

The Orphans' Friend.

VOLUME III.

OXFORD, N. C., WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1877.

NUMBER 4.

THE SAND PILE.

A rosy child went forth to play,
In the first flush of hope and pride,
Where sands in silver beauty lay,
Made smooth by the retreating tide;
And kneeling on the trackless waste,
Whence ebb'd the waters many a mile,
He raised in hot and trembling haste,
Arch, wall, and tower; a goodly pile.
But, when the shades of evening fell,
Vailing the blue and peaceful deep,
The tolling of the distant bell
Called the boy-builder home to sleep:
He passed a long and restless night,
Dreaming of structures tall and fair.
He came with the returning light,
And lo, the faithless sands were bare.
Less wise than that unthinking child,
Are all that breathe of mortal birth,
Who grasp with strivings warm and wild,
The false and fading toys of earth.
Gold, learning, glory, what are they,
Without the faith that looks on high?
The sand-forts of a child at play,
Which is not, when the waves go by.

THE DISEASE OF MENDICANCY.

An English paper, in some recent utterance, reminded the American nation of the appearance of an unmistakable evidence that it is growing old. It possesses "the tramp." The war left with us, as war always leaves in every country, many men utterly demoralized. The hard times have cut them loose from remunerative work, and they have become rovers, nominally looking for employment, but really looking for life without it. They lost their self-respect if they ever had any, lost their love of steady industry, lost all desire for independence, lost their sense of manhood and of shame, and have imbibed the incurable disease of mendicancy. We mistake the nature of the case entirely, if we suppose that better times and fair wages for all, would cure these men, and relieve the country of their presence and their support. Leprosy is not more incurable than mendicancy. When the disease has once fastened itself upon a man,—when, through long months or years, he has willingly and gladly lived on the industry of others, and roamed around without a home,—he becomes a hopeless case, and nothing but the strong arm of the law can make him a self-supporting man.

The same is true of the dead-beat, who is only "the tramp" of the city. He is not so humble a man as the country tramp. He dresses better and supports himself in different methods. He is the man who wants to get to Boston or Baltimore, where he has friends. He is the man who has just arrived from the South, having run as far as New York to get away from the yellow fever, or whatever trouble may be in progress there at the date of his application. He is the man who wishes to get money to bury his wife or child. Or, he is about to receive funds, but is in a starving condition, and wants something to assist him in "bridging over." If you happen to have been born in Vermont, he comes to you as a Vermonter. Perhaps he comes to you because you and he happen to have the same name. There is no end to the lies he can tell, and does tell. We have some very genteel and high and mighty dead beats in New York,

who never stoop to beg, but rise to borrow, and forget to pay. We know of one woman here, claiming to be productively literary, who apparently lives well on the funds which a bright and sweet-faced daughter borrows for her. Now all these people are hopelessly diseased. They can never be restored to sound manhood and womanhood. What is worse than all the rest is that they perpetuate their mendicancy through their families. So we have the tramps and the dead-beats, and the regular old-fashioned paupers, and they all are alike, with some exceptions, perhaps, in favor of the regular old-fashioned paupers; for now and then there is one of these who, much against his will, has been forced by circumstances into pauperism.

What are we to do with these people? How is this disease to be treated? These questions demand an early answer, for the evils to which they relate are increasing with alarming rapidity. There is the general feeling that they will take care of themselves, so soon as prosperous times shall return; but, as we have already said, this is a mistake. The dead-beat will never reform. The tramp will be a tramp for life, shifting from country to city as his comforts may demand, and ready to be led into any mischief which will give him grub and grog. There ought to be, this very winter, in every State in the Union, such laws passed as will restrain the wanderers, and force them to self-support in some public institution. A standing commission of vagrancy should be instituted in every large city, and every county in the land; and institutions of industry established for the purpose of making these men self-supporting, and of curing them of their wretched disease. We have lunatic asylums not only for the benefit of the lunatics, but for the relief of the community, and among the dead-beats and tramps we have an enormous number of men who are just as truly diseased as the maddest man in Utica, or at the Bloomingdale Asylum. Something must be done with them, and done at once, if we are to have any comfort by day or safety by night; for men who are so demoralized as to beg from choice, and lie by profession, have but to take a single step to land in ruffianism. Already they intimidate, and rob and murder, to get the means to support their useless lives.

It is only last year that we heard of a force of five hundred of them approaching a Western city, to the universal alarm of the inhabitants. The disclosures connected with the recent fraudulent registration in this city show how easy it is, under the lead of demagogues, to assemble them by tens of thousands at any point desired, and how readily they can be induced to perjure their souls for bread and beer. These facts menace both our homes and our liberties. It is not a tramp, here and there, such as we have at all times; but it is an army of tramps that can be brought together on the slightest

occasion, for any deed of rascality and blood which it may please them to engage in. The evil has come upon us so noiselessly—so almost imperceptibly—that it is hard for us to realize that we are tolerating, and feeding for nothing, a huge brood of banditti, who will ultimately become as monstrous and as disgraceful to our country and to Christian civilization as the banditti of Greece or Southern Italy.

The one fact which we wish to impress upon the people, and upon legislators, in this article, is, that the evil which we are describing and commenting upon is not one that will cure itself,—is not one that will be cured by returning national prosperity,—is not one that will be cured by driving tramps from one State into another,—and is a hopelessly demoralizing mental disease. It must be taken hold of vigorously, and handled efficiently and wisely. There is not a month to be lost. Thus far in the history of the country we have been singularly free from any pauperism but that which we have imported from the great European repositories of pauperism. But matters have changed. The tramps are not all foreigners. They are, to a very considerable number, our own American flesh and blood, and unless we are willing to see the country drift into the condition of the older peoples of the world, where mendicancy has grown to be a gigantic burden and curse, and pauperism a thing of hopeless heredity, we must do something to check the evil, and do it at once.—*Scribner, for Jan.*

THE KEROSENE "RING."

Those who use kerosene for light have probably observed that the price of oil has advanced very greatly within the past few months. In fact, it has more than doubled at wholesale, and the retail price usually keeps pace with every advance.

The cause of this increase in the cost of an article in almost universal use, is a "combination." A great corporation has sought to control the entire coal oil product of the country. It is large enough to threaten ruin to any oil refiner who dares sell below the price it fixes, and so long as the high price brings larger profits, no refiner has a strong inducement to sell a lower rate.

Although this "ring" is very injurious to the consumers of oil, and although there is no other reason for the rise in the price of kerosene than the desire of persons and companies comprising the "ring" to gain large profits, they have legally, a perfect right to combine. So on the other hand, consumers have an equal right to defeat the combination if they can. By a universal law, a high price checks the use of an article. It is not necessary for consumers to combine. They naturally do the very thing that makes all plots to give a too high value to anything so short-lived.

We have great foreign markets for our petroleum. When the price rises, less oil is bought and used. This in the home markets soon leads to large surplus stocks,

which one and another dealer will begin selling at low prices, in order to procure the money needed in business. There was hardly ever a "ring" formed in any trade that did not end ingloriously in the treachery of some of its members.

So it will be with this kerosene "ring." It may last for a few months; but unless it proves an exception to all rules, it will not hold out very long.—*Youth's Companion.*

AN INFIDEL SILENCED.

One day an infidel was lecturing in a village in the north of England, and at the close he challenged discussion. The challenge was accepted by an old, bent woman, in the most ancient attire, who went up to the lecturer and said, "I have a question to put to you." "Well, my good woman, what is it?" "Ten years ago," she said, "I was left a widow with eight children utterly unprovided for, and nothing to call my own but this Bible. By its direction, and looking to God for strength, I have been enabled to feed myself and family. I am now tottering to the grave; but I am perfectly happy, because I look forward to a life of immortality with Jesus in heaven. That's what my religion has done for me. What has your way of thinking done for you?" "Well, my good lady," rejoined the lecturer, "I don't want to disturb your comfort; but—" "O that's not the question," interposed the woman; "keep to the point, sir. What has your way of thinking done for you?" The infidel endeavored again to avoid the question; the feeling of the meeting gave vent to applause, and the infidel had to go away silenced by an old woman.—*Observer.*

FLOWER WORSHIPPERS.

Very beautiful is the Persian's love for flowers. In Bombay I found the Parsees use the Victoria Gardens chiefly to walk in, "to eat the air"—"to take a constitutional," as we say. Their enjoyment of it was heartily animal. The Hindoo would stroll unsteadfastly through it, attracted from flower to flower, not by its form or color, but its scent. He would pass from plant to plant, snatching them between his fingers, and taking stray sniffs at the ends of his fingers as if he were taking snuff. His pleasure in the flowers was utterly sensual. Presently a true Persian, in flowing robe of blue, and on his head his sheepskin hat,

"Black, glossy, curl'd the fleece of Kur-Kul" would saunter in, and stand and meditate over every flower he saw, and always as if half in vision. And when at last the vision was fulfilled, and the ideal flower he was seeking found, he would spread his mat and sit before it until the setting of the sun, and then pray before it, and fold up his mat again and go home. And the next night, and after-night until that particular flower faded away, he would return to it, and bring his friends in ever-increasing troops to it, and sit and sing and play the

guitar or lute before it, and after prayer still sit before it, sipping sherbet, and talking the most hilarious and shocking scandal, late into the moonlight; and so again every evening until the flower died. Sometimes, by way of a grand finale, the whole company would suddenly rise before the flower and serenade it together with an ode from Hafiz, and depart.—*Athenaeum.*

FOUNTAINS.

The sluggish stream usually has its source in the low morass where serpents glide. All the way from its foul head to its dirty mouth malarial vapor arises from it—which is "the pestilence that walketh in darkness;" an unseen enemy in the air. The stream that looks like flowing molten crystal, leaps from fountains far up the mountains, where the air is pure and life-giving. The former is a type of the political stream where the best men are so slothful or misguided as to leave the "caucus" or fountain in the hands of the dangerous classes.

It was a wise saying of one of the fathers that if a patriot can only attend one—the caucus; or the pole to vote on election day, he better attend the caucus.

We pity those who are nervous about pulpits and religious papers touching politics. Such may be interested to know that the dictionary defines the word politics as meaning "that part of ethics," etc.

If the great Republic ever dies, it will be because a better class of people do not attend to these political fountain heads. Like the priest and the Levite, they seem to pass by on the other side, and leave the angel of Liberty, who has fallen among thieves, to perish by the wayside. Omitting faithful attention to duty in this matter, is as really a sin as committing others prohibited by both sacred and civil law. Distinction is, of course, to wade between the patriot and the partizan. Political reading and printing should be divested of "the hiss of party hate;" but failing longer to look after the purity of the fountain is sowing the wind to reap the whirl-wind in our country, and that at no distant day. Reap it in blood on the hearth stone, and in the the ashes of the Temple of Liberty. It must be no fitful, meteoric rousing to action; but a steady, starlike flame of patriotic, "eternal vigilance."—*George May Powell, in Church Union*

The roof of Westminster Abbey, in London, long supposed to be of oak, when examined, last year, was found to be of chestnut. It was sound and perfect, although it had stood for eight centuries already, which would go to show that chestnut timber is pretty good for building purposes.

A Western papers say: It is simply absurd to talk about a woman being qualified to fill every position in life that a man fills. For instance, what woman could lounge around the stove in a country grocery and lie about the number of fishes she caught last summer?