

The Orphans' Friend.

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NOTHING.

I asked a lad what he was doing;
"Nothing, good sir," said he to me.
"By nothing well and long pursuing,
Nothing," said I, "you'll surely be."
I asked a lad what he was thinking;
"Nothing," quoth he, "I do declare."
"Many," said I, "in taverns drinking,
By idle minds were carried there."
There's nothing great, there's nothing wise,
Which idle hands and minds supply;
Those who all thought and toil despise,
Mere nothings live and nothings die.
A thousand naughts are not a feather,
When in a sum they all are brought;
A thousand idle heads together,
Are still but nothings joined to naught.

"THE SWEET SERENITY OF BOOKS."

What fellowship have we not all found in books! When other pleasures fail, when life disappoints, when ill health haunts us, we return to their perhaps long neglected companionship, and we meet with thorough geniality. When we are fatigued, they refresh us; when we are ill, they amuse us; when we are hurt by man's ingratitude, they draw us away from ourselves and our rights. They do not interrupt or contradict us, while they afford much of the pleasure of conversation; and though the opinions or thoughts advanced in a book may not chance to coincide with our own, we are not offended by them. Moreover, we are not obliged to listen to them when we are not in the humor, in which respect they have an advantage over the most delightful talker in the world. We can shut the book up when we feel inclined; the talker is not so easily disposed of. We can even take the liberty of falling to sleep over its pages; and what talker on earth would wink at such an indignity—would gather up the broken threads, when we pleased to awake, and pursue subject with unruffled composure? A book is a disembodied thought, and we do not come into collision with the personality of the writer, as we are apt to do with that of the speaker; and thus, if our own pet ideas are impugned, the attack does not savor of malice nor arouse resentment. Who does not recall the first volumes of his youth with something like a transport of remembrance? And what renown would not that book achieve which should produce the same effect upon the mature mind? What inexhaustible riches did not the fairy-books of that period open to our young imaginations, wherein we saw the minarets of Bagdad shine, and heard the Tigris murmur, and the bulbul trill, and all the barbaric splendors of the East were unfolded! To those whom "circumstances detain at the chimney-corner, what a boon and enlightenment is the book of travels which carries them away from their prosaic experiences into enchanted regions, opening their minds to a thousand marvels, widening their sphere of thought, narrowing their prejudices, and acquainting them with a world beyond their boundaries! Who does not remember stolen half hours at some favorite tryst which have solaced us for days spent in uncongenial tasks? In the company of a book which

delights us we forget that the seat is uncushioned, that the day is stormy, the purse lean, the cupboard empty; fact is dethroned by fiction or fancy for the nonce; and we are never alone, but surrounded by a cloud of witnesses. What an endless resource do books offer to those whose ways and means are too limited to admit of the expensive entertainments of society, the play-house, or the concert-room! What teachers of manners they are, and how stimulating to the faculties! And yet some people pretend to despise them, and speak of them with the contempt due to some explored method of enlightenment, to some pretentious folly.—*Bazar*.

AMERICAN SLANG.

The richness and variety of American slang is remarked upon by almost all English travelers, who, however, might find at home, in the language of high-born people, departures from purity quite as frequent and as great as those prevalent with us, although perhaps not so gross; for it must be confessed that most of our slang is coarse and offensive, at least in form. But the most remarkable American peculiarity in regard to slang, or indeed in regard to any new fangle in language, is the quickness with which it is adopted, and comes, if not into general use, into general knowledge. This readiness of adaptability to slang may, however, be attributed almost entirely to the reporters and correspondents, and 'makers-up' of our newspapers, who catch eagerly at anything new in phraseology as well as in fact, to give temporary interest to their ephemeral writings. Here, for example, is the word "bull-doze," the occasion of our remarks. A man who went on a journey to South America or to Europe four months ago would have departed in the depths of deplorable ignorance as to the very existence of this lovely word; returning now, he would find it in full possession of the newspapers—appearing in correspondents, in reports, in sensation headlines, and even leading articles. Although to the manner born, he would be puzzled at the phraseology of the very newspaper which mingled itself with his earliest recollections and with his breakfast, for there he would find the new word in all possible forms and under all possible modifications: bull-doze, the noun; to bull-doze, the verb; bull-dosing, the present participle; bulldosed, the past participle; and even, to the horror of the author of the "Words and their Uses," and in spite of him, being bulldozed, "the continuing participle of the passive voice." Such a phenomenon in language is peculiar to this country. But notwithstanding the fears of the purists and the philosophers, it does not threaten the existence of the English language here, nor is it at all likely to affect it permanently even by the addition of one phrase or word. For our use of slang of this kind is the most fleeting of temporary fashion. Such slang passes rapidly into use and into general recognition, and passes as quickly out again. Barlett's "Dictionary of Ameri-

cansims" is full of words of this kind—*locofoco*, for example—which lived their short lives, and passed not only out of use, but out of memory. While they are in vogue, however, they deform our speech, and they tend to increase our habits of looseness in language, and they bring reproach upon us such as that with an allusion to which we began this item. For our reputation's sake we should stop still; it subjects us with some reason to ridicule. But we shall not stop, because the men who could stop it—the editors—will not do so. Very few newspapers in the country—only two or three—are really edited as to the language used in them; and as to slang of this sort, it is regarded as something pleasant to the ear of the average reader, who is supposed to think it funny.—*The Galaxy for January*.

AN ESQUIMAUX HOUSE, OR HUT.

One would think that, cold and dreadful as the Arctic regions are known to be, the inhabitants would need every comfort that could be imagined in the way of a house. But no. The first thing the Esquimaux does in his house building is to clear away the snow and ice from a spot of ground of the right size for his house. This he makes as smooth as he can, leaving one end a little higher than the other. The higher end is to serve as parlor and bed room; the lower as work-shop and kitchen. Around this cleared spot of earth blocks of hard frozen snow are laid in such a fashion that they form a low round roof, resembling in shape the half of a hollow ball. By way of a window, a small square of rather thin and clear ice is set into the wall.

On the side of the house least exposed to wind is a long and low passage-way leading to the open air. This passage is so low that the inmates of the house have to crawl through it on their hands and knees. The door is only a loose block of snow.

These huts do not appear to be very charming residences, but there are two good things about them. One is that the high winds of that desolate region cannot possibly blow a hut over, though they may bury it in snow; the other good thing is that no one hut can be lived in longer than a season. The poor Esquimaux are, unfortunately, a very dirty people, and if they live ever so long in one house they would never clean it. But the snow-house finally cleans itself in the most thorough manner, for so soon as the warm days of Summer come, it melts away, and its inmates must set about building a seal-skin tent that will shelter them till Winter comes again.—*St. Nicholas for January*.

KEEP OUT OF DEBT.

Half of the perplexity, annoyance and trouble, that men have in this world, is in consequence of getting into debt. It seems to be natural for some people to buy, and incur obligations, without measure, so long as they can avoid paying ready cash. Give one of this sort a chance to buy

on credit, and the questions of payments are matters that he cares but little about. But what a crop of trouble springs up from the seed of debt. How many gray hairs it brings, and how often it shortens life, sometimes leading men to commit suicide or murder. And yet how easy it is to keep clear of this terrible monster. Every young man should form a fixed and unalterable determination, before commencing his active business career, not to incur one penny of indebtedness, under any circumstances. Never buy anything unless you have the money to pay for it at once. Pay no attention to the "splendid opportunities," "rare chances," gain," and the like. Such are only traps set to catch victims. If you see anything that you would like to have, look first at your money, and make the answer depend upon that. Always pay as you go. If you are short of money, gauge your demands accordingly.—*Church Union*.

THE TRADE WINDS.

The earth turns on its axis from west to east, and with its rotation daily the enormous envelope of the atmosphere. The velocity of rotation at the equator is something over 1,000 miles an hour; at thirty degrees distance in is about 150 miles an hour less. In higher latitudes it is still less; and the poles nothing. Therefore, whenever the air moves north and south on the surface of the earth, it will carry with it a greater or less velocity of rotations than the places it passes over, and will turn into an easterly or westerly wind accordingly as it approaches or recedes from the equator. In the region of the sun's greatest heat, the air, rarified and lightened, is continually rising, and cooler currents come in on both sides to take the place of the ascending volume. As these side-currents come from a distance of about 25 degrees from the equator, they have, at starting, an eastern velocity many miles an hour less than the localities they will eventually reach. Consequently they will appear to lag, behind in all the course of their progress to the equator—that is, they will have a westerly motion united with their north and south movements. These are the great trade winds, blowing constantly from the northeast on this side, and the southeast on the other side of the equator.—*Popular Science Monthly*.

A TRUE FRIEND.

Concerning the man you call your friend, tell me, will he weep with you in the hour of distress? Will he faithfully reprove you to your face, for actions which others are ridiculing and censuring behind your back? Will he dare to stand forth in your defense, when detraction is secretly aiming its deadly weapon at your reputation? Will he acknowledge you with the same cordiality, and behave to you with the same friendly attention in the company of your superiors in rank and fortune, as when the claims of pride do not interfere with those of friendship? If misfortunes and losses should oblige you to retire into a walk of life in which you

can not appear with the same liberality as formerly, will he still think himself happy in your society, and instead of withdrawing himself from an unprofitable connection, take pleasure in professionally assisting your friend, and cheerfully assist you to support the burthen of your affliction? When sickness shall call you to retire from the gay and busy scenes of the world, will he follow you into your gloomy retreat, listen with attention to your "tale of symptoms," and administer the balm of consolation to your fainting spirit? and lastly, when death shall burst asunder every earthly tie, will he shed upon your grave and lodge the dear remembrance of your mutual friendship in his heart? A true friend will do all this.

THE GIANT PLANETS.

In a recent lecture, Mr. Proctor the astronomer, taking for his theme "The Giant Planets," discoursed on Jupiter, Uranus and Neptune. The name, "Giant Planets," is quite appropriate. For the size of Jupiter is so great that it would take 1,300 globes the size of our earth to make or world as large as the giant planet. The diameter of Saturn is nine times greater than that of the earth, and that of both Uranus and Neptune is four times greater.

Mr. Proctor said that the giant planets are not in the same condition as the earth, but are bodies in an entirely different stage of planetary life. In fact, they are very young planets, growing with intense heat, and preparing, perhaps, to become one abode of life. But, though the giant planets are not adapted for life, yet Mr. Proctor thinks that the satellites round Jupiter may be suitable abodes for living creatures, whose sun is the planet itself.

LIKE THE SWIFT SHIPS.

How swiftly the mariner flies from a threatening storm, or seeks the port where he will find his home. You have sometimes seen the ship cut through the billows, leaving a white furrow behind her, and causing the sea to boil around her. So is life like the swift ships, when the sails are filled by the wind, and the vessel dashes on, dividing a passage through the crowded water. Swift are the ships, but swifter far is life. The wind of time bears me along. I cannot stop its motion. I may direct it with the rudder of God's Holy Spirit. Like a swift ship, my life speeds on its way till it reaches its haven. Where is the haven to be? Shall it be found in the land of bitterness and dreariness, that region of the lost? Or shall it be the sweet haven of eternal peace, where not a troubling wave can ruffle the quiescent glory of my spirit?—*Spurgeon*.

On a child being told that he must be broken of a bad habit, he naively replied, "Papa, hadn't I better be mended?"

None are so fond of secrets as those who do not mean to keep them; such persons covet secrets as a spendthrift does money, for the purpose of circulation.—*Colton*.