

THE COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT.

"I have sworn upon the Altar of God, eternal hostility to every form of Tyranny over the Mind of Man."—Thomas Jefferson.

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POETRY.

A NAME IN THE SAND.

BY MISS GUILD.

Alone I walked the ocean strand,
A pearly shell was in my hand;
I stooped and wrote upon the sand
My name, the year, the day,
As onward from the spot I passed,
One lingering look behind I cast;
A wave came rolling high and fast,
And washed my lines away.

And so, methought, 't will shortly be
With every mark on earth from me!
A wave of dark oblivion's sea
Will sweep across the place
Where I have trod the sandy shore
Of time, and been to be no more;
Of me, my name, the name I bore,
'To leave no track nor trace.

And yet, with Him who counts the sands,
And holds the waters in his hands,
I know a lasting record stands
Inscribed against my name,
Of all this mortal part he wrought,
Of all this thinking soul he thought,
And from these fleeting moments caught,
For glory, or for shame.

THE BLUNDERER.

From the Knickerbocker Magazine.

THE BLUNDERER.

Being a few passages in the life of short-sighted man.

Of all the evils to which mankind are subject, there is none more pitiable in its victim than an ordinary limitation of vision. I, alas! am one of those unfortunate individuals, whose nose is doomed to be 'spectacle bedstrid' during my mortal existence, and who can discern no object, unless it be thrust into my very face. This, it may readily be imagined, is at all times disagreeable, but particularly so when the article in question is obnoxious to the senses. O ye bipeds of oculars unimpaired!—ye all-seeing gentry! little do ye know the thousand evils that daily accumulate upon our devoted heads, and sometimes shoulders! Little do ye ken the numerous faux pas that we of the limited vision are almost constantly pushed into, to the imminent jeopardy of our moral and physical sense, as men of feeling.

My misfortunes commenced from infancy—yea from my veriest infancy—and have continued up to this day, with a frequency and regularity as astonishing as unfortunate. My mother has often told me, that when a baby, I would make a dozen ineffectual attempts to gain her breast; and my first essays in the art of walking, have been memorialized, by a multiplicity of scars, occasioned by violent contact with chairs, tables, and other articles of domestic usefulness. As a boy, I was still more deserving of commiseration. In fact, my misfortunes seemed to accumulate with my growth. The delicacies of the dinner table were invariably appropriated by my brothers and sisters, before I could be made conscious of their presence; and if I failed to examine closely every particle upon the prongs of my fork, or in the concave of my spoon, I might inadvertently swallow a red pepper for a sausage, or masticate a quantity of horse-radish for as much sugar or Sago cheese. My good old aunt, pitying my situation, resolved to better it, and for this purpose purchased me a pair of spectacles, the first I had worn. For a time I got on very well, in the way of eating comfortable dinners; but this fortune was too good to last long. My affectionate brethren and sisters contrived to abstract my glasses. In vain I replaced them. They were continually stolen; and I was every day compelled to partake of what they in the fulness of their stomachs, thought proper to leave me.

In due season, I was ushered into the solar system of society; but I had not revolved a month upon my own axis, among the planets and satellites of the beau ciel, before they all complained that I passed them in my diurnal transit without a smile or bow of recognition, and unanimously concluded to eject me from their sphere. I deprecated their displeasure, acknowledged the imperfection of my vision, and was again admitted into their circles. I now resolved to speak to every one I passed; and then thought I, in the fondness of imagination, 'there will be no mistake!' I put my resolution at once in practice, and for a while

things went swimmingly on; but at length the same result was the consequence.

'What have I done, now?' asked I of a friend: 'why am I again thrust without the pale of society?'

'The reason is, simply,' said he, gazing about to see that no one observed him speaking to so proscribed a being as I, 'that people are not willing to meet on terms of sociability and equality a man who claims the acquaintance of every loafer, male or female, he may chance to meet. At Trinity Church, last Sunday, you offered your arm to a chamber-maid; and you were yesterday observed by a party of ladies in the act of making a profound bow to three of the most notorious courtizans in town.'

'Good God!' exclaimed I, 'is it possible?'

These were not the only bad effects of my politeness. A great six-foot whiskered and insulting his sister, by speaking to her without the previous formality of an introduction; and it was with the greatest difficulty that I could persuade the fellow to refrain from horse-whipping me—a thing which he had fully resolved upon, and which nothing but my humble apologies, and labored explanations, joined to the entreaties of one or two of my personal friends, deterred him from putting into practice.

'Happier,' thought I, 'far happier, had I been born blind, for then I should at least have avoided the tissue of blunders into which I hourly stumbled. My life has been one continued series of getting into scrapes in the worst way, and getting out of them the best way I could. Why am I coupled with such a destiny? I am one of the gentlest and most inoffensive of mankind, and yet the sulkiest blackguard about town encounters not half the difficulties which fall to my lot.'

Such were my musings, as I passed down Broadway—such my reflections—when my dog—as I thought, but alas! it was another's—rushed between my legs, and nearly tripped me up. Although naturally, or rather commonly, a good-natured man, I was not at that precise moment, as the reader may imagine, in my smoothest mood. The current of my mind had been agitated by more than one circumstance that day, and the little dog rendered me absolutely angry.—With an exclamation of wrath, I gave this member of the canine race a kick, which sent him howling to the opposite side of the street.

'Sare,' said a tall, swarthy, Frenchified, looking personage, bowing until his mustaches brushed my nose, 'You av, by H—ll! kick my dog! What for you 'av done dis for, eh?'

'My dear Sir,' exclaimed I, terribly discomposed, 'I beg ten thousand pardons.—I really thought it was my own dog.'

'Ah, you to'ought it was your dog, eh? No, sare, it is my little dog dat you 'av kick!'

'Sir, I am exceedingly sorry; I mistook him for my own dog. I assure you, I thought it was my own dog, at the time.'

'By Gar, Sare, dey is not resemblance dere; de one dog is of de white, and de oder dog is of de black color. Beside, Sare, de one 'av got de ear ver' wide, and de oder ver' short; de one 'av got de tail ver' much, and de oder 'av lose he tail ver' much!'

'But, Sig, I am near-sighted; my eyes are impaired; I could not distinguish between the dogs.'

The foreigner looked steadily in my face for a moment; but perceiving nothing there but truth, his countenance became calm, and comparatively pleasant.

'You 'av, den, Monsieur, de vision not very far, eh?'

I assented.

'Ah! den dat is all de apology which I demand;' and, with a graceful adieu, he passed on.

'How fortunate for me,' soliloquized I, 'that he was a Frenchman! Had he been one of my own countrymen, I should no

doubt have figured in the gutter.' Strange, strange people, these Americans! They punish an offence first, and inquire into its causes and effects afterward. My apology would have been laughed at by a Yankee. They have generally so much in view themselves that they cannot appreciate the difficulties of one whose vision is not as extensive as their own. 'Alas!' sighed I, pausing, and wiping the classes of my spectacles, 'who ever pitied a near-sighted man?'

It was nearly sunset. The benches and avenues of the Battery were thronged with human beings. The rich, the poor, the young, the old, the gay, the dignified, the ungaily and the beautiful—the merchant, the artisan, the statesman and the philosopher—the near-sighted and the far-sighted—all recreated themselves here, promenading or sitting, thinking or talking, as their several inclination prompted; for no matter how different the tastes and pursuits of men may be, they all coincide in the admiration of nature.

'How glorious! how magnificent!' ejaculated a pale, middle-aged man, extending his right hand toward the Jersey shore.—'Yon purple cloud, so chastely tipped with glowing silver, sails slowly and gracefully along; and lo! the topmost leaves of all yonder forest seem gilded and burnished o'er a thousand times.'

'That 'ere chap is eyther crazy, or he 's poet,' said a loafer to a very disreputable-looking individual, who accompanied him.

'I guess he 's a poet, Sam,' said the other, in reply: 'them 'ere fellers is always crazy.'

'The bay,' resumed the pale, middle-aged man, 'looks like a purple mirror, and yon fairy islands so many emerald spots upon its surface. The monuments of man's industry, too, serve to glorify the scene; and Nature and Art stand hand-in-hand, smiling complacently upon their splendid representatives.'

Interested by the poetry of this description, I looked forth upon all this space of beauty, but saw nothing, except a dim conglomeration of hazy coloring. Never before had I experienced so painful a sense of my misfortune. I grew dizzy and sick at heart, and wheeling about, sought my way homeward, full of the bitterest reflections. An omnibus was just on the eve of departure; and mistaking the inscription of 'Bowery and the Battery' for 'Broadway and Bleecker Street,' I jumped in, and was whirled some two miles and a half out of my proper way, before I was made acquainted with my error.

I now resolved to adopt a new course. 'Am I not,' asked I of myself, 'the author of many of my own misfortunes? Surely, my errors are chiefly caused by my impatience and impetuosity. I am too hasty. I will endeavor to be more moderate. I will examine before I proceed, and remove the difficulties that may occur in my way. In a word, I will be more discreet in all things.'

On the following day, I dined with a friend at one of the most fashionable hotels of the city, and was for a while, as I thought, extremely lucky, having as yet made but one faux pas, which was merely the drinking of a glass of brandy for as much wine—a mistake, by the way, which might have occurred to almost any one. A tremendously-stout gentleman from Mississippi was seated on my left. This individual had just cleared his plate of a large quantity of roast beef, and was engaged in gazing ominously at a lobster, his shut right hand, in the mean time resting upon the table. Unfortunately for myself, at this particular juncture, I happened to stand in need of a piece of bread, and raising my eye in search of the necessary article, I mistook his clenched fist for a loaf. Taking up my fork very deliberately, I hitched up the sleeve of my coat, and plunged the sharp steel instrument into the fleshy part of the man's hand. With a noise between a roar and a growl, the victim jumped upon his feet, knocking down the gentleman who sat next him, and up-setting a waiter who was hur-

rying along with a large supply of custards. I, of course, jumped up too, frightened, and attempted to explain matters; but scarcely had I opened my mouth for the purpose, when I was floored by a tremendous blow from the wounded limb, directly in my face. No sooner had the avenger knocked me down, than he unsheathed a huge glittering Bowie knife, and advanced to annihilate me altogether. Words cannot portray the horror of my emotions. I had seen the fellow carve a pig a few moments before, and had myself admired his dexterity in the proceeding.

The company, however, interfered between the Mississippian and my destruction. My friends made known the imperfection of my vision, and the man of the far west became satisfied. I was borne to bed, nearly senseless, and have not yet recovered from the effects of that adventure, although my physician is one of the most learned and efficient in the city. He is an Englishman; and when I related to him the occurrence, he shook his head, saying:

'Terrible chaps, these fellows from Mississippi; 'orrible beings! Wonder he did'n't cut your 'ed off, haltogether!'

OUR COUNTRY IN 1837.

The following elegant article is from the chaste and glowing imagination of Doct. T. N. Caulkins, editor of the Coldwater Observ.

What will this Union be fifty years from this day? The cloud by day, the pillar of fire by night, for the world to follow in their march of civilization and refinement! The dawn of 1837 will dawn upon this nation doubled in extent, with Michigan and Iowa as the centre of civilization, and the unbegotten States of Oregon, Macedon, Columbia, and Pacificus, stretching along the ocean, called the Pacific states, with another tier of the sisterhood lying along the Rocky Mountains, known by the name of the middle or mountain States. What now are known as the western, will then receive the appellation of the eastern States, while the western will be those bordering on the Pacific ocean. Fifty millions of freemen will look upon the light of that morn, and glory in the name, yielded by France, of the "Great Nation." Splendid cities will then exist where now the Indian, the lord of the dark forest around him lies down upon his copper face, dreaming of the happy hunting grounds of his fathers, with whom must soon dwell the whole human race. On that day a mere handful will be found lingering on the borders of the great deep that must at length engulf them. Where will then be the capitol of Michigan!—In some inland city, near her centre, will its columns rise in magnificence and splendor. Branches of the University of Michigan will then be flourishing and imparting their cheering influence in every county throughout the State. Each county will have its temple of liberty, whose altar is the printing press, and each town its temple of worship and its numerous schools, the nurseries of freedom, instructed by well taught teachers, at fifty dollars a month. Then perhaps the schoolmaster will be esteemed equal to the cook on board a steamboat—a happy epoch in the march of human improvement. Where then will be the capitol of this Union? Possibly in the Valley of the Mississippi—St. Louis may be the favored spot, or even the unbroken wilderness still farther west. And where, alas, will then be the present citizens of our great Republic! Then will

"Each in his narrow cell forever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep."

The present dwellers of the earth will then have ceased their bustle—but little space will be held by them, and a new race of men—our children and our children's children—will then manage the machinery of the world.

The above is the language of prophecy, but that of rational deduction from a knowledge of the past and present. Even the

boldest flights of the imagination, fifty years ago, could scarcely have been equal to the reality at the present hour. And may Heaven permit us to continue our glorious career till all the nations of the earth become even as we are.

NEWSPAPERS.

The Hon. Judge Longstreet says— "small is the sum required to patronize a newspaper, and amply is the patron remunerated. I care not how humble and unpretending is the Gazette he takes. It is next to impossible to fill a sheet fifty two times a year without having something that is worth the subscription price.

Every parent whose son is off from him at school, should be supplied with a newspaper. I well remember what a marked difference there was between those of my schoolmates who had, and those who had not access to newspapers. Other things equal, the first was always decidedly superior to the last, in debate and composition at least. The reason is plain; they had command of more facts. A newspaper is a history of current events as well as copious and interesting miscellany, which youth will pursue with delight when they will read nothing else."

"A father of an interesting family, near Detroit, not long since, stopped the only newspaper which he had ever allowed himself or family, and solely on the ground that he could not afford the expense. This man chews up fourteen dollars and sixty cents worth of tobacco every year.—*Cov. Everett's Address.*

Old Letters.—What a world of thoughts and feelings arise in perusing old letters! What lessons do we read in the silliest of them, and in others what beauty, what charms, what magical illusion wraps the senses in brief enchantment! But it is brief indeed. Absence, estrangement, death, the three great enemies of moral ties, start up to break the spell. The letters of those who are dead, how wonderful. We seem to live and breathe in their society. The writers once, perhaps, lived with us in the communion of friendship, in the flames of passion, in the whirl of pleasure; in the same career, in short, of earthly joys, earthly follies, and earthly infirmities. We seem again to retrace those paths together; but are suddenly arrested by the knowledge that there lies a vast gulf between us and them. The hands which traced those characters are mouldering in the tombs, eaten by worms, or already turned to dust.

Letters from those we once loved, who perhaps are still living, but no longer living for us; it may be we grew tired of them; or the separation may have arisen from mutual imperfections in character. Still the letters recall times and seasons when it was otherwise, and we look upon ourselves out of ourselves, as it were, with much melancholy interest. That identity of the person, and that estrangement of the spirit, who can paint it!

There is still a third class of old letters on which the heart delights to expatiate; those of the still living, but the absent. Oh! what do they now afford of delight! They have the whole witchery of beauty, love, and truth in them, without one speck or flaw to lower the tone of that enchantment they contain.

AN INSOLVENT.—A Peruvian, who was deeply involved in debt, was walking the streets with a very melancholy air; one of his acquaintances asked him why he was so sorrowful? Alas! said he, I am in a state of insolvency! Well, said his friend, if that is the case, it is not you, but your creditors, who ought to wear a woful countenance.

An Irishman who recently went out rabbit shooting, observing a jackass peeping over a hedge immediately leveled his piece, exclaiming, 'Och by the powers! that must be the father of all rabbits.'