The Orphans' Friend.

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LIGHT.

BY WILLIAM PITT PALMER.

[This composition has been pronounced, by the most eminent critics of Europe, to be one of the finest productions of the same length in our language.]

From the quickened womb of the primal gloom
The sun rolled bleak and bare,
Till I wove him a vest for his Ethiop breast
Of the threads of my golden hair;
And when the broad tent of the firmament
Arose on its airy bars,
I penciled the hue of the matchless blue
And spangled it round with stars.

I painted the flowers of Eden bowers,
And their leaves of living green,
And mine were the dyes in the sinless eyes
Of Eden's virgin queen;
And when the fiend's art on the trustful heart
Had fastened its mortal spell,
In the silvery sphere of the first-born tear
To the trembling earth I fell.

When the waves that burst o'er a world accursed,
Their work of wrath had sped,
And the ark's lone few, the tried and true,
Came forth among the dead.
With the wondrous gleams of my bridal beams,
I bade their terrors cease,
As I wrote on the roll of the storm's dark scroll,
God's covenant of peace.

Like a pall at rest on a senseless breast,
Night's funereal shadow slept—
When shepherd swains on Bethlehem's plains
Their lowly vigils kept—
Then I lashed on their sight the heralds bright
Of Heaven's redeeming plan,
And they chanted the morn of a Savior born—
Joy, joy to the outcast man!

Equal favor I show to the lofty and low;
On the just and unjust I descend:
E'en the blind, whose vain spheres roll in darkness and tears,
Feel my smile, the best smile of a friend.
Nay, the flower of the waste by my love is embraced
As the rose in the garden of kings;
At the chrysalis bier of the worm I appear,
And lo! the gay butterfly wings.

The desolate morn, like a mourner forlorn,
Conceals all the pride of her charms,
Till I bid the bright hours chase the night from her bowers
And lead her young day to her arms.
And when the gay lover seeks eve for his lover,
And sinks to her balmy repose,
I wrap the soft rest by the zephyr-fanned West,
In curtains of amber and rose.

From my sentinel sleep by the night-dreaded deep
I gaze with unslumbering eye,
When the cynosure star of the mariner
Is blotted from out the sky!
And guided by me through the merciless sea,
Though sped by the hurricane's wings,
His compassless, dark, lone, weltering bark
To the haven-home safely he brings.

I waken the flowers in their dew-spangled bowers,
The birds in their chambers of green,
And mountain and plain glow with beauty again,
As they bask in the matinal sheen.
Oh, if such the glad worth of my presence on earth,
Though fretful and fleeting the while,
What glories must rest on the home of the blest,
Ever bright with the Deity's smile!

An aged man said: "If husbands only had any sense they'd never have any trouble with disobedient wives. I never did, an' I have been married nigh onto fifty years."—"What is your secret?" asked a friend. "Why, I always tell my wife to do just as she pleases, an' she never fails to do it."

HISTORY AND USES OF GUNPOWER.

Who invented gunpowder?

No one knows. All agree that its composition and properties were understood in remote antiquity. Authentic history extends but a short way into the past, and it is always difficult to draw the line separating the authentic from the fabulous. Like some other things, gunpowder, as ages rolled on, may have been invented, forgotten, and reinvented. Certainly in some form it was known, and used for fire-works and incendiary material long before any one dreamed of a gun, or of using it to do more than create terror in warfare. And yet it is said that some of the ancients had means of using it to throw destructive missiles among their enemies—probably a species of rocket or bomb. Nor does it seem, in its infancy, to have been applied to industrial purposes, such as blasting and quarrying rock, for there is evidence that the people who used it for fireworks at their feasts, quarried immense blocks of stone by splitting them out of the quarries with hammers and wedges.

Its first uses probably were connected with the religious ceremonies of the Pagan ancients. An old tradition taught that those were the most powerful gods who answered their worshippers by fire. The priests, therefore, who practiced upon the credulity of the people, exercised their ingenuity inventing ways of producing spontaneous fire, which they told the people was sent by the gods from heaven in answers to their prayers. The accounts of old writers still preserved and dating back to three hundred years before Christ, describe a "sulphurous and inflammable substance," unmistakably like our gunpowder. There was a certain place called the "Oracle of Delphi," once great, where this kind of fire was produced by the priests, and it is said that the Druids, the ancient priests of Briton also used something of this sort in their sacrifices, for they not only produced sudden fire, but they also imitated thunder and lightning, to terrify the people with their power.—This must have been more than two thousand years ago. It is known that the Chinese, on the other side of the world, had gunpowder about the same time, but they used it chiefly for fireworks, which then, as now, formed the main features of all their festivals and ceremonies. In India it was early used in war, for a writer who lived about A. D. 244, says: "When the towns of India are attacked by their enemies, the people do not rush into battle, but put them to flight by thunder and lightning."

It is said, too, that one of the Roman Emperors, who lived just after the crucifixion of Christ, "had machines which imitated thunder and lightning, and at the same time emitted stones." Then, about A. D. 220, there was written a recipe "for an ingenious composition to be thrown on an enemy," which nearly corresponds to our gunpowder. During the many hundred years that follow, little is recorded until about the ninth century, when there appears in an old book, now in a Paris library, an exact recipe for gunpowder, and a description of a rocket. It is said that in 1099 the Saracens, in defending Jerusalem, "threw abundance of pots of fire and shot fire darts"—no doubt some kind of bombs and war rockets. History affords accounts of other wars about this time, in which gunpowder was undoubtedly used in some form. But in 1216 a monk, Friar Roger Bacon, made gunpowder, and it is asserted he discovered it independently, knowing nothing of its existence elsewhere. It is not unreasonable to believe this, for in those days people kept their inventions to themselves, if they could, and news traveled slowly. Some authors say a German, named Schwartz discovered it in 1320, and perhaps he did, too, and as honestly and independently as did Friar Bacon, or the East Indians, or the Chinese. Others insist that it was originally invented in India, and brought by the Saracens from Africa to the Europeans, who improved it. At any rate, an English gentleman who has made a translation of some of the laws of India, supposed to have been established 1,500 years before the Christian era, or over 3,300 years ago, makes one of them read thus: "The magistrates shall not make war with any deceitful machine, or with poisoned weapons, or with cannon and guns, or any kind of firearms."—*St. Nicholas.*

TAKEN FOR GRANTED.

One of the surest ways of producing confusion and annoyance, is to allow one's self to form the habit of taking things for granted. The habit is easily acquired, and is such a natural result of the lack of thoughtfulness, that many, while suffering from its consequences, are unconscious of the habit. There are several reasons why it should be overcome. It is self-evident that one who supposes the case, nine times out of ten cannot be relied upon in any enterprise of importance, and thus becomes so inefficient as to be unable to fulfil his obligations acceptably to others or with credit to himself, being constant sources of annoyance to others and inconvenience to himself. A fair share of enemies are made by supposed slights or misinterpretation of careless remarks, which, if carefully considered, would save much disquietude and ill-will. Not only in social life, but in business, is this habit damaging, causing ruin and the downfall of otherwise promising enterprise.

Even into everyday life this habit intrudes itself. A lack of energy, and too great a reliance on others' forethought, causes many scenes of domestic confusion and petty vexations, not only to the delinquents, but to the whole household. Is it surprising that this habit, formed at home, should be found amid the scenes of active life? Opinions being formed from conjecture and surmises instead of being founded on rational inference, is it surprising that energies are misdirected, and so many life-failures are seen? See the evidences of disaster strewn along the path of the thoughtless, seeming not unlike the track of a retreating and vanquished army! Surmises and suppositions cannot fill the place of opinions formed by penetration and discernment. A man of penetration is as slow to decide as he is quick to apprehend, calmly and deliberately weighing every opposite reason that is offered, and tracing it with a most judicious penetration. All these one must possess to have that judgement of Plutarch, to discriminate betwen right and wrong; while to have the clear perception of Gœthe, one must be willing to breathe a foreign atmosphere, and, freed from prejudice, feel the inspiration of other scenes and conditions. If, in fact, we wish our life structure to be perfect, we must give it our personal care, lest, while we sit with folded hands and placid minds, the tottering structure over us falls with crushing violence to the earth, burying us amid the ruins.—*Waverley Magazine.*

BRILLIANT ASTRONOMICAL DISCOVERY.

Prof. Hall, with the great telescope of the Naval Observatory at Washington, has made one of the most interesting astronomical discoveries of the century. About 11 o'clock on Thursday night before last he noticed a small star following Mars a few seconds, and made an estimate of its distance from the planet. Two hours later he looked again, and was surprised to find that the star seemed to be still following the planet. He renewed his observations on Friday and Saturday nights, and was rewarded with the evidence that it was a satellite of Mars, a planet which has hitherto been regarded as without an attendant. In the course of his observations Prof. Hall found another satellite of the same planet.

The observations of the first showed its time of revolution to be about thirty hours, but several weeks will be required to settle exactly. The distance of the first satellite from the planet is between fourteen and fifteen thousand miles, which is less than that of any other known satellite from its primary, and only about one-sixteenth the distance of the moon from the earth. The inner one, as to the existence of which the astronomers are not yet absolutely certain, is still closer. The diameter of the new satellite is very small, probably not more than 80 or 100 miles.

THE PROPER USE OF WORDS.

To be able to select the right word for the right place is an art that can only be acquired by a long and laborious process. It does not come natural to any one. The efforts should be early made to acquire readiness in the art. Take this example for advanced class—to illustrate the use of the word "proud." The synonyms are *presumption, insolent, haughty, vain.* What term shall we use in "He was——enough to ask for the chief command?" And why? And in this sentence—"The poet was——enough to take every opportunity to recite his works?" And why? And in this sentence—"The general, when requested to lay down his arms——replied 'Come and take them?'" "The ——conduct of the drunken soldiery alienated the natives?" And why? We say "and why?" because the naming of the proper word without giving some clue to the reason for the choice of that word will not set the pupil to thinking for himself. In the same way, take the word *famous* and write on the blackboard a sentence in which it is correctly used; put also the synonyms "notorious," "illustrious," "renowned," "well-known," and "notable." Require your class to give sentences in which each of these words will be used—and used to the exclusion of any of the others. A series of lessons carried thus progressively forward will fix clearly in the minds of the pupils distinction between the meaning and force of words.—*Exchange.*

GOETHE.

It has been the habit of certain persons in uninformed circles, to class Goethe, who is to modern German literature, what Shakespear is to English, with relationalists, and skeptics. The verdict is unjust. A man whose colossal genius stands preëminent in the ages, and whose influence has had, and still exercises, a mighty moulding power upon the intellectual life of a great people, ought to be dealt with justly, at least, if not generously.

We can not conceive that a skeptic, or a rationalist, could have written such a sentiment as this, for instance: "Religion does what philosophy could never do; it shows the equal dealings of Heaven to the happy and unhappy, and levels all human enjoyments to nearly the same standard. It gives to both rich and poor the same happiness hereafter, and equal hopes to aspire after it."

Roaming at will in the enchanted gardens of romance and fiction; allured by the worship of the Muses, whose favorite child he was; with his sensitive, and beauty-loving spirit continuously wrought upon by the mysticism prevalent in his time, and by the genius of classic antiquity, his clear mind rises above the infectious atmosphere, to the pure ether of religion; he feels and expresses its divine charms, and, turning away from the bewitching ideal of philosophy, he prefers to describe the diviner merits of the "daughter of the skies."

We think it must require a very illiberal mind, or a very ignorant one, to see in such sentiments aught else than a clear and beautiful conception of religion, and of its peerless power to confer immortal happiness.—*Christian Index.*

The every-day cares and duties which men call drudgery are the weights and counterpoises of the clock of time, giving its pendulum a true vibration, and its hands a regular motion, and when they cease to hang upon the wheels the pendulum no longer swings, the hands no longer move, the clock stands still.—*Longfellow.*