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Miscellaneous.

THE ENGLISH PEASANTRY.

Poor, toiling, ill-fed, hopeless peasant! Bound, as with chains of adamant, to a destiny immutable and eternal of poverty, and hardship, and sorrow, and ignorance, and brutishness; in the very midst of enormous wealth, and overflowing superfluity, and inordinate, unbounded luxury, and refinement of self-indulgence, such as the world has never seen.—Gathering the full sheaves into the crowded garners of his sumptuous master, and then returning weary and hungry, to his humble cottage to rejoice with his wife and little children over the handfuls of wheat-ears which they have toiled patiently the livelong day to collect. The most abject and forlorn of serfs, in a country which boasts without ceasing to the wide world of its universal freedom! Aye, freedom to him to toil in most absolute and humiliating dependence, and abject, despairing penury, till death. What knows he of any other? What the grand orators can mean when they talk about the freedom which every stranger has as soon as ever he touches the soil and breathes the air of England, full well he may wonder. He touches the soil every day, and breathes the air. He is an Englishman, besides, and not a stranger; and the clergyman tells him on Sunday, that no other is so blest and happy as England, and no glory so great as to be an Englishman; and he wishes he could believe it; but he knows that his bondage is bitter, though the grand orators and the clergyman call him free He feels the iron entering deep into his soul, though he wears no outward chain; he knows that England's glory, whatever it may be, brings small joy to his heart, and he sees no hope that his shackles will fall till he reaches the place where the servant is free from his master, and the weary are at rest. **

The ten o'clock lunch of a New England farmer's man would be a dinner for him, and ample too. Very often have we seen them sitting at noon on the ground under the green hedge, with each a large piece of bread, and a small piece of hard, skim-milk cheese, cutting, with a jack-knife, first from one, and then from the other; and this, with a draught of cold water was the whole of their dinner. This was the whole of their dinner, not for one day or a week, but continually, week after week and month after month, and worst of all, in quantity so stinted that the poor men rose from under the hedge and went back to their work with appetites blunted but not satisfied.

We remember having called, on a bright spring morning, at the cottage of a peasant, whom we found eating a piece of dry bread, without butter, or cheese, or tea. It was ten o'clock, and this was his breakfast, and the first mouthful he had eaten that day, though he had gone to his at four, and had toiled six hours till he was faint and trembling. And this he did day by day continually, because he had found that his meagre pittance of food would "go further," as the poor man expressed it, than when any portion of it was eaten before going to the field. He had made a careful reckoning as to the quantity of plain food which his scanty wages would allow to each member of his family, including himself, his wife and four children. The eldest child was a great girl, was growing fast, and had an appetite not easily satisfied with her share, and the tender-hearted and pitiful father (her mother was dead) gave her each day a part of his, insufficient at the most. And this was a healthy, sober, industrious man, in full employment, and on full pay, his master being a rich man and a gentleman, in one of the very best agricultural counties in all England. The man talked freely of his circumstances, and told us that he never had meat at all in any shape, his children did not know the taste of meat, unless, perchance, some kind neighbor sent them a small joint at Christmas. Plain bread, hard, unnutritious cheese, potatoes, a little butter, and a little cheap tea, made up all their substantial dishes and all their luxuries, and even these in insufficient quantity, as we have seen. That they were in a "state shocking to humanity," may be readily granted; yet, so far from doubting the poor man's statement, we only wondered how he could procure even these things, in addition to the rent of his cottage, and fire, and light, and clothing. For the amount of his wages was only eight shillings sterling, or two dollars a week, with the deduction of every day that was lost from bad weather or any other cause; a practice which explains the fact, that you see English laborers out all day in weather which, in Massachusetts drives every man to seek a shelter. Out of his eight shillings, the man paid one and sixpence a week for rent; and the meanest black tea, such as nobody drinks in our country, was sixty-two cents a pound, four-fifths of that sum being duty paid to government in a time of peace. Almost all other things that this peasant's family consumed were in proportion. And it was true that his wages did not purchase these things, for his wife was compelled to leave her infant child with an older girl, and go out washing, and scrubbing at a shilling sterling a day, in order to eke out their miserable income.—*Boston Review.*

A LITTLE HERO.

Grace Greenwood writes the following little story—and a true one it is—for the *Little Pilgrim*, a child's paper. She gets the facts from an incident described in the Hartford *Daily Times*, some years ago, as having happened in Colt's Meadows:

In the city of Hartford, Connecticut, lives the hero of the true history I am about to relate—but no longer "little" as the perilous adventure, which for the time made him famous in his native town, happened several years ago.

Our hero was then a bright, active boy of 14 years—the son of a mechanic. In the severe winter of 18—, the father worked in a factory, about a mile and a half from his home, and every day the boy carried him his dinner, across a wide piece of meadow land.

One keen, frosty day, he found the snow on the meadow nearly two feet deep, and no track of the little footpath remaining. Yet he ran on as fast as possible, plunging through drifts, keeping himself warm by the most vigorous exercise, and brave, cheerful thought.

When in the midst of the meadow, full half a mile from any house, he suddenly felt himself going down, down, down! He had fallen into the well! He sunk down into the dark, icy water, but arose immediately to the surface. There he grasped hold of a plank, which had fallen into the well as he went down. One end rested on the bottom of the well, while the other rose about four feet above the surface of the water. The poor lad shouted for help till he was almost helpless and speechless, but all in vain, as it was impossible for him to make himself heard at such a distance from any house.—So at last he concluded if he was to be saved at all, he must save himself, and began at once, as he was getting extremely cold in the water. So he went to work.

First, he drew himself up the plank, and braced himself at the top of it, and the wall of the well, which was built of brick, and had become quite smooth, then he pulled off his coat, and taking out his pocket knife he cut off his boots that he might work to greater advantage. Then with his feet against one side of the wall, and his shoulders against the other, he worked his way up by the most fearful exertion, about half the distance from the top. Here he was obliged to pause to take breath, and gather up his energies for the work yet before him. Far harder was it than all he had gone through, for the side of the well from that point, completely covered with ice, he must cut with his knife, grasping places with his fingers, slowly and carefully all the way up.

It was almost a hopeless attempt, but it was all he could do. And here he lifted up his heart to God, and prayed fervently for help, fearing that he could never get out alone.

Doubtless the Lord heard his voice from the deep, and pitied him. He wrought no miracle to save him, but breathed into his heart a yet larger measure of calmness and courage, strengthening him to work for his own deliverance.

After this the little hero cut his way up inch by inch. His wet stockings froze to the ice and kept his feet from slipping, but his shirt was almost torn from his back, ere he reached the top. He did reach it at last—crawled into the snow, and lay down a moment to rest, panting out his breath in little white clouds on the clear, frosty air.

He had been two hours and a half in the well!

His clothes soon froze to his body, but he no longer suffered with the cold, as full of joy and thankfulness, he ran to the factory where his father was waiting and wondering.

The poor man was obliged to go without his dinner that day, but you may be sure he cared little about that, while listening with tears in his eyes to the thrilling story his son had to relate to him.

He must have been very proud of his boy that day, as he wrapped him in his warm overcoat to take him home to 'mother.'

And how that mother must have wept and smiled over her boy, and kissed him, and thanked the Lord for him.

☞Flavel said that if men should rise from the dead and read their epitaphs, some of them would think they had got in the wrong grave.

☞Old age is a relentless tyrant: it forbids the pleasures of youth on pain of death,

☞Envy is unquestionably a high compliment, but a most ungracious one.

TOUCHING INCIDENT.

Who can read the following without tears? We copy it from the *Press:*

Several charitable ladies lately visited one of our military hospitals.—Every refreshment that could be furnished, they supplied. Ice-cream was handed round, and the poor invalids eagerly partook of it. In one corner of the room, however, the spoon and saucer had not been touched.—On the bed, by the little table containing them, lay a young boy, his features pale, his eyelids drooping.—A lady gently fanning his fair forehead, softly whispered, "The poor little fellow is asleep, we must not disturb him."

"No, ma'am, I'm not asleep," he answered. It was a silvery voice, full of the sweetness of innocence and boyhood.

"Well my little fellow," continued the lady, as she nearer drew, "are you not fond of ice-cream?"

"Very much so," he replied.

"Didn't you see me place this on your little table?" reaching for the plate of cream.

"Oh, yes," he answered tremulously, "but I shut my eyes and cried to myself."

"Cried, my child! why, what made you cry, my dear?"

"Oh, madam! if you will pull the quilt down a little, you will see."

The lady did so, and found that he had no arms! Both of them he had lost in battle.

Poor little fellow! the sympathy of silence and tears was all that could be bestowed upon his wounded spirit. The remembrance of sister and brother, of father and mother, of childish frolics and playmates loved of yore, was awakened to soothe the fancy of the little sufferer, and to wreathe his young brow with the still tenderer beauty of resignation to the will of God.

COURTSHIP IN "HARD TIMES."

The following story of an English merchant's courtship when business was "pressing," may serve as an example while times are so very "hard":—"The lady called at his counting-house, and said that her business was to consult him on the propriety, or otherwise, of her accepting an offer of marriage which she had received. Now, for the first time, occurred to the merchant the idea of the holy estate in his own case. 'Marriage,' said he, listlessly turning over some West India correspondence. 'Well, I suppose everybody ought to marry, though such a thing never occurred to me before.—Have you given this gentleman an affirmative answer?' 'No.' 'Are your feelings particularly engaged in this matter?' 'Not particularly.' 'Well, then, madam,' said he, turning round on his stool, 'if that be the case, and if you could dispense with courtship, for which I have no time, and think you could be comfortable with me, I am your humble servant to command.' There were some people who thought that the lady had a purpose in going there; but if so, she prudently disguised it. She said she would consider the matter. The merchant saw her out with the same coolness as if she was merely one of his correspondents, and when she was gone five minutes, was once more immerged in his letters and ledgers. A day or two after he had a communication from the lady accepting his offer, very considerately excusing him from an elaborate courtship, and leaving him to name the 'most convenient day'—They were married."

THE LAST OF THE BYRONS.

The dullness of London at this season of the year has been relieved for the day by a glimpse into the romance of the peerage. Last week there died at Brighton, at the early age of twenty-seven, Byron Noel, Baron of Ockham and Wentworth. The heir of a large fortune, the grandson and last direct representative of the English poet's the young peer had—so the world might have judged—a brilliant career before him. He was the son of Ada Byron, the poet's only daughter; and this is almost all that is known of him, positively. For some cause unknown, and only faintly surmised, the young baron never assumed his rank, never took his seat in the House of Lords, never even made his appearance in the fashionable world. Very early in life he broke his connection with his family, willingly or not, served on board a ship as a common sailor, then supported himself as a hired laborer in a Thames dock-yard, and was engaged (if he was not actually married) to a bar-maid. The last of the Byrons is dead; and the story of the latest descendent of that strange race is buried in the grave with him.—*London Letter.*

☞In Cleveland a boy of seventeen was accepted as a substitue for a drafted man, and received $200 bonus. He spent the money and then obtained his discharge on a writ of habeas corpus, on the ground that he was under the age prescribed by law for recruits.

SAD SIGHTS.

An Alexandria correspondent of the Tribune says:—"I noticed during the busiest days of shipping off the wounded, any number of surgeons and doctors idle, promenading the streets, while some of the wounded actually died on the boats for the want of surgical assistance. To see them as they cried for the doctor would melt a heart of stone.—One man had an awful cut in his head, caused by a fragment of shell. It looked like a cavern. I could put in four fingers. As he moved his head the blood rolled over, and sometimes over flowed and streamed down his cheek. He thought I was the doctor when I came to take his name. He said, 'Will I live, doctor?' 'Certainly, my friend,' said I; 'keep your head steady—don't move it so much.' He said, 'Ah! I would like to live on account of my family.'—He had a sweet, manly face. I had seen many hundreds of wounded, but he was the worst that was able to move and talk. From my heart and soul I pitied him and his 'family,' and I let fall my pencil and went for the doctor, who was, fortunately, close by."

A RIDE TO A WESTERN WEDDING.

Among the checkered scenes of missionary life on the frontier, there are not many more pleasant than a genuine Western wedding. The heartiness; the bold dash, the generous hospitality of the thing, and often the novel phases of social life which it reveals, together, of coure, with the *fee*, which is rarely small in porportion to the ability of the parties, make the event quite welcome to the toiling preacher.

One day, on answering a modest knock, there stood before our log-house door a young man, barefooted, coatless, with coarse, well patched pants and rimless straw hat, whose face, beaming with a bashful happiness, would at once have suggested his errand, were it not for his garb, or, rather, want of garb.

"Are you the minister?" he asked.

"Yes," I replied.

Then followed a pause.

"Is there any thing," said I, breaking the silence, "that I can do for you?"

"Y-e-s. I came to see if you could come down to Mr. L.'s next Thursday and marry a couple."

"Where does Mr. L. live?"

"Seven miles below here, on the other side of the river. They want you at 2 o'clock, Thursday afternoon."

"I will endeavor to be there at that time," said I; "but who are the parties?"

"Oh," he replied, with a look which was its own interpretor, "you will know when you get there!"

After getting all the directions needful for finding the place, I was about closing the interview, but my caller lingered as if he had more to say; and after evident embarrassment, asked what I had for marrying folks?"

"I generally leave that to the parties," said I.

Then ensued another pause, broken at length by saying, in a depressed tone,

"I have no money now; perhaps you wouldn't come down and marry us, and wait for your pay?"

"That I will," I replied. "And, Providence permitting, you will see me at precisely the hour named."

The cloud lifted from the sunburnt face, and, smilingly thanking me, he hurried away with a light step.

Seven miles in prarie land is a short distance; but not being in a mood to walk, I engaged a horse of a neighbor. Meanwhile, for the two intervening days, it rained, or rather poured incessantly, moderating to a gentle fall on Thursday. On calling for the horse, however, the owner was loath to let him go.

"Elder," said he, (he was a Methodist,) "are you used to managing horses?"

"Somewhat—why?"

"Because," he added, "my horse is a high-spirited fellow, and he has a bad trick of throwing folks. Few can ride him without getting hurt.—The fact is, I didn't sleep a wink last night worrying about consenting to let you have him; and I don't feel right to let him go without speaking of it."

"How does he throw his riders?" I asked.

"By suddenly jumping to one side. He's powerful at jumping—beats all the horses I ever saw in *that* line," said he.

"I can look out for him!"

"He'll outwit you, Elder; hope you won't try it."

But it was too late to go in search of another, and pleading urgent business and willingness to incur all risks, the formidable beast was led out—a powerful, intelligent, fiery animal, black as a raven.

What can be more inspiriting than a horseback jaunt across a rolling, Northwest prarie? So, despite the cold and rain, and now and then a prodigious leap by Black Hawk, the ride was most exhilarating. It was two miles to the bridge. On arriving there, I found the freshet had swept it away. Just in sight, however, in the margin of a fine grove, was a snug little cabin, and riding briskly there, the barking of dogs and my shouts brought the proprietor to the door, a bevy of flaxen-haired urchins at his heels, with eyes brimful of curiosity.

"Is there any way to cross the river?" I asked.

"Yes; on the bridge," he replied, curtly.

"The bridge is gone!"

"Well, then, there isn't any way!"

"But is there no place on the stream shoal enough to be forded?"

The settler scratched his head comically, scanned me and my beast leisurely, and said:

"Take the road to the left, and you will come to the old ford; how it will be in this flood, can't say. You can try it, though, if you like; nothing like trying, they say!"

There was *need* of trying, I found, on reaching the spot. There rolled the river, deep and wide, with steep banks on either side. What was to be done? Go back and wait till the waters subsided? This was not *Westen*. The genuine pioneer never thinks of giving up an enterprise.—A short experience in the vicissitudes of frontier life wakes up a self-reliance and love of adventure, which make danger and difficulty to be courted rather than shunned; indeed, they are everyday occurrences, adding piquancy to privation and hardship.

And, as I looked down into the water of the river, there rose to view the image of the ragged, barefoot, coatless, moneyless bridegroom: and memory recalled certain facts which I had learned about his borrowing articles of apparel for himself and bride, and materials for a wedding-supper. Now, to disappoint persons in their condition was hardly to be thought of. So, chirrupping to my good steed, we made the plunge—and a deep plunge it was for the animal above, as well as the animal beneath, for the former went nearly to his neck.—However, the horse soon rose to the surface, permitting his rider, by a happy exercise of unwonted agility, to strike the saddle *a la Turk*, which position I prudently kept till the opposite shore was gained. Clambering up the steep bank, my borrowed nag, went at a breakneck pace the remaining five miles to our destination. It was a small, framed house, perched on a swell of land in the midst of a wide prairie, dotted with an occasional cabin. The dwelling was covered only with rough boards, between which the ever-restless winds came and went at will. Alighting at the gate, a gray-haired man, the bride's father, who was cutting wood in the little front yard, laid down his ax and came forward to take my horse. He had, as I afterwards learned, served in the Michigan war, and had still a soldierly bearing. Taking the bridle, he said:

"You are the minister, I suppose? We had given you up, thinking you would not come in such a storm as this. But how did you cross the river? We heard the bridge was gone."

"Horseback," said I.

"Well," said the old soldier, his eye kindling, "*a minister that can do that can preach, I know!*"

I had fulfilled my engagement partly from sympathy and the pleasure of conquering obstacles; there was, beside, a sort of presentiment that urged me on; nor did I in the end regret that I yielded to it.

The interior of the humble dwelling, and its occupants, I shall not soon forget. What taste and neatness under the most discouraging circumstances! What method and fertility of arrangements where all was plain, and rough, and scant! It is on the frontier, where the appliances of elegant housewifery are impossible, that woman's fertile resources of tact and skill most strikingly appear—often making the rude log-house and simple home-made furniture wear an aspect of comfort and taste not unfrequently wanting in homes of luxury.

The household consisted of the father—already introduced—mother, three daughters, and the young man who had called for my services.

"Mother is not well, and would like to see you a moment," remarked one of the young ladies, showing me into an adjoining room, where loving hands had spared no pains to fortify its pining inmate against exposure, and sooth the anguish of suffering.

A bed, with its snowy counterpane and tasteful curtains, stood in a corner of the apartment. On it reclined the dying mother, the emaciated frame and hectic cheek marking her a victim of consumption.

"I am so glad to see you," said she, extending her hand. "It is a long while since a miniater of the Gospel has entered our door; and yet I regret you have been put to so much trouble and exposure in coming. God will reward you! But I wished to speak to you about this marriage."

From her remarks I learned that the family were from New England. Her husband, on his return from the war, removed them to the West, making one or two temporary locations, then selling out and going still further into the unsettled woods. It was while on their way out that the young man, to whom their daughter was now engaged, made their acquaintance, and joined his fortune with theirs. It was under circumstances of great trial to them, and his presence and aid were peculiar acceptable, indeed indipensable

With untiring zeal he devoted himself to their comfort, and whether on the long journey in the emigrant wagon, or in the toils incident to making a new home, he was like a son and brother.

"We came here," said the mother, "because of my health, that the climate might do for me what medicine could not. I now see it was too late. But for my husband and George's sake, who have sacrificed so much on my account, I hope this last settlement may prove productive some day. They have secured a good tract of land, that must be valuable by-and-by; but we are 'land poor' now; all our money is gone. Another season, however, we hope our crops will bring us something more than the necessaries of life. George is like a child to me,—and what is more, he is a Christian. Annie and he are tenderly attached, and despite our present poverty, I shall rejoice in knowing that they are united before I am called away."

But the few friends that had been invited had come in; the simple words that make two inseparably one were uttered; and then as the table was being laid, bride and bridegroom poured forth their joy in Christian song. Strangely touching was it, here, on the lone prairie, to listen to wedded love, thus expressed. Very happy were they, and comely, too, in the freshness and vigor of their youth. And as we gathered around the well-spread board, the sick mother taking once more her place at the head of the table, her face beaming the peace she felt, there was a glow of happiness in my heart, such as I never experienced before as guest at a marriage feast.

"Well, Elder," said my Methodist friend, as I alighted at his door on my return, "not a limb broken, eh? But you had to swim the river!—Guess you didn't get much of a fee though, did you?"

"Never better paid in my life—what's my bill for Black Hawk?"

"Well, seeing you feel *so rich*, I think I sha'n't charge you anything this time. All is, I'm glad you got back safe and sound."—*Watchman and Reflector.*

The Battle of Shiloh---An Incident with Gen. Hindman.

The following remarkable incident is described:—Just before the retreat occurred one of the most remarkable incidents of the battle; few more wonderful are on record.—Gen. Hindman, than whom no more fearless, dashing, or brave man is found in the rebel army, was leading his men in a fearful struggle for the possession of a favorable position, when a shell from the Federal batteries, striking his horse in the breast and passing into his body, exploded. The horse was blown into fragments, and the rider with his saddle, lifted some ten feet in the air. His staff did not doubt that their general was killed, and some one cried out, "General Hindman is blown to pieces." Scarcely was the cry uttered, when Hindman sprang to his feet and shouted, "Shut up there, I am worth two dead men yet. Give me another horse." To the amazement of every one he was but little bruised. His heavy and strong cavalry saddle, and probably the bursting of the shell downward, saved him. In a minute he was on a new horse and rallying his men for another dash. A man of less flexible and steel-like frame would probably be so jarred and stiffened by the shock as to be unable to rise; he, though covered with blood and dust, kept his saddle during the remainder of the day, and performed prodigies of valor. But no heroism of officers or men could avail to stay the advance of the Federal troops.

Anecdote of a French Marshal.

Some time ago, while at a review, a murderous shot was fired at the late Marshal Castellane, from a regiment of Voltigeurs. He heard the whistling of the ball near his head, and on taking off his cap found that it lodged in it. Without saying a word to his staff he galloped up to the front of the regiment from which the shot proceeded, and cried out that if he knew the unlucky dog who was such a bad shot he would certainly give him a week in the guard house. Then turning to his staff he said, "What do you think of this? a fellow in a crack corps who misses his man at thirty yards; certainly he ought to be broke." The Marshall would never allow any inquiry to be made into this attempt upon his life; but he resented it against the whole corps of Voltigeurs by never allowing any one of them to mount guard at his quarters.

☞No man will excel in his profession if he thinks himself above it; and commerce will not flourish in any country where commerce is not respected.