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Reflections for March.

Grandeur and distance of the Sun.

If we have never properly considered the narrow compass of earth, or are too ignorant to perceive our own insignificance, we may perhaps be benefitted by considering that immense body which communicates light and heat, not to our world only, but to many others.

The Sun, nearly in the centre of all the planets and comets, may be regarded as the monarch of many worlds, to which he imparts light, heat, and motion. This alone would lead us to conclude that his size is prodigious, and this opinion is confined by his apparent magnitude, notwithstanding his immense distance from us. But the calculations of astronomy have certified us of this beyond the possibility of doubt.

From them it appears that the diameter of the Sun is about 100 times greater than that of the earth, and consequently he is a million times larger than the whole earth.

Astronomers have differed respecting his distance; the truest calculations makes it about 82 millions of miles.

Some planets move in their orbits much nearer to the Sun, and others at a greater distance, than does the earth; but though, if formed like our globe, in the one case they perhaps might be consumed by the heat, in the other wrapped in cold and darkness, we have reason to believe that those spheres which move around the Sun, whether nearer to him or more remote than our earth, are so constituted, that neither the globe itself, nor its inhabitants, suffer from their situation.

Perhaps it will be urged that what we have stated respecting the magnitude and distance of the sun is exaggerated; for we can discover nothing so great as the earth we inhabit, and with which we compare the sun, which is a million times greater.

This luminary from its prodigious distance appearing so small, ignorant people are disposed rather to believe that which they can see with their own eyes, than give credit to calculations which their reason cannot comprehend. But had we been placed on a planet whose magnitude bore the same proportion to the earth as the earth now does to the sun, we should have been equally incredulous as to the dimensions of this earth, compared with that we then inhabited.

It is far from being strange, then, that we should be astonished when we are told of the distance and vast magnitude of the sun.

This admiration ought to make us ascend to that Being which is its Creator, Director, and Conservator; compared with which, the grandeur and brilliancy of the sun are as nothing: consider the glory of him who created it, and you will find infinitely more incomprehensibilities than when you only reflect upon the grandeur of the sun. If the earth, compared with the sun, is so small, what must be the littleness of man compared with his Creator! If the space between the earth and sun is found to be so immense, what an inconceivable distance is there between man and the infinite God.

Who is like unto thee, O Lord! What can be compared unto thee?

Thy Glory is exalted beyond the reach of praise, and the grandeur above the comprehension of man.

Glory, splendour, and majesty surround thee, the principle and source of life; and light encircles thee, as a garment.

But whilst we admire the sun as he springs above the horizon, let us not forget our divine redeemer, that son of righteousness which visited us in our afflictions, and whose rays impart life, health, and eternal salvation, and without which, deprived of light, virtue, and consolation, we should still wander in darkness, ignorance, and the grossest sin! *Sturm's Reflections.*

In a town in the goodly state of Massachusetts, did one time reside, a little lass of six years old, whose name was Martha. In the same house with this little lass lived a maiden lady of very unpleasant ways, whose delight it was to pester the small Martha with questions, by which means Martha had come to much dislike Miss Pump. Once Martha made a visit to Boston. When she returned, Miss Pump set upon her. Whereat this colloquy:

"Where ye been, Marthy?"

"To Boston, Miss Pump?"

"La! And who'd you see there, Marthy?"

"Oh! I saw a angel."

"My! And what'd the angel say, Marthy?"

"He said, 'How do you do, pretty little girl?"

"Sakes! And who else d'ye see, Marthy?"

"Oh! I saw the old 'un."

"Marcy! What did he say, Marthy?"

"He said, 'How's my good friend, Miss Pump?"

The pump suddenly became dry.

—"Paddy, why don't you get your ears cropped? They are entirely too long for a man."

"And yours," replied Pat, "ought to be lengthened; they are too short for a mule."

THE WRONG CARPET BAG.

BY F. H. STAUFFER.

DEAR FRED.—I am glad that you got home safely, and confess to having enjoyed yourself during your week's sojourn with me. Your remarks in reference to my "better-half" are somewhat flattering, but I accept them in the spirit of "kindly intentions." You ask me how and where I came to "pick up such a glorious woman." I respond with pleasure, though I forewarn you that the narration will abound more in the gossip of "little or nothings" than in romantic adventures. This shall suffice for a preface. I shall now enter upon the story, subdividing it into appropriate heads.

I. THE DISCOVERY.

I reached the city of Philadelphia weary and travel-stained. Registering my name at the hotel, I rushed up stairs into the room allotted to me, to refresh myself with a change of linen. I unlocked my carpet-bag, thrust in my hand, and brought—a pair of delicate lace undersleeves.

"I wonder how some of sister Nell's 'fixins' got in here?" I said to myself.

I made another dive with no better success—bringing to light a waterfall, two "rats" (that's what Ned calls 'em,) and a pair of side-combs. I stared at them in astonishment. I shut the bag and examined it. If it was not mine it was one remarkably like it. I turned it bottom upward. Were my initials there? No; but somebody else's were.

"Well, here's a go!" I muttered. "I have got the wrong carpet bag, and a woman's at that. 'M.J.P.' That might stand for 'Mary Jane Peckover.' This is provoking, but not to be helped. I will go on with the inventory."

Emptying the bag, I found a variety of articles, describable and indiscribable. A bundle of letters tied with blue ribbon, a diary, a photograph album, etc. The latter contained photegraphs of men in military uniform—all fine looking fellows.—Under one was written "Brother John—missing since the battle of Cedar Mountain." Under another, "Brother Ralph; died at Andersonville, Sept. 1864." In the 45th."

"A patriotic girl, that!" I said, closing the album.

The diary next claimed my attention. The chirography was excellent, I read a few pages. The writer evidently was a keen observer—shrewd, piquant, racy. I subjoin a few.

II. EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY.

Thursday, Nov. 1st.—A rainy, chilly, disagreeable day. Tried to sew, but found that it hurt my eyes; tried to write, but could not concentrate my thoughts; took up a book, and flung it away, vexed at the stupidity of the author. Why cannot people write about natural things naturally? Why must they warp sentiment, overstrain probabilities, belie the commonest experiences?

This afternoon little Abbie came up to my room. I hugged and kissed her. She brought a plentitude of sunshine with her. I would like to see the artist who could sketch her, the author who could describe all her varying moods! Such quaint conceits, such warm imaginings, such strong belief in uncommon things!

There is something beautiful in the faith exhibited by a child. Pity it is that we grow so skeptical as we grow old. A child believes without mental reservation. He may wonder why "doctor brought baby with him under a cloak"—or how the touch of a wand could transform the rags of Cinderella into the robes of a princess—or how Jack's beanstock grew to the sky in a night; but he is easily satisfied and silenced. Good children believe what is told them. Then why should not he? And he *does* believe!

How is the child to distinguish between the Witch of Endor and the Witch of Edmonton—between the giant whom David slew, and the giant whom Jack killed—between the she-bears that tore up the taunting children and the wolf that gobbled up Red Riding Hood—between the miracle which followed the touching of the bones of the prophet and that which followed the rubbing of the lamp of Alladin? Ah! in after years comes to him the subtle power of reasoning—the force of logic—the ability to dissect and anatomise. * * * *

Friday, March 5th.—Air bracing. Clear over head and dry under foot. Out shopping. Spent the afternoon at Mrs. D—'s. Went in the evening to hear Mr. E—— lecture. It was talk in elegant dishabille. The spice of tone and manner was there; the fires of rhetoric, the rich, strong essences of an individual mind. When will lectures meet with the remuneration and popularity they so much deserve? Books have their office. They are the products of insulated hours—dissevered nights—sundered years. The lecturer is their counterpart—organized in flesh and blood relations to the people—the living mind in living contact with the living world.

May 3d.—Sabbath. A delightful day. Went to the Sixth Street Church. A good sermon, but delivered under difficulties, and heard under adverse circumstances. The preacher deals in semi-tones and his voice languished through the exercises, something like Hamlet's "infirmity of purpose," without his vigor of speech. I could not hear to advantage. The edifice was one that no human voice could have filled. It was costly but not convenient; patterned after some Notre Dame at the expense of the first principles in acoustics. The reputation of the finest speaker would have suffered amid such architectural folly. Why did they cramp up the preacher in that wine glass enclosure, called a gothic pulpit? No wonder he suffered with the bronchitis. Why was not his chancel in the midst of the congregation, where he could move his limbs as freely as Paul did on Mars Hill, and where he could hear and feel the magnetism of his appeals.

So the diary read on. The record of each day contained such passages—such racy dashes of passing thoughts. On the fly-leaf I found the name and address of the owner of the carpet-bag:

"MARION J. PENROSE, Altoona, Pa."

Of course the lady would live to have her valuables, and perhaps she could give me some information respecting mine. So the next day I wrote to her as follows:

III. THE LETTER TO M. J. P.

Girard House, Phil'a, June 3, 1865.

Miss (or Mrs. Penrose:)

By an exchange, error, mistake, oversight, or in some other unaccountable way, a carpet-bag belonging to you has come into my possession. If we made an *exchange* you can appreciate how much I have been inconvenienced, and will be just as ready as myself to "effect a compromise." Your letters have been untouched. I took the liberty of looking at your diary in order to obtain your address. Will you take offence if I compliment you on those racy, criticising pensketches? Your property awaits your order. I shall send it to you at such time and in such manner as you may direct—though I feel like exacting conditions. I am a single man, and if not inconsistant with the relations you hold in life, I would be pleased to have you correspond with me—for enjoyment, pastime, profit. What do you say? Direct your letter to L——, Pa., where I reside.

JOHN A. CARSON.

When I returned to L——, I found the following letter at the post office:

IV. M. J. IN REPLY.

ALTOONA, PA., June 7th, 1865.

MR. CARSON:

The receipt of your letter is acknowledged. Please return my baggage by earliest express. It would be difficult to prove which of us was most inconvenienced by the blunder. I strongly suspect that was a mistake. I forwarded your carpet-bag this morning. I took an inventory of it, as any other curious vexed woman would have done. In doing so, I for the first time discovered upon what a preciously small allowance of baggage a man can travel! I am not offended at your compliment; I receive more flattering ones every day. I am not offended because you glanced at my diary. I only wish you had read it. You would have been profited by some hard hits at the "immaculate gentry."

You ask me in a brusque way, to correspond with you. I have no objections. But you will be disappointed in the pleasure and instruction you expect to receive. In justice to myself, though, I must ask you to look upon this as a mere premonitory symptom of what is to follow. I warn you not to get sickly sentimental. I will take it as a hint to correspondence. Write earnestly about earnest things, and describe pleasant scenes pleasantly.

I am not at present in a mood for writing. My head aches, and the apple dumplings bubbling in the boiler, my airy flights go back to every day miseries and realities. There is such a thing as a mood for writing. Sometimes it is toilsome, dragging, up-hill work. The ideas will not flow; particular words taunt us; sentences cling together horribly disjointed. What is the reason? Because the organism is unstrung, the mind dull, the brain weary, the mood unfavorable, unpropitious. At another time you may try again. Away the pen gallops, leaping the bounds of reason; thoughts crowd, language flows, and the word-painting is exquisite! O, you are merely in the right mood.

When Meissonier, the artist, had just lit his cigar at a banquet given him by his admirers, he began unconsciously, while talking, to draw on the table cloth with the blackened end of a match. The Baron de Hoyff, the landscape painter, seeing what he was about, continued to put half-burned matches in his way, and with these, Meissonier sketched one of the most exquisite of his male figures, full of nature and vivacity. The Baron took away the cloth, purchasing it of the landlady of the house, and it is now in his drawing room, the figure work admirably framed, and the remainder of the cloth tastefully arranged as a drapery.

I have imagined that to be the way or pleasant mood in which some authors write. In a moment of sheerest idleness, as it were, the pen sketch grows rapidly into life, sparkling, vivacious—to be stored away with pleasant memories.

In consideration that I am not in a happy mood, as I have said, I bring my letter to a close. You may write again if you wish. Perhaps I should have said, that I rather wish you would write.

I remain yours, etc.

MARION J. PENROSE.

V. SUBSEQUENT ACQUAINTANCE.

We exchanged a dozen letters or more. Last spring a young lady took the cars at Downingtown. The seats were all filled, and so I offered her mine. She accepted it with a pleasant nod and smile. She was a well formed girl, with clear skin, laughing eyes, white teeth, red lips, arching neck.

I remained standing in the aisle. She looked up at me. It was but a second, yet I knew she had made her estimate of me.

"You may sit beside me," she said pleasantly, making room. "You were kind in giving me a seat. I will not allow you to stand."

"Are you going far?" I asked, taking the seat.

"No farther than Harrisburg to day."

"In looking down at her feet I saw a black carpet bag, with the letters "M. J. P." on it. Was this my sprightly correspondent? I was quite sure that it was.

"M. J. P," I repeated aloud. "That might stand for Mary Jane Peckover."

"So it might," answered my companion.

"Or for Marion J. Penrose," added I.

She started a little—then looked up into my face in astonishment.

"You have the advantage of me," said she.

"Slightly," said I.

My eyes twinkled merrily. She followed them in a glance at the carpet bag. Then the crimson surged over that transparent face, touching the roots of her hair, penciling the delicate throat.

"You are Mr. Carson," she said.

"At your service, madam," said I.

She laughed a low, silvery laugh.

"Don't madam' me any," she said.

"I would be sorry to Miss you," returned I.

"Was that intended for a pun?"

"It might be taken for a compliment."

"I did not think of that," she said.

We chatted about [illegible] each other.

VI. THE CONCLUSION AND THE CONSEQUENCE.

She invited me to visit her at the farm at Altoona. I went. There was something attractive in those high, mountain gorges and sunny valleys. I went repeatedly. I proposed to her and she accepted. And now you know, Fred, how and where I came "to pick up such a glorious woman."—*Saturday Night.*

Influence of the Diet upon Health.

At a lecture delivered at the Cooper Institute the following suggestions were made on "Animal Heat, on the Influence of diet on Health, strength and long life:"

The lecturer commenced by saying that he would speak upon food and drink. As these topics were closely connected with that of digestion, he would recapitulate some points spoken of in a previous lecture. He then explained, with the aid of models constructed for the purpose, the various organs of digestion. The salivate glands were an important agency in the utilization of food. Their office was to moisten and prepare it for the stomach. Liquids taken during the meals usurped their place, while they did not discharge their functions. Hence, drinking during the time of eating was to be avoided as far as possible. The teeth, the masticators of our food, were, if used properly, fitted to last a hundred years, and still be in good order. How was it that they so commonly failed us before the middle age had been reached. The answer was to be found in the large quantity of hot liquids taken into the mouth, and the inordinate amount of sweets consumed. The tongue and thorax filled minor functions in the work of digestion. Diseases of the throat were generally the result of undigested food in the stomach, affecting the mucous membrane lining of that delicate organ. This brought him to speak of the stomach, the great agent in the transmutation of our food. The doctor here brought forward a model of this organ of average size. Stomachs, he said varied much in size—one pint was the average capacity, while there were some which were able to contain three gallons. This member of the body, being made of thin and elastic material, was capable of great distension. In it the food was mixed with the gastric juice, necessary to proper digestion. All stimulants and condiments checked the exudation of this juice. Hence the food, lying undigested in the stomach, fermented and involved, carbonic acid gas, which, being absorbed by the blood and carried to the brain, was productive of most disastrous results. The use of ardent spirits, lager beer and tobacco were most vehemently condemned. Men who in perplexities resorted to the intoxicating draught were cowards. The true man should be able to stand alone. The food become chyle by means of the action of the gastric juice, was passed from the stomach through the intestinal canal—thirty feet in length—by whose veins, arteries and lacteal glands it is absorbed and distributed through the body, to be built up into the various constituent parts of the human system. The blood, supplied with oxygen from the lungs, was thus purified and vitalized. The lecturer then enlarged upon the great importance of his theme. The blood depended upon the digestion. The health, happiness, cheerfulness, intellect, faith, religion, whole character, were dependent in a large degree upon the quality of the blood. The food we eat and the way in which it is cooked, and eaten were thus widely influential in life. It was more important to regulate the food than the teaching of the rising generation. Ignorance was more out of place in the kitchen than any where else. The lecturer went on to speak of the various kinds of food in their relative digestibility, &c. This portion of the lecture was illustrated by a peculiar "bill of fare." The various comestibles were arranged in a list indicating their respective qualities as affording nutriment, heat or calcerous matter to the system. From this list it appeared that potatoes—contrary to the usually received opinion—were not a cheap article of food containing seventy four hundredths of water and but little nourishment. They should never be boiled, the true object being to get as much of the water out of them as possible. Of grains, rice and oats were the most largely nourishing; wheat, rye and corn came next. The Scotch Highlander illustrated the amount of courage and vitality to be drawn from oatmeal. His tenacity and bravery as a soldier were proverbial. Of meats, beef afforded the highest proportion of nutriment, there being twenty two pounds of actual vitality in every hundred. It should be so prepared as to avoid any waste of its juices. The doctor advocated boiling it. Beans and peas exceeded beef in their nutritive qualities. Of all food, pork is the least nutritious and the most hurtful. It should never be eaten in anyway. No man could eat fat pork alone for four consecutive weeks and survive. In regard to animal heat two thirds of our food went to fatten and warm us. Cream, butter, and the like were intended for this end. These articles contained a large quantity of carbon. The lungs breathing in oxygen, to be mingled with [illegible]. By a diet regulated properly all danger of cholera and contagious and epidemic diseases would be avoided.

Renting and Owning a Farm.

There is no man more independent than the owner of a well cultivated farm. He is less beholden to popular sentiment than people of any other calling. He has always a sure support before him without consulting the opinions or relying upon the custom of any one. There is a constant market for all the surplus he can produce, and he obtains for it the current price without any one demanding to know of him his religious or political faith.

It should therefore be the object of all young farmers, who are renters, to pursue such a course as will insure for them at the earliest period a farm of their own. This course will be found not to lie in frequent changes, as we think nothing retards the success of a renter more ruinously than this. To avoid this, he should take a lease for five or ten years, and work it with all the care and energy as though it were his own. Let the landlord see clearly that at the end of each year the farm is in better condition than at the beginning; the fences are as good; the out buildings suffering no damage, reasonable wear and tear excepted; that in every respect the tenant has done his duty, and best of all has found his advantage in it. Such a person could get the premises at a lower rate than another who was untried; but not oly so, he could have his lease renewed were it desirable, or it may be could become owner were the farm for sale; and some land lords, who see so much honesty, skill and industry applied for a series of years by his tenant, would be induced to favor him in the price of it.

But there is another side to the question. It is the indisposition of landlords to lease for more than one year at a time. They say that if they obtain a bad tenant it is too long; if a good one the lease can be renewed as long as both parties are agreed. This plan, however, gives poor encouragement to a tenant who intends to devote all his energies to the business and to do the best for himself and the landlord. The latter may see proper to sell, or he may come across some one whom he thinks he would prefer for a tenant. At least his tenure is uncertain and of course discouraging. A tenant who desires to do well wants to be assured of a fair chance to do so by occupying the place for a series of years. And it is on this erroneous system of leasing that we always have so few good tenants on the one hand and so few capitalists on the other who invest in lands with a view to income.

The sooner the whole system is reformed the better it will be for all parties.

—"Shall ladies vote?" asked a speaker at a meeting in Oneida county. "Certainly," replied a strong-minded woman in the audience. "Is woman made only to sew on buttons? And, if she is, it is against the law of nature to turn away the needle from the poll."

The Development of Radicalism.

In the spring of 1864, while Abraham Lincoln was still President, Thaddeus Stevens said, in a speech in the House of Representatives, "I believe Congress has the power to create a dictator; I believe we ought to have a dictator, and I am prepared to vote for one now." During the present session of Congress, the same leader and ruler of the Radical party declared, "The United States is not a republic. It never was a republic. Pennsylvania is not a republic, and I wish Congress would take it in hand and make it one."

Thaddeus Stevens is the acknowledged leader of the dominant party in the United States. He is the author of the military bill for destroying the States upon which the Sherman compromise is founded, and from which it derives its life, spirit and meaning. It is then just and fair to claim that Mr. Stevens, by subsequent action, is endeavoring to carry out his leading idea of 1864. Then he desired to raise some person to the position of dictator and govern the nation by his will, not that of the people expressed through the constitutional channel of the ballot box. The advent of Andrew Johnson prevented the dictator from being taken from the White House, and hence the base of action was changed, and an attempt made to clothe Congress with dictatorial powers. That idea is not abandoned. The after declaration of Mr. Stevens, that the United States is not and never was a republic, shows that he still clings to the position that in some portion of the government is lodged the power by which an ambitious man can mount to the dictator's place, destroy the States, uproot the constitution and enslave the people.

That power Mr. Stevens evidently thinks rests in Congress, independent of the other branches of the government. He would have Congress rule the President, overawe the Supreme Court, and command the military. The Constitution is no longer to be considered as the supreme law of the land. The Nation, a radical weekly paper published in New York, in elaborating the idea of Mr. Stevens, or of a party, that in the detection of the signs which indicate that the nation has reached the point at which it begins to consider whether it will blindly adhere to constitutional forms and perish, or disregard them and live. There are a thousand signs that we have reached the latter point, and the people are fast getting into a state of mind in which constitutional forms count for very little."

The "constitutional forms" so objectionable to the radicals have been omitted in all recent movements of the dominant party under the lead of Mr. Stevens, and he is slowly developing his pivotal idea of a dictatorial form of government. If Congress is to rule supreme, then the man who controls that body is a dictator. He can say what rights and liberties shall be accorded to the people of the several States. The measures of those rights is set forth in the military reconstruction bill, and if that system is accepted, then Mr. Stevens will be in a fair way to realize the scheme developed in 1864—the creation of a dictorial form of government in the United States.

Security to Property and Life.

Considering the career of Butler in N. Orleans, and Dow in Pensacola, and lesser of Generals and commanders in other sections during the war, there is a grim facetiousness in proposing to establish military governments in the South to afford "security to property." And yet there was a good deal of property "secured" by somebody in the Department of the Gulf—cotton, plate, pianos, pictures, jewelry, and what not. These things were sent to the North perhaps for "security." But coupled with this promise of "security to property," "security to life" is also an avowed object of the new military establishment. There is sense in this. Human life was never endangered anywhere within a hundred miles or more of the place where the plate and piano "Generals" were in the field.—*N. Y. World.*

Old Proverbs Simmered Down.

It is recorded in an old *Latin proverb*, that "without money all is vain," but I have known sum folk to be vain as had money.

It is said that *in some cases* "the remedy is wuss than the disease," but I hev known diseases that kould not find remedies wuss enough for 'em.

Speakin' of "blossoms of a time gone by," reminds me of rum blossoms.

"A man ought to be born a king or a fool;" there are but few who attain the former position, but the latter is thick enough—too thick.

An old Frenchman sez, "crooked wood makes a straight fire," but that depends on whether the wood is seasoned or not.

We find it recorded, "good ointments are in small boxes"—this no doubt means itch ointment. OBADIAH.

—Miss Nellie Dean figures on a Pittsburg skating pond as a professional performer, and receives two hundred dollars a week and her expenses.