

The People's Press.

Mrs. Handcock

VOL. XXI.

SALEM, N. C., JANUARY 2, 1873.

NO. 1.

The People's Press.

L. V. & E. T. BLUM,
PUBLISHERS AND PROPRIETORS.

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Select Miscellany.

FIRE TEST.

I believe it, sir—I do, indeed. There never was an evil that some good did not spring from it. It is something hard to believe; it was for me once, but it is truth. Shall I tell you why I changed my mind? I don't know as I ought to, for I am not much of a storyteller. I can balance an account, or scale a load of lumber, but I will try this time. Ah! how I wish I could tell it as I saw it! But I don't believe anybody ever could do that, so I'll make the best of it.

I am in the employ of a heavy lumber company doing business on the lake shore, and have been for years. Most of the time there are two of us in the office—John Richards, a son of one of the owners, and myself, Jacob Jackson. John usually goes into the pines in the winter.

Well, last winter was unfavorable for logging; there was no snow to speak of, and our supply of logs was so much less than usual that we were obliged to shut down the mill by the 1st of September. That left thirty or forty men idle. You know these lumbermen must have something to eat and wear clothes, and the firm decided to put a crew into the woods, if it was early. So, about the 4th or 5th of September a lot of men started.

John Richards went up to boss them, and to be frank, as I always want to be, I was glad when John was out of my sight. There were two or three reasons why I was glad. First, John Richards was not a very agreeable person to have around. He was haughty and overbearing to the last degree, and many a wordy tilt have we had. Again, he was paying attention to a beautiful girl whom I loved. No doubt, I was a little selfish, but I really could not help it. There was no open rivalry between us, however, for I had never insisted even to my dearest friend, my mother, that I cared aught for Belle Royalty. But I loved her, and the idea that Richards, or anybody else for that matter, would bear off the prize, even before I had entered the lists as a competitor, was repugnant to my feelings, to say the least. Lastly, John Richards was my enemy. Wherefore? I could not fathom, unless some act or look of mine had betrayed my love. But he was my enemy, and I was glad when he was out of my sight.

John had been gone nearly a month when the firm received a letter from him, in which he had stated that he had found a large tract of pine land for sale. The owner had just been burned out, and John advised that I should come up with a few thousand dollars, for a splendid bargain could be made.

I hope you will see no trouble on your journey. You must be very careful, however, for fires are burning through all that region.

You don't know how these words cheered me. Notwithstanding my embarrassing position, I could not feel sorry that I went; and, apologizing for my mistake, I took my leave, very much happier, yet, withal, feeling a sort of pity for John Richards.

The first part of my journey was performed without serious trouble. It is true I had some narrow escapes from the fires, which I found everywhere, thus proving my mother's fears not without foundation. But on Saturday night, the night for camping out, I met with the first of a series of mishaps that promised a very unfortunate ending to my trip.

The camping-out, however, was not so disagreeable as I anticipated, for our men on the way had erected a cabin for themselves and a sort of stable for their horses. In the latter I tied Jim, finding hay and grain enough for a feed, and then betook myself to the other cabin, where I made preparations for passing a comfortable night. But I could not sleep at first. Ten thousand dollars in one's pocket is not a remarkable narcotic, especially when one is in a lonely cedar swamp, with fires lighting the heavens above, the suffocating smoke retarding respiration, and men prowling around for prey. But sleep came to me after awhile and money, fire, smoke, and robbers were forgotten.

I do not know how long I slept, but I do know that I was awakened very suddenly. I sprang from the heap of straw that had been my bed, and, by the light of the fire, which had burned nearer, I saw a man standing in the door. His face was towards me—a black face it was, too, but whether artificially colored or natural I could not say.

"If you don't want to get burned up you'd better get out of here!" he said, gruffly. Ten minutes more and the hut will be ablaze.

I needed no second bidding. I found that his words were true, his warning timely. On three sides of the cabin the hungry flames were greedily licking up everything combustible, and at one point were only a few rods from where I stood.

What! tell me that again?" I demanded forgetting everything but the idea of having my honor sustained.

"I took it, Jacob. I knew Belle loved you, and I couldn't bear it. That letter I sent was to get you where I could carry out my plan. I might have left you to die in the hut, but Belle would always remember you, while a shadow of suspicion upon you would have ended it all. But I give her up to you. I am not good enough for her, even if she wanted me; but if I live, I'll do better. You will not tell Belle or father?"

"No, John."

By this time the heat was so intense that we had to wade deeper into the water, and keep our heads wet, to save our skin from blistering. Ah, sir, it was terrible. Many a poor being fled down into the water that night and never returned.

Well, I hardly know how we lived through that awful night, but here I am, as you see, considerably scorched, and somewhat soiled, but quite a man after all. There is one more thing to tell you, and that is, in that bed in the corner. He will get over it, I guess. I shouldn't be telling you this now, only I said I might. He has turned over a new leaf, and does not want any secrets weighing him down.

There is Belle, too, just coming up the walk. They put my bed here, so that I should be the first to see her when she came, and the last when she went away. Isn't she beautiful? Ah, but that is nothing to her goodness. She has saved John and me, they say; and she is my promised wife.

Do not blame me now for saying there never was an evil that good did not spring out of it.

ed by deep beams filled with dynamite; and his only resource was to try to frighten them away by throwing stones into the water, then dash in and endeavor to cross before they had recovered their courage. One large river he crossed on a raft, the branches for which he cut down with a knife made out of a rusty nail he found on the way. Indians, Spaniards, and jaguars were on his track. To add to all, the heat was overpowering. Yet he persevered all day; and on the fourteenth day—the distance was over one hundred miles—he had the delight of beholding a buccanering coveading.

He was received with transports by his old friends, and immediately offered to lead them against a prize worthy of them; nothing less than the very ship in which he had been a prisoner in Campeachy. He soon found volunteers to accompany him, and a day or two afterwards, at the dead of night, noiselessly boarded the Spaniard. The sentinel challenged them. "We are sailors," said Bartholemey, returning from shore with goods that he had brought on duty. "The faithful sentinel muttered a hope that he would not be forgotten, but the next moment he was killed and the vessel taken.

Bad-Tempered People.
The state of the stomach, we are told, has a great deal to do with the temper, the natural result being that when a man's liver is out of order, his temper is in the same condition. This may be true enough, but we question very much whether the liver is answerable for all the sins which are laid at its door. We know many bad-tempered people who, to our knowledge, have never been really bilious in the whole course of their lives. Of course it may be alleged that if the liver is all right, something else is all wrong—the nerves, or the heart, or the lungs, or the teeth, are driving poor buffers almost to distraction. This, also, may be correct. But it must be admitted that there are many pleasant beings who never complain of being afflicted by any special complaint, whose existence for all that, is one of chronic ill-humor, who snarl and snarl when they are spoken to, and snarl when left to themselves. A good many of these "gentle creatures" will, in intervals of comparative good humor, tell you to your face that they are bad tempered, that they always have been, and always will be. They may support the information by declaring that their fathers and great grandfathers were similarly afflicted, though not, perhaps to the same extent. They apparently glory in the admission of their weakness, evidently considering an out-and-out bad temper a possession of which a man has some reason to be extremely proud. They do not appear to recognize the fact that bad-temper is a positive vice, and that they have ought to have any control over it. They regard it rather in the light of disease, which like fever must be allowed to run its course unchecked. Naturally, it is not pleasant to have much to do with these people; but, if it is questionable whether it is possible for many to hold close and long continued intercourse with them. Generally such intercourse is brought to a conclusion by a terrible row, in which the sufferers from bad-temper display their infirmities in a thorough fashion. They say things not compatible with the laws and usages of polite society, and do that which is the reverse of proper. Timid beings are almost frightened to death, and to abate the furor, are ready to swallow the least to any extent. The furor probably feel some slight twinges of compunction after their temper has cooled, and, perhaps, half apologetically laying the blame upon their passions. The injured ones, longing for peace, perhaps accept the explanation; but they never forget, and ever afterwards are cold, arid distant, and watchful, and suspicious. These bad-tempered people are ever on the look-out for insults. When they are servants, their proud spirits chafe at being told to do their duty by their employers. They kick at authority, and cannot brook reproof. They are constantly on the look-out for things at which to take offense. If they hold subordinate positions, they come to loggerheads with the manager, head clerk, or foreman as the case may be. When they occupy positions of authority themselves, they play the part of tyrants. They get into a furious rage at trifles, decline to allow a hapless culprit to exonerate himself by rendering explanations, and inflict draconian punishments. Naturally, they are pretty generally detested, but while they are detested, they are feared; which is but to say, is not the case with another class of bad-tempered people.

This class is more sulky than passionate. There seems to lie within them a smouldering mine of irritation, which is bubbling forth night and day—that is, of course, when they are awake. If they are asked an ordinary question, much asperity is evident in the tones of their reply. As a rule, they are angry at nothing in particular, and with no one in particular—they are simply, in a continual, confoundedly bad temper; though they do not know why, and no one else can guess for it except upon the supposition that it is natural to the animal. These folks have ever a sore and wrinkled appearance, the natural result of long-continued scowling and frowning. They are pleasant people to live with, if you are a Mark Tapscott, and want to show you can be jolly under the most trying circumstances. You will not be able to do anything to please the afflicted ones. They snarl at breakfast, dinner, and tea, there being always something which is displeasing to them. They growl at you; and do what you will, you are quite unable to dispel them. They terrify the servants, who in despair, give warning. They scold their children, who betake themselves off whenever they imagine they can do so with safety. They testify their love for their wives, and unfavorably criticize the domestic management. In short, they make themselves universally disagreeable, completely destroying their own peace of mind, and do a great deal towards making other people miserable. But, though they are always in bad temper, and ever snapping and snarling, they avoid downright quarrels. They may go to the verge of one, but so far they will they proceed. Nor will they ever admit that they are, or have been, in a bad temper. Other people's imaginations must have led them astray, or they would not think of such a thing for a moment. A good many

people of this class are particularly noisy in the earlier part of the day, and comparatively placid in the latter. This idiosyncrasy is studied by people who know what they are about. Such people always make application for favors during the latter period, as well as do what business they can then. Like almost everything, this chronic bad humor is a luxury which can only be indulged in by the comparatively well-to-do. Poor men, though they may have the inclination to do so, cannot afford to snarl at almost everybody with whom they are brought in contact. They know that by so doing they would be taking the bread and butter out of their own mouths, and this is a consideration which controls, to a great extent, even the most irritable. Acting upon the principle, however, that there is within them a certain amount of snappishness which must be expended, such people still will expend quantities upon those who come within their clutches, and from whom they have nothing to fear. Probably, a certain kind of morbid pleasure derived from indulgence in ill-humor. People by acting as we have indicated, secure a certain amount of outward show and defiance; for somehow or other, most persons would almost as soon be struck as snarled at, and so they do all they can to avoid such treatment. Really, however, we fail to see why bad-tempered men and women should receive such tender consideration. Their bad temper is nothing more or less than an alms-house vice, and those who indulge in it are supremely selfish. Their troubles are no more to them than are troubles to other people, so there is no reason why they should be so sympathetic. Righteous anger is justifiable, but chronic ill-humor is a falling for which there can be nothing but the bitterest condemnation.

Lightning on the Mountain Top.
Gray's Peak is the home of the thunder. The lightning knows it as the eagle knows his nest. Being the highest of all peaks of the Sierra it attracts the clouds, which all most daily gather round its head and burst upon it, so that sometimes it tries the nerves of the boldest to run the gauntlet of these storms. At such times the whole mountain seems charged with electricity. Several who have been caught there at such a moment told me how it shot through their heads like needles; it buzzed about their heads like bees; they could hear it whistling like a gale through the rigging of a ship. The guides being always accustomed to such things are less terrified, but tourists are sometimes paralyzed with terror if not with the shock, and fall to the ground unable to move. Even the guides sometimes think it is a matter of prudence to throw themselves flat upon their faces, not to present a point for the lightning to strike. The poor brutes, taught by dumb instinct, turn their heads from the storm and let it beat. If a party were caught on the summit in a long heavy storm, it is probable that they would perish. In the blinding drifts it would be impossible to find the path, and no mortal strength could hold out for many hours. Such accidents do not occur, because the guides are on the watch; when they see a storm coming up they bid all run for their lives. They fly with speed, and come down, often trembling and afraid, as if, like Moses, they had been up in the mount into the cloud, and had seen the awful power of God.

Pruning and Thinning Orchards.
One of the most successful fruit raisers in Western New York, once informed us that by removing two-thirds of the young fruit from his peach trees, the peaches grew so much larger that he had as many bushes as on the unthinned trees, and that while the latter would scarcely bring fifty cents per bush, the large and excellent fruit resulting from thinning, sold readily for a dollar and a half. Another proof of the advantage of this process is furnished by Dr. Hall's orchard in Southern Illinois, who has a model orchard of 1800 trees, affording last year nearly 10,000 baskets; and while ordinary peaches go begging for buyers at from twenty-five to thirty cents, those 10,000 had a ready sale at seventy-five cents to one dollar and twenty-five cents. So much for pruning and thinning and careful picking and packing.

A thriving young orchard should be pruned every spring to obviate the necessity of cutting off large limbs, which is always detrimental to the health of a tree. The head should be kept well thinned out, limbs crossing and abrading one another removed, and any branches inclined to grow out of proportion shortened, so as to make a round symmetrical head.

We can conceive that the most interesting, and perhaps the most useful, department of the Vienna, Austria, Exhibition will be that known as the "Infant's Pavilion." It is an unique idea to illustrate here every phase of child-life, all its pleasures and trials, which are not less intense, perhaps, than their adult counterparts. There will be a full line of toys from all countries, and aside from the enjoyment that will be found in so varied and picturesque a collection, it is not impossible that the Japanese, Chinese, Turkish, Egyptian, English, French, and American playthings may reveal some connection with national characteristics and comparative culture. This child department will have a special system of usefulness in exhibiting and comparing the various devices for the preservation of health and physical strength from childhood. Food, medicine, and clothing will be among the most important subjects for consideration and illustration. There will be plans for orphan asylums, founding hospitals, and nurseries, and models for playgrounds and gardens for outdoor exercise.

The idea of self-importance which is so frequently exhibited by our brethren of the "colored persuasion" when they are engaged in any work, has seldom been better illustrated than by the exclamation of a colored mail carrier in Virginia, who had been well shaken by a man for kicking his dog. "Look-a-her, mass, you'd better be thankful how you shake dis dog, an' when you shake me, you shake de whole ob de United States; I carries de mails."

What is the meaning of hubbub? I asked a committeeman of a class he was examining. "Little Bright Eye raised his hand." "Well, my son, speak up," said the committee. "It's de hubbub, Little Bright Eye explained. It is evidently expressed upon the dignity."

Gambling in the East.

In the East gambling is a universal practice. All classes delight in it, from the king on his throne to the wretched beggar that prowls about the gates of the noble to find a scanty support, not in the "crumbs that fall from the rich man's table," but in the very garbage that is cast from his gate. So passionately devoted to this deplorable vice are many Orientals that when they have bartered off everything else they possess, rather than desert, they will sell their wives and children into slavery, and even pawn their own bodies to get money to gamble with. Immoral gaming houses are found in all the great cities, and even in the most remote and barbarous parts of the East.

During the reign of the old emperor who sat upon the throne at the time of my first visit to Sam, it was one day reported to His Majesty that some scores of his household slaves had been indulging in the great sin of gambling. The four culprits, being summoned to the royal presence, made full confession of their guilt, but pleaded excuse as excuse, and prayed His Majesty's forgiveness on the ground that they had lost only twenty thousand taels (twenty thousand dollars) which they argued was "but as a drop in the ocean compared with the boundless resources of His Serene Majesty's Majesty. The courteous old king, who loved money better than anything else in the world (the fair culprit themselves not excepted) had no sooner heard the sum of twenty thousand taels mentioned than, losing the small modicum of patience with which nature had endowed him, he summoned to his presence several high officers of the royal harvest, and ordered them to inflict, in his name, "the fatherly discipline of thirty stripes on the sole of the feet of each of the offending ladies, to preserve them in future from the degrading vice of gambling."

Dancing by Proxy.
Among the amusements of Oriental nations, dancing is a general favorite. But let not the uninitiated suppose that by dances are meant waltzes or cotillions, round dances or quadrilles, all of which involve an amount of muscular exertion quite inconsistent with Eastern ideas of pleasure. No; the Oriental has a fashion of his own in regard to the dance; and whenever he feels inclined to indulge his Terpsichorean proclivities, he does so, not by dancing himself, but by having his slaves to do it for him. Kings and princes, lords and ladies, retire at ease upon cushions of velvet, reclining away the lagging hours of sipping sherbet from golden cups, watching the curling wreaths of smoke from still more fragrant tobacco, while bands of dancing girls exhibit their grace and dexterity for the entertainment of the august company. I remember a ball given by a British merchant at the capital of Siam in honor of his Queen's birthday, when several Siamese nobles were among the guests, and in the early portion of the evening stood with each other in complimenting their host on the brilliancy of his entertainment.

Knowing him to be wealthy, convivial and fond of display, they naturally expected something very fine in the way of dancing. Their expectations may be imagined when the Scottish bagpipes played by an old sailor, struck up the only music which had been found available, and the European members of the company went whistling and past, as reel, jig, and Highland fling followed each other in quick succession. Dumb with surprise and dismay, the nobles rushed as men from the horse, entered their boats and ordered the oarsmen to pull furiously for the mission houses situated some two miles lower down the river. It was verging toward midnight, but some of the missionaries were still busy in their libraries, and the excited nobles, first knocking furiously at the door, and then entering without waiting for a response, called clamorously, "Heli, heli, heli, for your countrymen!" The foreigners at the British godowns are all gone crazy; they are dancing for themselves!—From *Oriental Sports*, by Mrs. Fanny R. Fulginiti.

He Couldn't Drink Wine.
That was a noble youth who, on being urged to take wine at the table of a famous statesman in Washington, had the wretched courage to refuse. He was a poor young man, just beginning the struggle of life. He had brought letters to the great statesman, who kindly invited him home to dinner.

"Not take glass of wine?" said the great statesman, in wonder and surprise.

"Not one single glass of wine!" about the statesman's beautiful and fascinating wife, as she arose, glass in hand, and with a grace that would have charmed an angel, endeavored to pour it upon him.