lord Charles and his bride had been travelling all this while; his sister with them. No news had reached them of Sir Herbert; no letter, no message. He was not in England, or they should have heard. And Ada had whispered to her husband that she fancied Bertha somehow at the bottom of his sudden departure, so that the other young man found the matter easily explainable.

"Bertha has refused him, silly girl," he said. "She should have been proud of such a lover; that is the sort of girl who throws herself away at last upon a rascal. I have no hope for her."

And Bertha! Ah, poor Lady Bertha was unutterably wretched. She had loved Sir Herbert, and she lost him by her own silly act. She was humbled by her own vanity. And now she knew how dear this man had been to her, and how empty her life would be without him.

They were in England again, and friends had flocked about them.

"Welcome home," cried one gentleman, shaking hands vigorously. "Welcome home. I am glad to see you with whole bones, after so much climbing. There have been accidents without number. One or two have been killed, and, of course, you know about poor Sir Herbert. He was with your party, wasn't he?"

"About Sir Herbert—"

Each looked at the other.

"We know nothing, except that he left us without any adieux," said Lady Ida.

"Ah, it was after that, then! Well, they brought him home last week—a mere wreck. Spine injured, they say. Fell down one of the horrible precipices; and you did not know?"

Lady Berthat wanted to hear no more. She crept out of the room, and found her way to her own, where she might indulge her emotion without restraint. Those few words had told her the whole story. She knew why he had not returned to the inn. She knew not the cost of the snow-blossom on which she had trampled.

"Oh, Herbert, herbert!" moaned the proudest lady in all England. "Herbert, darling, will my whole life atone in any measure for what I have done? If it may, you shall have it."

"Then, with trembling hands, she attired herself for a drive, and ordered her carriage. She knew that Sir Herbert Vane would be found at his mother's residence, and she drove thither at once.

"It is Herbert that I wish to see, not Lady Vane," she said to the servant, who stared at her in astonishment. "Give him my card. I know he is an invalid; but he will see me."

In ten minutes more the door of a darkened room was opened, and she crept in.

A figure lay motionless on a couch, and two eager eyes looked toward her.

"Come closer," said a faint voice; "I am unable to offer you a chair or even my hand. Perhaps you have heard that I have met with a bad accident?"

Lady Bertha went closer, but she did not take a chair; she knelt beside the couch, and looked at the invalid as she had never looked before.

"You brave, great-hearted man?" she said, "you refrain from taunting me, from telling me that I bade you bring the snow-blossoms! Oh, I know all. It was in plucking that you fell. Tell me, do you hate me for it?"

He smiled tenderly.

"Hate you!" he said. "Bertha, let me keep one thought through the dull life that I must lead. If I had brought you the flower, would you have given me the right to say I loved you?"

The proud head bent itself. The cheek laid against his own.

"You plucked the snow-blossom for me," she said. "I have brought you the mean and miserable reward—myself. Such as I am, take me. Let me be your faithful wife, and do all that a wife may do to alleviate your sufferings. I offer myself to you, and if you refused me I shall deserve it."

"You know that I lie here like a helpless log. You would sacrifice yourself to be nurse to one like me! I love you, but I dare not——"

But she sealed his lips with her first kiss.

So the most romantic marriage of the year took place, before long, beside Sir Herbert's couch, and the few guests gave tearful kisses to the wedded pair, and cried over their fate in very earnest afterward. But from the hour when Bertha's lips touched his, Sir Herbert seemed to grow stronger; and by slow degrees he recovered not all his strength and beauty perhaps, but still so much that life is a blessing, and to his wife, at least, he seems the very handsomest of men.

Opium Victims and Chinese Missions.

The opium difficulty in China is one which presents a most formidable obstacle to missionary effort, as indeed all our readers too well know. The following statments, from a Wesleyan missionary who is laboring in the midst of a native population at Kau Chi, near Hankow, are valuable as affording an idea of impressions produced by daily contact with and observation of the practice which so curses the country of China:—

"In this city the practice of opium-eating and smoking is becoming alarmingly prevalent, insomuch that I do most soberly fear that in a few years the majority of the adult male population will become its victims. Our population in this town is rather under ten thousand, and yet there are to take the lowest estimate given by the people themselves) no fewer than from sixty to seventy opium dens, and from personal observation I can say that the number constantly increases. All classes of the people smoke, and what is saddest of all the practice is becoming common amongst the youth, students, as well as tradesmen's sons and assistants giving way to it. The women even are beginning to indulge in the vice. Nor is the abuse of the drug connned to smoking; for very many, in consequence of some domestic fend, rush off to the opium shop, and eat large quantities of the poison, and thus hurry themselves into eternity! Thank God we are able to save many from this untimely end; but sometimes the poor creatures are beyond human power to save when we reach their homes. Only recently, within the space of a month or so, I had three fatal cases. The first was a man, and the other two were women. The man, poor fellow! was blind and it made my heart sick to see him stretched on his bed in the last struggle with that dread enemy whom he had rashly called to take him before his time. Yet, whilst one cannot think of the future of these poor souls without shuddering, it is not the number whom this pestilential thing hurries to an early grave that alarms us and fills the heart with sad forebodings, but it is the ever-increasing legions whom it shuts up into a living death—a death social, moral, and spiritual, and so profound that nothing but an extraordinary manifestation of the saving power of God can ever call them forth into that pure and blessed life which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

"Almost every day, both in the chapel and at the street preaching, men, the majority of them under thirty-five years of age, come to us and ask if they can be cured of this awful disease. They see that it is ruining their health, and what is more, many of them see that it is morally wrong and, stung by a remorseful conscience, they desire (oh, so earnestly!) to be freed from their bondage. But all their desires are in vain, for they have neither moral nor physical force left to set themselves against their foe, and when the craving for the drug comes upon them they go at once to the opium den, and become its victims once more. They know to do good, and will do it; but their will is wholly inoperative, because it has lost the power of enforcing its commands—"*Sunday Magazine.*

It is estimated upon careful calculation that fully one-fourth of the earnings of the poor in cities is absorbed by the extortionary profits of the retail trade; and mainly of the trade in what they eat and drink.

Funny Men.

The man who professes to be amusing is usually such a bore that we overlook his wit when he has any. Small jokers, like great talkers, are more plague than pleasure. They worry us when we want rest and are so afraid of our missing their point that they extinguish any possible amusement by overstating if not by explaining it. For company the sprightly man is better than the witty man, and the sprightly woman better than either; but who ever heard of a funny woman? Yet, on the average woman greatly exceeds man, both in liveliness and wit. A good joker should have a short memory, both lest he should remember and repeat the jokes of others and lest he should be troubled by remembering them when he repeats his own. If he has constantly to think whether he said this or that in the same company before, he will lose all the freshness which is an important element in his success. It is, no doubt, a mistake consciously to repeat; but when it is done unconsciously it is of very little consequence so long as the repetition is merely verbal. The best fun does not bear repetition or description, but vanishes when written down. All Sydney Smith's recorded jokes would not account for the great reputation he had as a wit; but it was well said of him, as of many another funny man of slighter pretensions, that after you had been in his company you remembered, not so much the witty things he said as the amount of laughing you yourself had undergone. It is here that the distinction comes which must be drawn between good things and fun. A good thing is by no means always funny; when it is funny it is often illnatured toward somebody present; and to have to laugh at it may disturb one's enjoyment of its flavour. The Alderman complained to Coleridge that in consequence of the poet's making him laugh he had swallowed a magnificent piece of fat without ever tasting it. We confess to the deepest sympathy with that Alderman. Could we but learn his name, it would be enshrined in the tablets of our memory. He was not stupid; he could see a point—only too well indeed for his own comfort. He had come to eat, not to laugh, and he wished to be allowed to choose his own time for either pursuit.

To be funny without ill nature is not a common gift. It is but too easy to see and remark the weaknesses of other people. Many funny men have not friends, because everyone is afraid of them. It is their misfortune to say biting things, to wound the susceptibilities of unoffending neighbours and to give nicknames which stick. To be able to suppress a joke is in some cases much better than wound, the chances are he can command his wit and be as funny as he pleases when occasion demands. Such a person is invaluable at a dull party or when others are melancholy or tired. He is able to relieve anxiety, to comfort sorrow, to brighten the wettest of wet days, and be cheerful under the most cheerless circumstances. If only he knows how to temper his wit he may be a benificent visitor anywhere. He must have sympathy for the sorrowful, and be able to enter into the views of people who differ widely from himself not only in opinions and natural gifts but in attainments and in experience. He will often find comedy and tragedy as closely allied as they are in Shakespeare, who will know, as indeed every true artist must know, how inseparable they are. Funny characters in novels are seldom consistent, because they are made funny and nothing more. Lover and Cockton are merely tiresome to some readers on this account. Charles Lever mingled pathos and fun with much success; but even he found the task to much in his latter years. Frank Smedley succeeded in being very funny, as did Captain Marryat; but they were usually nothing more. It is only the greatest genius that can unite the two extremes. It is often supposed that a man only requires a good digestion and a hard conscience to be amusing, but the supposition is not well-founded. High spirits are no doubt a good thing, if they be not too high, but they often correspond to a depression which nothing can mitigate. Consciously or not, a high-spirited man is always amusing, but there is a much higher walk in the mind which can command its wit. As a rule the most cultivated people are the most agreeable. No man, it is true can absolutely set himself to learn humour. But no man is naturally so witty that he can afford to dispense with art. Sheridan was funny by nature yet even he worked up a joke before he dared to use it in the House of Commons, and Goldsmith's best things have been traced, like Sterne's, through many authors before his day. It is the same with most other writers of comedy Swift, perhaps being the only one in English literature who can bear the investigation of the critic. Some of the most famous hits in "Gulliver" have, however, been found in Rabelais just as Shakespeare's plots are found in Boccaccio. The really natural wit is funny to the last: Raleigh and Moor joking on the scaffold are not examples in point. Both were playing a part at the end. But when Sydney Smith writes of Holland House, in his last moments, that it had every convenience for sickness and death, we feel sure that his spirits had not flagged and that the presence of his end did not destroy the readiness of his mind. There is not of necessity any want of reverence in true fun. It has been well remarked that any fool can make a joke of sacred things, and that mere coarseness is often looked upon as a form of wit. The man who has to distort Scripture, or say what is nasty, or revile his neighbour, in order to raise a laugh, may often succeed, but at best his wit is of a second rate order. A close observation of things on the surface, a vivid appreciation of shades and character as they are presented to the eye, will alone constitute a fund of pure comedy, and it is in this particular that Dickens differs from the greatest humourist of his day. Thackeray was superior to Dickens because he saw below the surface, and though he never created a Weller, or even a Tapley, the outpourings of his own mind are always sufficient to secure for him the higher place. No doubt it is the fault of funny men that they wish to produce an immediate effect, but it is not given to every one of them to be so disinterested as to wish that they may be remembered after death by the amount of pleasure they have been able to give to those who knew them in life.

Leaches, Lye, and Soap.

In the older States, before the general use of coal as fuel, a leach was an important household appliance; the ashes from the wood burned during the winter were carefully saved, and in spring, these with the careful housewife's saving of soap-fat, were put to use in the annual soap-making. As wood as a fuel went out of use, good honest home-made soft-soap also disappeared. Still there are localities where wood is yet the fuel, and though these are much less than formerly, they are sufficient to bring us a number of enquiries about lye and soap-making. The value of ashes depends upon the kind of wood used, the soft woods yielding ashes very poor in potash, which is the important constituent so far as soap-making is concerned. Where soap is to be made from ashes, the first step is to extract their soluble parts, to get a solution of them in water, known as lye. To do this, the ashes are placed in some receptacle, called a leach, in which water can gradually trincle through them, and come out below as a strong solution of lye. The old method was to put in the bottom some bricks or stones, then some brush, and over this a layer of straw, and then put in the ashes. This will answer if no better method can be followed, but it is much easier and better to place on the bottom of the leach, of whatever kind, a piece of old blanket or old carpet. This will accomplish the purpose for which the straw, etc., are used, viz., to prevent the ashes from clogging up the holes, and allow the lye to flow out. Ashes moisten slowly, and in filling the leach, it is better to put in a small quantity at a time moistening each layer as it is put in, and compacting it with pounder of some kind. If the ashes are thus moistned all through, the leach will work more evenly than when filled dry. It is customery to make in the top of the ashes a cavity large enough to hold a pailful or two of water, and replenish the water as it soaks away. The more slowly the water percolates among the ashes, the stronger the lye will be. It is a common practice to put lime in the leach, six or eight quarts of quick lime being placed on the first layer of ashes. This makes the lye much stronger, the lime converting the carbonate of potash, as it exists in ashes, in part into caustic potash. —*American Agriculturist.*

Sleep.

Sleep has been defined as a general repose, during which almost all of the bodily organs are at rest. Doubtless, all who have considered the subject are familiar with the recognized principle that no living thing is capable of continuous or uninterrupted activity; it being an inflexible law of nature that a period of work must be succeeded by a quiescent state, during which the organism may repair the loss entailed in its tissues by previous exertion. A muscle is capable of a certain amount of activity, but its energy, after a little while, becomes exhausted and the muscle itself powerless and flaccid: That which is true of the whole body and of its individual organs: We are told that even the heart, the action of which appears to be incessant, conforms to this universal rule, though its motions are not intermittent but rhythmical, and that there is a distinct period of rest between each pulsation. But it seems that in the case of the brain more than in that of any other organ, this principle forces itself upon our notice, inasmuch as every act of thought or volition is said to entail a certain loss or consumption of brain substance, and the period during which the brain rests for the repair of this loss, constitutes that portion of our existence which we term sleep. Sleep is, however, more than a time of rest for the brain, inasmuch as it is the time during which the whole body recoups itself for such waste as has not been made good during the day, by the processes of nutrition. In connection with this point, medical science teaches that a local increase of the circulation of the blood; that a large proportion—about one-fifth—of the whole blood leaving the heart normally flows directly to the brain, and that an increase of activity in this organ—as deep thought — increases this flow; and that the approach of sleep being accompanied by a gradual diminuation of brain circulation std by a sensible collapse in the substance of the brain, as a consequence during sleep more than the normal quantity of blood is distributed over the remainder of the body, more especially over the surface and extremities. Any cause tending to promote circulation in the brain, such as worry or anxiety, tends to prevent sleep; and, inversly, any cause tending to diminish the circulation in the brain induces sleep; too sudden a diminutation or entire cessation producing syncope or death. Among other influences calculated to induce sleep may be enumerated, warmth of atmosphere, darkness and monotony of sound. (Many, doubtless, will have had an opportunity of noticing the soporific effect of monotony of sound in their churches.)—*Canadian Monthly.*

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