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Wayside Gleanings.

FOR THE TIMES.
Morning Contemplations.
BY EVA PATTON.

When the calm morn with its soft light dispels darkness from the earth, and the eastern sky is richly gilded with the golden rays of the sun, how pleasant to look abroad or stroll over the fields and meadows and feel the balmy breath of nature playing coolly around us; while the pearly dew drops linger upon each leaf and flower, sparkling like so many gems.

Every thing is teeming with life at this beautiful and unrivaled hour; every passing breeze seems laden with the melody of sweet sounds. The murmuring brooks greet our ears with their low soft tones; the little busy bees humming their playful tunes, while extracting the sweets from each lovely flower; and the little birds as they fly through forest and grove, calling their plaintive songs, in praises to their Maker; and in short, "the whole musical world seems to be in the breeze," and how can we be silent and not send up one note of praise when a revived nature so pressingly invites us to join in the general concert? What a fit time for contemplation upon the marvelous works of an Almighty Creator; while the body is refreshed by the restoring slumbers of the past night, and the faculties of the mind strengthened by a suspension of effort, or, heated imagination.

And no position can be more appropriate than, while surrounded with nature's magnificence and beauty, with nothing but the blue arch of heaven for our canopy, and each lovely scene inviting our attention—the green carpeted earth, and the flowery glade spread out before us, and the waving forest, bowing to us in stately dignity; all make up a scene of imposing grandeur, sufficient to inspire the soul with wonder and admiration. With wonder, because it leads us to contemplate that Being who spoke nature into existence by the power of his own word, by which we are reminded of our littleness, of our entire nothingness, when compared to the Author of such sublime, stupendous, works; and that we should be the objects of his care, or that he should be so mindful of us, poor simple "worms of the dust," and exercise such infinite goodness towards us. These reflections make us ready to exclaim like the king of old, "Lord! what is man, that thou art mindful of him?"

With admiration, because there is such wonderful wisdom displayed in the arrangement of all his glorious works; such order and unsurpassing beauty; every part of creation so admirably adapted to the purpose for which our great Benefactor designed it. Who can stand and behold such grandeur and beauty, and not be moved? What an irresistible influence such meditation exerts upon the mind? It causes our spirits to bound with elasticity; warms our hearts; kindles each lofty desire; and bids our hopes ascend to the topmost branch of virtue.

Though, reader, like many others, you may not at all times have the opportunity of witnessing the full display of nature's sublime magnificence and beauty, during the lovely hours of the early morning, yet, remember, there is not a corner of the globe, not a spot throughout the whole universe, upon which God has not stamped a revelation of his divinity, or the voice of

nature does not appeal in thrilling tones to our souls, for a due acknowledgement of that Being who made us; and to pour forth our warmest gratitude to Him, for the many ten thousand blessings we daily enjoy from his bountiful hand.

Yes, dear reader, there is not a feature in nature, which has not some useful lesson inscribed upon it. God in his infinite goodness, has placed them here for our information and especial benefit. Let us then be a strict and frequent observer of all his works, and give a due reflection upon them; for such are the teachings of nature, that there is not a lesson which she conveys through the eye to the soul, which may not be useful to us while journeying through life.

From the majestic sun, which rises in such splendor and beauty, and floods our earth with his glorious light, imparts warmth to vegetation, which causes some new expansion in each bud and plant, let us learn to go forth upon the mission of life, and perform with alacrity the duties assigned to us; and by our ardent zeal and love for truth, make ourselves useful to the world. Search out the wandering captives of sin, and reclaim them from the forbidden paths of vice and folly; impart warmth and feeling to the cold and desolate heart; help to germinate each bud of hope, and use our utmost endeavors to arouse the idle and careless to a sense of duty; to enforce upon the gay and thoughtless, loftier and purer motives; and to convince the morally good that human virtue, when accompanied by that self-sacrificing love, which is prompted by a sense of duty to God as well as man, and has no less aim in view than the pure motive of serving our fellow beings in that manner which will tend most to glorify the blessed name of our Redeemer, is like the pale moon-shine that is admired for its mild serenity, but, imparts no warmth of life. And the murmuring brooks, whose "dancing waves," merrily chase each other, how vividly they bring to mind that we too are passing away, and others will soon take our places; and like them let us bend all our courses in life, towards the great Fountain of Goodness from which we received our existence. And the flowers, with all their kindred, (silent expositors of human life,) shall we pass them unheeded? Let us stop and pause awhile upon the close analogy between their existence and ours.—How minutely they display each stage of human life. Some are blooming in fragrance and beauty; others are fading and many have been severed from among their gay kindred at various stages of expansion. Scattered around our feet, we behold the little rose buds, that so lately sat upon their mossy stems in all their fragrance and loveliness; have been snatched by some rude hand from amongst their blooming companions, and others of half expansion have fallen a victim to no less rudeness than the former, are lying in mouldering decay; and many that were full-blown, whose gorgeous colors have charmed the eyes, and whose rich perfumes make redolent the air we breathe, their petals no longer sustained by nature, have withered in all their glory and loveliness, and fallen to the tomb. And we too, dear reader, must soon pass away, and all our glories. Yes! beauty and talent, if we have them, and all other gifts, which nature has pleased to bestow upon us, though they may be of the choicest kind, must fade and come to naught; and like our bodies, be leveled with the dust. "For all flesh is as grass and the glory of man as the flower of grass." What a lesson of mortality is here given, for every human being to consider solemnly, and deeply upon. How, probably, many of us may be snatched off in the bloom of youth, or, like the half expanded roses, only number half our days; or, if we should be spared beyond this, let us bear in mind, that the time must soon come, when the bloom of life will have passed away, each lovely feature will be marred by the rough hand of time; and nature, falling to lend us aid, our tottering limbs will sink beneath the burden of age, and the gaping tomb, close upon our remains. Since this is our destiny, let us endeavor to crown with virtue every act in life, so that, though we be dead, yet our names shall live in the hearts of the good and virtuous, and our hallowed deeds yield odor of peace and delight to our kind friends, who are left behind. And like the little busy bees, let us improve each shining moment, and endeavor to gather from surrounding circumstances all the good we can, to sweeten the bitter cup of life. And the little birds, whose joyous songs float

on the breeze through every grove and vale, let us learn from them to maintain a cheerful spirit, which has a great tendency to strengthen the power within us; to influence each heart around us. For be assured there is nothing that meets with better success in winning the confidence of those we dwell among, than a radiant countenance, continually lit up by the placid smile of true affection. And now, dear reader, that we have perused a few pages of the book of nature, may we not let the truths, we have learned thereon, escape from our memory; but treasure them up, in our hearts, and profit thereby. And may we often be found resting our thoughts upon these wonderful pages, which leads us to look "from nature up to nature's God." It will give us nobler views of his character; and with the help of his divine word, mould our affections according to his holy will, which will fit our souls to dwell with Him on high in the abode of light and love.

"Where the wicked cease from troubling,
And the weary are at rest,
Where the reward of all our toils,
We'll share among the blest."

Literary.

LIFE OR DEATH.
A TRUE STORY OF THE NATURAL BRIDGE OF VIRGINIA.

BY ELING HERRIT.

The scene opens with a view of the great Natural Bridge of Virginia. There are three or four lads standing in the channel below, looking up with awe to the vast arch of unheaven rocks with the almighty bridge over their everlasting abutments. The little piece of sky, spanning those measureless piers, is full of stars though it is mid-day. It is almost five hundred feet from where they stand, up these perpendicular bulwarks of limestone, to the key rock of the vast arch which appears to them only the size of a man's hand. The silence of death is rendered more impressive by the little stream that runs from rock to rock, down the channel. The sun is darkened, and the boys have unconsciously uncovered their heads, as standing in the present chamber of the Majesty of the whole earth. At last this feeling begins to wear away—they begin to look around them. They see the names of hundreds cut in the limestone abutments. A new feeling comes over their hearts and their knives are in hand in an instant. "What man has done, man can do," is the watch-word while they draw themselves up, and carve their names a foot above those of a hundred full grown men who had been there before them.

They are all satisfied with the feat of physical exertion except one, whose example illustrates perfectly the forgotten truth that there is a royal road to intellectual eminence. This ambitious youth sees a name just above his reach—a name that shall be green in the memory of the world when those of Alexander, Caesar and Bonaparte, shall rot in oblivion. It was the name of Washington. Before he marched with Braddock to the fatal field, he had been there, and left his name a foot above all his predecessors. It was a glorious thought of a boy to write his name side by side with that of the great father of his country. He grasps his knife with a firmer hand—and clinging to a little jutting crag, he cuts into the limestone, about a foot above where he stands; but as he puts feet and hands into these gains, and draws himself carefully at full length, he finds himself a foot above every name chronicled on that mighty wall. While his companions are regarding him with concern and admiration, he cuts his name in huge capitals, large and deep, into the flinty album. His knife is still in his hand, and strength in his sinews, and a new created aspiration in his heart.

Again he cuts another niche, and again he carves his name in large capitals. This is not enough. Heedless of the entreaties of his companions, he cuts and climbs again. The graduation of his ascending scale grew wider apart. He measures his length at every gain he cuts. The voices of his friends grow weaker, till their words are finally lost on his ear. He now for the first time, casts a look beneath him. Had that glance lasted a moment, that moment would have been his last. He clings, with a convulsive shudder, to his little niche in the rock. An awful abyss awaits his almost certain fall. He is faint from severe exertion, and trembling from the sudden view of the dreadful destruction to which he is exposed. His knife is worn half way to the haft. He can hear the voices, but not the cries of his terror-stricken compa-

nions below. What a meagre chance to escape destruction. There is no retracing his steps. It is impossible to put his hand into the same niche with his feet, and retain his hold a moment. His companions instantly perceived that new and fearful dilemma, and await his fall, with emotions that "freeze their young blood;" he is too high, too faint, to ask for his father and mother, his brothers and sisters to come and witness or avert his destruction. But one of his companions anticipated his desire. Swift as the wind, he bounds down the channel, and the fearful situation is told upon his father's hearth-stone.

Minutes of almost eternal length roll on, and there were hundreds standing in the rocky channel, and hundreds on the bridge above, all holding their breath, and awaiting that fearful catastrophe. The poor boy hears the hum of new and numerous voices both above and below. He can just distinguish the tones of his father's voice, "William! William! don't look down—your mother and Henry and Harriet are all here praying for you. Keep your eyes towards the top."

The boy didn't look down—his eyes are fixed like a flint toward heaven; and his young heart on him who reigns there. He grasps again his knife. He cuts another niche, and another niche is added to the hundreds that removed him from human help below. How carefully he uses his wasting blade. How anxiously he selects the softest place in that pier. How he economizes his physical powers—resting a moment at each gain he cuts. How every motion is watched from below. There stands his father and mother; and on the very spot where, if he falls, he will not fall alone.

The sun is half down in the West. The lad had made fifty additional niches in the mighty wall, and now finds himself directly under the middle of the vast arch of rocks, earth and trees. He must cut his way in a new direction to get over this overhanging mountain.

The inspiration of hope is dying in his bosom, its vital feeling is fed by the increased shouts of hundreds perched upon cliffs and trees, and others who stand with ropes in their hands, on the bridge above, or with a ladder below. Fifty grains must be cut, before the longest rope can reach him. His wasting blade again strikes into the limestone.

The boy is emerging painfully, foot by foot, from under the lofty arch. Spiced ropes are ready in the hands of those who are leaning over the edge of the bridge. Two minutes more and all will be over. That blade is worn to the last half inch. The boy's head reels, and his eyes are dimming from their sockets. His last hope is dying in his heart. That niche is his last. At the last faint gasp he makes, his knife—his faithful knife—falls from his hand, and ringing along the precipice, falls at his mother's feet.

An involuntary groan of despair runs like a death-knell through the channel below, and all is as still as the grave. At the height of near three hundred feet, the devoted boy lifts his hopeless heart and closing eyes, to commend his soul to God. "Tis but a moment—there—one foot swings off—he is reeling—resembling—toppling over into eternity! Hark! a shout falls on his ear from above! The man who is lying with half length over the bridge, has a glimpse of the boy's head and shoulders. Quick as thought, the noose is within reach of the sinking youth. No one breathes. With a faint convulsive effort the swooning boy drops his arms into the noose. Darkness came over him with the words, God! Mother! whispered on his lips; just loud enough to be heard in heaven, the tightening rope lifts him out of his shallow niche. Not a lip moves while he is dangling over the fearful abyss: but when a sturdy Virginian reaches down and draws the lad up and holds him in his arms before the fearful, breathless multitude, such leaping and weeping for joy, never greeted the ear of human being so recovered from the yawning gulf of eternity.

Why Not Successful.
The young mechanic or clerk marries and takes a house, which he proceeds to furnish twice as expensively as he can afford, and then his wife, instead of taking hold to help him to earn a livelihood, by doing her own work, must have a hired servant to help her spend his limited earnings. Ten years afterwards, you will find him struggling under a double load of debts and children, wondering why the

luck was always against him, while his friends regret his unhappy destitution of financial ability. Had they from the first been frank and honest, he need not have been so unlucky. The world is full of people who can't imagine why they don't prosper like their neighbors, when the real obstacle is not in banks or tariffs, in bad public policy nor hard times, but in their own extravagance and heedless ostentation.

SHE LOVED HIM.

She loved him; but she knew it not—
Her heart had only room for pride—
All other feelings were forgot,
When she became another's bride.
As from a dream she then awoke,
To realize her lonely state,
And own it was the vow she broke,
That made her drear and desolate.

She loved him; but the slanderer came,
With words of hate that all believed;
A stain thus rested on his name,
But he was wronged and she deceived.
Ah, rash the act that gave her hand,
That drove her lover from her side,
Who bled for to a distant land,
Where, battling for a name, he died.

She loved him, and his memory now
Was treasured as a thing apart,
The shades of thought were on her brow,
The seeds of death were in her heart,
For all the world, that thing forlorn,
I would not, could not be and live;
That casket, with its jewel gone—
A bride, who has no heart to give.

THE MILL.

I loved the brimming wave that swam
Through quiet meadows round the mill,
The sleepy pool above the dam,
The pool beneath it never still,
The mill-ricks on the whitened floor,
The dark round of the dripping wheel,
The very air about the door
Made misty by the floating meal.

No Gloom at Home.

Above all things there should be no gloom in the home. The shadows of dark discontent and wasted fruitfulness should never cross the threshold, throwing their large black shapes, like funeral palls, over the happy young spirits gathered there. If you will, your home shall be heaven and every inmate an angel there. If you will, you shall sit on a throne and be the presiding household deity. Oh! faithful wife, what privileges, what treasures, greater or purer than thine?

And let the husband strive to forget his cares as he winds around the long narrow street and beholds the soft light illuminating his little parlor, spreading its precious beams on the pave before it. The night is cold and cheerless, perhaps, and the December gust battles with the worn skirts of his old over-coat, and catches, with a rattling and whining cry, at the rusty hat that has served him many a year. He has been harassed, perplexed, and persecuted.

He has borne with many a cruel tone and a cold world, and nerved himself up to an energy so desperate that his frame and spirits are weakened and depressed; and now his limbs ache with weariness; his temples throb with the pain-beat caused by a too constant application; he scarcely knows how to meet his wife with a pleasant smile, or sit down cheerfully to their little meal which she has provided with so much care.

But the door is opened, the overcoat thrown hastily off. A sweet voice falls upon his ear, and the tones are so soft—and glad that hope, like a winged angel, flies right into his bosom and nestles against his heart.

The latch is lifted, and the smiling face of his wife gives an earnest welcome. The shining hair is smoothed over her fair brow; indeed she stole a little coquettish glance at the mirror hanging in its narrow frame, just to see if she looked neat and pretty before she came out. Here eye-beams with love, her dress is tasteful—and—what? Why! she forgets all the trials of that long, long day as she folds her to his arms and imprints a kiss upon her brow.

A home where gloom is banished, presided over by one who has learned to rule herself and her household, Christianity!—oh! he is threefold consoled for all his trials. He cannot be unhappy; that sweetest, best, dearest solace is his—a cheerful home. Do you wonder that the man is strengthened a new for to-morrow's cares?

Print It in Letters of Gold.

A father whose son was addicted to some vicious propensities, bade the boy to drive a nail into a certain post whenever he committed a certain fault, and agreed that a nail should be drawn out whenever he corrected an error.—In the course of time

the post was completely filled with nails. The youth became alarmed at the extent of his indiscretions and set about reforming himself. One by one the nails were drawn out, the delighted father commended him for his noble, self-denying heroism, in freeing himself from his faults.

"They are all drawn out," said the parent. The boy looked sad, and there was a whole volume of practical wisdom in his sadness. With a heavy heart he replied: "True father; but the scars are still there." Parents who would have their children grow sound and healthy characters must sow the seed at the fireside. Charitable associations can reform the man, and perhaps, make a useful member of society; but alas! the scars are there! The reformed drunkard, gambler and thief is only the wreck of the man he once was, he is covered with scars—dishonorable scars—which will disgrace his character as long as he shall live.

AVARICE.

That man may breathe, but never lives
Who much receives, but nothing gives
Whom none can love, whom none can thank,
Creation's blot, creation's blank.

Common Schools.

From the Ohio Journal of Education.

Irregularity in attending School.

NUMBER I.

Perhaps no one evil is more destructive to the vitality and efficiency of school exercises, than the one named at the head of this article.

This arises chiefly from two causes: First, because in its nature and tendencies it is disastrous; and second, because of its universality. It seems to be the crying sin of the age. It lays its withering hand upon the teacher's fairest plans and prospects, and thwarts and blasts them as effectually as though it had been invented for that special purpose. To the scholar himself, the consequences are not less demoralizing. It robs him of his confidence and dignity—destroys his interest in study—arrests him in a career of success—and thus paves the way for future crime and degradation.

Its baleful influence is not only felt in the school room; but the habit once formed, here or elsewhere, is sure to carry itself into whatever department of business the pupil may engage in after life. It clings to him like a putrid carcass, and infecting more or less whatever he may lay his hand upon, he is driven from the most honorable positions in life, and seeks refuge in the lazy herd.

The grand secret of success among men, in any business whatever, may, almost without an exception, be traced directly to attention, regularity, and punctuality; while their failures and disasters may as often be traced to an opposite cause. This may not be apparent to a casual observer; but to one who examines and weighs the remote as well as the recent causes, this problem of human life and fortune is not of difficult solution. Because the penalty does not follow the transgression immediately, we are apt to overlook the real cause of suffering, and blame dame fortune for our ill luck, (when in fact there is no "luck" about it.) But because the penalty does not follow immediately, we have no right to infer that it will not, sooner or later, overtake the offender, though many long years may intervene. When justice lingers long, her reckoning is most fearful.

If parents, therefore, knew and felt, when they were, for trifling excuses, keeping their children out of school for a few days in a week, or permitting them to be tardy or out of season in their daily attendance, that they were rendering those habits in them that would render them unsuccessful in business, and miserable, perhaps, in their whole course of life, they would say at once, that the experiment is too hazardous to risk in matters so weighty.

Now why cannot parents see this? Simply, because they do not reflect upon these subjects. They would readily take cognizance of an evil inflicted upon the person of their child.

Suppose, for instance, that a neighbor had been guilty of mistreating a little boy or girl, and that in so doing an arm or a leg had been broken: would the offence be lightly looked over? No, no! Speedy recourse would be had to the law; courts of justice would be implored for the adjustment of grievances. The poor neighbor would pay dearly for his imprudence, and perhaps justly, too. But does that parent act less culpably, less unkindly to

his offspring, who suffers them to form habits in their early life that will curse them as long as they live? Is he any less inexcusable? I tell you nay! Rather give me the maltreated, the maimed, the cripple, (for what is the physical cripple to the intellectual—the body to the soul?) and I will engage to make a better, a more useful and a more successful man of him, than can be made of that unfortunate boy that has been thus abused by parental indulgence or neglect.

The evil in the first case is only a physical one; in the second, it is both intellectual and moral, and likely to result in all the physical evils of the first: and (which is of infinitely more consequence) to entail untold evils upon the sufferer, both for time and eternity. And yet parents cannot, or will not see this! They seem to shut their eyes against the very light that would reveal to them the true policy in reference to these seemingly little, but really important and weighty matters.

J. OGDEN.

Public Instruction in America.

An educational journal of Paris, has been publishing for several months a series of papers on Popular Education in America.

The following paragraphs translated from the seventh article, give an interesting comparison between the state of things upon different sides of the ocean.

"Public instruction is in our day more of a national business in North America, than in any other country of the world.—Not only are legislators well disposed toward existing institutions, but if a new idea is thrown out in the columns of a journal, if a novel method has been tried in this place or that, if a system of administration, without precedent, has been the object of fortunate experiment, the most eminent men in legislative assemblies and in the country receive that idea, take cognizance of that method, study the mechanism of that system, and inquire seriously if they can not find therein some new means of accelerating progress.

The improvement of schools is, so to speak, the fixed idea, the constant pre-occupation of statesmen in America.

Among most European nations we find that public instruction is directed, inspected, administered by special functionaries to whom belongs the initiative in pedagogical matters. There is confidence in their decision, or if there is dissatisfaction it is from a political point of view, as to who in church or state shall direct or inspect the schools. Inquiry has less reference to the pupils than to the dominant influence of this or that power.

But in America where the schools are not governmental but national, the question of education is a popular question. School inspectors are men engaged in active life, in public business, and thus the atmosphere which is breathed in the classes is not sensibly different from that without. The motto, "Give me the education of a generation, and I will transform the world," is understood in all its extent by every American citizen. The wisdom of that nation declares that the prosperity by which it awakens the envy of the world, is due in a great measure to the diffusion of light among the masses. The incessant activity, the spirit of enterprise, which distinguish the Americans, would grow weak from the moment when public instruction should cease to be offered equally to all without exception, or should become stationary. The Americans have started at full steam upon a course where they cannot stop a single instant; their power, their future depend upon this; the least success in a trial of obscurity (obscurantisme) would dismember that society, the condition of whose existence is movement itself. While we are living upon tradition, the Americans are incessantly looking toward the future. While we are discussing systems they are making experiments and profiting by our own.

This is why school matters are everybody's business; why every year in all public meetings, the problem of increasing the national strength by instruction is continually taken up; this is why the popular representatives and not merely official functionaries, are informed upon educational questions and are charged with their solution.

DELAWARE LIQUOR LAW.—We learn that, after a long and most searching trial, the Prohibitory law is pronounced constitutional in all its points. The enemy has labored and toiled, all in vain. From this, we learn, there is no appeal.