

THE STAR OF THE NORTH.

R. W. Weaver Proprietor.

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THE STAR OF THE NORTH

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CHOICE POETRY.

LITTLE THINGS.

Scorn not the slightest word or deed, Nor deem it void of power; There's fruit in each wind-waited seed, And life in every power. A whispered word may touch the heart, And call it back to life; A look of love bid love depart, And still a holy strife. No act falls fruitless; none can fail How vast its power might be; Nor what results unfolded dwell Within it silently. Work and despair not, give thy mite, Nor care how small it be; God is with all that serve the right, The holy, true, and free.

Interesting Facts Concerning Rain.

PHILOSOPHY OF RAIN.

To understand the philosophy of so often beautiful and sublime phenomenon, so often witnessed since the creation of the world, and so essential to the very existence of plants and animals, a few facts derived from observations and a long train of experiments must be remembered:—

1. Were the atmosphere everywhere at all times of a uniform temperature, we should never have rain or hail, or snow. The water absorbed by it in evaporation from the sea and the earth's surface, would descend in an imperceptible vapor, or cease to be absorbed by the air when it was once fully saturated.

2. The absorbing power of the atmosphere, and consequently its capacity to retain humidity, is proportionally greater in warmth than in cold air.

3. The air near the surface of the earth is warmer than it is in the region of the clouds. The higher we ascend from the earth, the colder do we find the atmosphere. Hence the perpetual snow on very high mountains in the hottest climate.

Now, when, from continued evaporation, the air is highly saturated with vapor, though it is invisible and the sky cloudless, if its temperature is suddenly reduced, by cold currents descending from above, or rushing from a higher to a lower latitude, or by the motion of a saturated air to a colder latitude, its capacity to retain moisture is diminished, clouds are formed, and the result is rain.—Air condenses as it cools, and, like a sponge filled with water and compressed, pours out the water which its diminished capacity cannot hold. How singular, yet how simple, the philosophy of rain! What but Omnipotence could have devised such an admirable arrangement for watering the earth?

EFFECTS PRODUCED BY RAIN AS IT DESCENDS THROUGH THE SOIL.

1. It causes the air to be renewed.—It is believed that the admission of frequently renewed supplies of air into the soil is favorable to its fertility. This the descent of the rain promotes. When it falls upon the soil it makes its way into the pores and fissures, expelling of course the air which previously filled them. When the rain ceases, the waters run off by the drain; and as it leaves the pores of the soil empty above it, the air flows, and fills with a renewed supply the numerous cavities from which the descent of the rain had driven it. Where lands remain full of water, no such renewal of air can take place.

2. It warms the water soil.—As the rain falls through the air it acquires the temperature of the atmosphere. If this be higher than that of the surface soil, the latter is warmed by it; and if the rains be copious, and sink easily into the soil, they will carry this warmth with them to the depth of the drains. Thus the under soil in well drained land is not only warmer, because the evaporation is less, but because the rains in the summer seasons actually bring down warmth from the heavens to add to their natural heat.

3. It equalizes the temperature of the soil during the season of growth.—The sun beats upon the surface of the soil, and gradually warms it. Yet, even in summer, this direct heat descends only a few inches beneath the surface, and slides an easy descent, as it does into the under soil. Then the roots of plants are warmed, and general growth stimulated. It has been proved, by experiments with the thermometer, that the under soil, as well as the upper soil, is warmer in drained than in undrained land, and the above are some of the ways by which heat seems to be actually added to soils that have been thoroughly drained.

4. It carries down soluble substances to the roots of plants.—When rain falls upon heavy

undrained land, or upon any land into which it does not readily sink, it runs over the surface, dissolves soluble matter, and carries it into the nearest ditch or brook. Rain thus runs and impoverishes such land. But let it sink where it falls—then whatever it dissolves it will carry downwards to the roots—it will distribute uniformly the saline matters which have a natural tendency to rise to the surface, and it will thus promote growth by bringing food every where within the reach of plants.

5. It washes noxious matter from the under soil.—In the subsoil, beyond the reach of the air, substances are apt to collect, especially in red-colored soils, which are injurious to the roots of plants. These the descent of the rains alters in part and makes wholesome, and in part washes out. The plough may depend in search of food where they would previously have been destroyed. It is true that when heavy rains fall they will also wash out of the soil and carry into the drains substances which would be useful to retain. Upon this fact some have laid unnecessary stress, and have adduced it as an argument against thorough drainage. But if we balance the constant benefit against the occasional evil, I am satisfied, as experience indeed has shown, that the former will greatly preponderate.

6. It brings down fertilizing substances from the air.—Besides, the rains never descend empty-handed. They constantly bear with them gifts, not only of moisture to the parched herbage, but of organic and saline food by which its growth is promoted. Ammonia and nitric acid together with the many exhalations which are daily rising from the earth's surface, come down in the rains; common salt, gypsum, and other saline substances derived from the sea, rarely wanting; and thus, the constant descent from the heavens may well be supposed to counterbalance the occasional washing from the earth.

7. Much of the rain is evaporated.—And lastly, in answer to this objection it is of importance to state, that in our climate a very large proportion of the rain that falls does not sink through the soil, even where there are drains beneath, but arises again into the air in the form of water vapor. Experiments in Manchester have shown, that of 31 inches of rain, which fall there in a year, 24 are evaporated; while in Yorkshire, of 24 inches of rain which fall, only 5 inches run off through pipes laid at a depth of 2 feet 9 inches, the rest being evaporated. There is little cause, therefore, for the fear expressed by some, that the draining of the land will cause the fertility in any perceptible degree to diminish in consequence of the washing of the descending rains. They may, as I have said, improve the soil by washing hurtful substances out of it, but in general, the soil will have extracted from the water which filters through it, all the valuable matter it holds in solution, before it has reached the depth of a 3 feet drain.

RAIN WATER AS A BEVERAGE.

Rain-water is the purest water in the world. Dr. Fleming, of the water-cure at Rochester, allows no other water to be used in his family or office. He passes this rain-water through a filter, which separates from it every offensive taste, and extraneous matter—its taste is better than well or spring water. In all locations where water is defective, the evil can be remedied by the use of rain water. The miasmas of fever and ague countries can be completely avoided by a proper use of this simple remedy. The apparatus for filtering, sufficient for one family, can be procured for from three to eight dollars.

The writer, while riding in the cars near Big-bamptor, saw two brothers, healthy looking men as you would see among ten thousand, who had spent some twenty-five years in the lowlands of Indiana. In conversation with one of them, he attributed his uniform good health, to the constant use of rain water. They were lawyers, one of them the President of the United States Senate, and of course acting Vice President of the United States. (We want great names to give force to little truths now-a-days.) Mr. Bright's mode of purifying rain water, is to get it in winter snows, which gives it in its pure state, or when obtained from summer rains, let it stand some three weeks, when it will undergo a process of fermentation the extraneous matter will evaporate leaving the article pure. Water put up for a sea voyage will grow slimy and nauseous after a few days' embarkation, yet will become pure in three weeks. Pure even as coming from the hand of the Creator, when it was first pronounced good, together with everything then made; very good.—Corning Sun.

Down on the Governor.—The Lancaster Examiner and Norristown Herald, two of the staunchest and best old-line Whig papers in this State, have come out in strong condemnation of the recent appointments of Governor Pollock. With one or two exceptions, they pronounce them "not fit to be made." The Examiner goes into particulars, and gives some off-hand portraits of the Leather, Bark, Whiskey, and Flour Inspectors, which are by no means flattering to those functionaries.

Important Provisions.

By two sections of the general appropriation bills, as approved by the Governor, it is made the duty of Treasurers, Clerks, Probationaries, and other persons who collect moneys belonging to the Commonwealth, to deposit monthly the sums in their hands in such place as may be designated by the State Treasurer.

Original Communication.

MUSIC:

An Essay read at the Friday Evening exercises of Dickinson's Seminary, May the 11th, 1855, by JOHN GROSS, of Juniata County, Penn'a.

Music may be defined to be the art of producing a combination of sounds agreeable to the ear. As an art its history may be traced from the days of Adam, in whose period it is said "there lived one who was the father of all such as handle the harp." In all ages and among all tribes, it seems to have occupied a prominent position, being held as a part of religious worship, both by pagans and christians; even the untutored savage has dispelled his griefs and cares by this gracious boon of heaven. Indeed when we consider its mysterious effects and influences on the mind, its ubiquity and exalted nature, we must be lost to all the finer feelings of humanity if a conviction of its importance be not impressed upon us. It is a remarkable fact that the "accomplished minstrel" can touch and sway the hearts of friend and foe nor can the savage beast of the forest withstand his power, but losing his ferocious nature is rendered harmless as a lamb.

By his magic power crowded multitudes have been rapt in awe and melted into one. He can excite mirth or create sadness—he can rouse a spirit of revenge, or inspire our hearts with feeling of gratitude and love—"he is master of the soul and sways it at pleasure." So powerful are the effects of music, that man and beast have been known to expire under the violent agitations produced by it. Sacred music has a favorable influence on the moral and intellectual powers of man. He must be stupid indeed, who would not have some pure desire or holy thought awakened in his heart, by hearing one of Zion's rich songs, set to a soul stirring melody. Martin Luther was both a composer and a practical musician. Whitefield and the Wesleyes were noted for their musical talent. Bacon required its aid in his profound investigations, and Milton it is said was indebted to his organ for much of his depth and splendor. Its swells and explosive tones, its intervals and variations, its noisy choruses and silent rests, its major and minor moods, its grave and presto movements, are calculated to "reach and play upon every chord of the human soul."

But let us notice its ubiquity as exhibited throughout the works of Creation, Music, harmony and order seem to pervade the universe. If we take our position by some forest, whose tall, dead trunks look like vast organ pipes, we can hear every variety of movement and combination of harmony.—The molten murmur which the north wind wakes among the treetops, will fit us for quiet and heavenly meditation. The ringing soprano of the whistling tempest and the thunder bass of the sky are calculated to inspire our hearts with reverence and awe while the mournful moans of the sinking breeze and the lowing of cattle produce sadness and heaviness of soul. Still greater emotions are awakened in the mind, when approaching a beautiful grove on a spring morn, just as the silver edge of the sun is shooting its rays parallel to the eastern horizon, and the clarion notes of a thousand feathered songsters fall upon the ear as they join in one harmonious concert to welcome the "harbinger of day." All nature seems to catch the theme and reverberates it through her vast domains. Its exalted nature may be inferred from the important occasions on which it was used. We learn that when the earth was created for the abode of a new race of beings "the morning stars sang together and all the sons of the most high shouted for joy." The immortal Milton, referring to this, beautifully represents the Messiah returning from his six days work in these lines:—

"Up he rode Followed with acclamation and the sound Symphonious of ten thousand harps that tuned Angelic harmonies; the earth, the air resounded. The heavens and all the constellations rang. The planets in their stations listening stood. While the bright pomp ascended jubilant. Open ye heavens, ye living doors. Let in the great Creator from his work returned. Magnificent, his six days work, a world.

At the incarnation of the redeemer a choir of angels appeared to the shepherds watching their flocks by night, singing Hosanna to the highest peace on earth and good will toward man. We may infer from these terms that music occupies a high position among the things that minister to the happiness and comfort of our race. Were it otherwise the Creator would not have bestowed it so plentifully throughout his works. When therefore we consider its mysteries, operations and effects that we are endowed with faculties capable of producing these effects when we remember that it is stamped on all nature's works, and finally when we consider that it is not merely man's interest, but the theme of angels, it becomes us as rational and accountable beings to cultivate our minds and train our voices in order that we may be enabled to join the anthems of redeeming love when time shall be no more.

An Irishman, on being told to grease the wagon, returned in about a quarter of an hour afterwards, and said: "I've greased every part of the wagon, inside and out, yet honor, but by the blue hair o' Moses' wig, I can't get at the axles the wheels hang on, sure."

Lord Bacon says, "He is the greatest philosopher who adheres most closely to particulars."



GARIBALDI.

For the "Star of the North." EUROPE IN 1855.

BY R. W. WEAVER.

(CONCLUSION)

A general war in Europe now seems inevitable, but all the crowned heads are interested against such an event. If it does come only Omnipotence can know the result, for there are strange providences in history.—The Bourbons thought to check England by furnishing aid to the American revolution, and when independence was acknowledged, it was the universal cry of exultation at Paris and Vienna that England was ruined. Even at London it was the subject of lamentation. And yet it was the republican spirit which came home with Lafayette and his companions that revolutionized France, and brought Louis XVI. to the scaffold. The American revolution was the seed that brought forth its fruit in France, and if the fruit was not like the seed, that difference was the effect of a less genial soil for such a result. So perhaps may the short-sighted wisdom of man now. The rulers of Europe think their safety lies in the war against Russia. And yet the Cossacks may in this very war sweep every throne from Europe, and thus pave the way for a new order of things out of chaos. The barbarous Cossacks could not remain the rulers of the refined South and West, but the new government, that would arise, would begin without the encumbrance of the present national debts that now hang like an incubus over Europe. For the doctrine is ere long to be recognized that the Kings and Czars of one generation cannot for their own family aggrandizement impose a tax equal to half the value of their empire upon all the generations that shall follow them.

In England this question of national debt thunders loud at the palace gate. By means of that debt, unproductive and consuming, England has been waging a secret warfare against the labor of the kingdom, until now the wages of a week of a month will only buy one fourth the necessities and comforts of life which that labor would have purchased five hundred years ago.—But worse than that—the manifest wrong of the oppressor has crushed the spirit and withered the heart of the laborer. This poverty of man's infiction has demoralized the toilsman, and made him hate and fear his own human nature. It has eaten the feeling of humanity out of his soul, as well as vitality from his body. So that in England, since regular statistics of crime has increased six fold; and that was four times as fast as the number of the people. In Scotland the records show that in the same period crime has risen twenty-five times as fast as the number of the people.

It is this and other such problems which must be solved in this war or by some other political convulsion in Europe. In France the people long since expelled their incapable rulers, and sought for good plebeian blood. And though they have been deceived since by each new set they have chosen, the mass has learned its power and the Emperor feels it. When the caged lion knows his strength, the keeper dare no longer be cruel.

If the impending war go on there will be a strange fellowship of incongruous elements, and in the multiplicity of the Czar's enemies will lay his strength. There is no natural affinity between the French and English nations, that have been at sword's point for ten hundred years, and the world may well wonder when Kossuth and Mazzini will once marshal their brethren with the forces of Lord Aberdeen and Louis Napoleon. The Hungarian and Roman chiefs would fight for the cause of Freedom, Lord Palmerston to check Russia and save India—Louis Napoleon to give employment to his restless and troublesome countrymen or to realize the idea of his uncle that the world might be partitioned between him and the Russian Czar—and only the infidel Turk would battle for his country. But Kossuth and Mazzini are not yet the allies of Palmerston and Napoleon, nor will they be so soon. The former look to the overturning of thrones before they become a party to the fray; while England and France lead the conservative interest, and fear the uprising of the liberal elements. There is the germ of republicanism in every nation in Europe, and it only needs a little loosening of the "upper crust" to break through. The diplomatists know this and are fearful of the result. They do not want war, and yet fear the encroachments of the Czar.

If this is a mere question whether Turkey shall fall into the clutches of Russia, Prussia and Austria, or of England and France, as American republicans we have no interest in the result. But it were far better for the cause of humanity that Austria and Prussia should join with the Czar. Then England and France would not take the field as the champions and allies of kingcraft, but as the defenders of freedom. Then they would be compelled from necessity to ally themselves with the republican elements of Europe, and it would be the war of the English and French people and not of the English and French dynasties. Then, (and in that case alone) would 15,000,000 Hungarians fight with good true steel and lead, and not only with their nails and implements of husbandry as before. Then would the free spirit of Italy burst forth again, and Germany answer with her million sons of freedom.—Sweden is the natural enemy of Prussia since the day that Charles XII. with 8,000 Swedes defeated 80,000 Prussians in their entrenchments at Narva. Bernadotte, his ruler, is a brave and bold soldier after Bonaparte's own heart—a man frank, true and honest to the cause of his people. The Swedes are a noble and gallant nation, and will never forgive Russia the robbery of Finland. If the war shall be the last great battle of freedom the Austrian and Prussian governments will find their hands full at home to suppress republicanism; and the Polish soldiers will no longer be in the Russian ranks to be driven on by the threats and blows of Russian officers, as at Olteniza, nor will they need to desert and beg as they did then to be incorporated into the army of their Turkish captors. The most formidable part of the Czar's army is the southern division of Cossacks, and these savages only fight in any cause so long as they can find plunder. The detachment of the army which has been under the training and patronage of Nicholas himself has enthusiasm for his cause, but the soldiers of the distant provinces who know only the discipline of the rod and the knot, and who have neither family nor land in the Empire will not be equal to the enthusiasm of Patriotism and Freedom. If the war must come, may it so begin and end that the cause of Humanity and Liberty may triumph.

PROGRESS AND BIGOTRY.

The following extract from a lecture of Prof. Joseph D. Friend of the Metropolitan Medical College has a great deal of force in it:—

The past is full of error. Man has been seeking in every direction and availing himself of all the means within his reach to enlarge the sphere of his knowledge—to bring forth from the great store house of art and nature, things new and valuable. Amid the rubbish of the past there has been gathered up many a gem of priceless worth, which will grow brighter and brighter as the shadows of time lengthen. But the iron hand of precedent has grasped many a false and hurtful thing, garnered from every department of philosophy and science and art, and with its giant force has borne it triumphantly along through succeeding ages, and to day holds it up to our gaze and bids us behold and wonder and approve. But mankind have learned that precedent is often but another name for error, and refuse to pay slavish homage to its claims.

God has endowed every soul with a mental activity. If it lie not dormant and unused, progress must be the result of its exercise. The mind cannot always feed upon what it knows. It must have other mental aliment. It has desires which must be satisfied; hopes which seek fruition; aspirations which lead it upward to the attainment of high purposes—the accomplishment of noble ends. Could the results of mental activity be daguerretyped and exhibited at a single view, we should see more distinctly the evidences of progress. We should learn by studying the picture, that many of the errors to which men cling to this hour, with zeal and pertinacity, are but the stepping stones over which mankind have necessarily passed in the attainment of truth. Our pride might here find something to chasten and subdue its vauntings; and the great Diana to which we have bowed and worshipped, might be found to be a sightless and soulless image. The noble temple which the hands of our predecessors have for ages been employed in rearing, and which their successors and followers have been industriously engaged in adorning and strengthening, might be seen, in the language of Rusel, to be roofless at the top and cracked in the foundation. Systems and theories which we have learned to reverence and respect, might be seen stripped of every element adapted to inspire the one or command the other. The reformer might here learn to distrust somewhat the correctness of his own dogmas; and while he receives with enthusiasm the doctrines that go to make up the sum and basis of his system of practice, let him guard against sitting down with a satisfied and contented air, as if nothing more were to be learned, no greater victories to be achieved. While you believe that the fundamentals on which your structure rests, are truths in harmony with the laws of life and the teachings of nature; while the experience of the past serves to fortify and strengthen your convictions of its superiority over other methods and other systems, it will serve us to remember that the same law of progress applies here as elsewhere. If you would not rust your must work, depend not on past successes alone as a capital that will always yield you the respect and confidence of an intelligent and discerning public.

I used to wonder when I was very young, what the Jews stoned Stephen to death for—and afterward, when I came to learn something of history, why men were burned and butchered and mowed and tortured for thinking different kinds of thoughts from those who murdered them; why such good men as Harvey were persecuted and scolded at and exiled.—What crime Jenner was guilty of that led his contemporaries to treat him like a malefactor; and in latter times, whose house Thompson had set on fire, that he should be loaded with chains and cast into prison, along with other criminals and disturbers of the peace. I used to wonder, if truth were invincible in every encounter with error, why error's mouth should so often shut by padlocks, and her arms compassed with chains, instead of giving her a fair free field in which to spread herself—and be vanquished. The day of dungeons and inquisitorial persecutions is past. But the spirit that say and proclaimed their necessity, still lives, and shows itself in a thousand petty annoyances and displays of ostentation and arrogant assumptions.

Fearful Mortality.

From the report of the board of trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital, we learn that during the past year, 922 patients have been admitted into the institution; of whom 115 or about one eighth of the whole number have died!

At the McLean Asylum 120 patients have been admitted, of whom 16, or nearly one seventh have been discharged dead! In addition to this dreadful mortality, not one half of those admitted have been discharged cured! This too, our readers will remember, is in public institutions where every comfort and attention that tend to facilitate a cure is provided at the expense of a generous and philanthropic public.

The greatest breadth of the Crimea is 124 miles; the length from east to west a 170. The Taria population is about 60,000. A few miles from Simferopol the ground becomes so level, that there is not even the slightest undulation. This uniformity constitutes the whole way to Perekop.

From the Medical Reformer. INCREASE OF INSANITY IN THE UNITED STATES.

In a cursory examination of the census report for the year 1850, I have been greatly surprised at the awful increase of this fearful malady among us; and my own mind has been led into a train of thought in the investigation of the unknown cause that must be surely thought secretly working all this mental wreck and ruin among the vigorous sons and fair daughters of our own happy land.

At the decennial census of 1840 there were reported 14,641 insane and idiotic persons in the United States; ten years later, in 1850 this number is nearly doubled, amounting to 29,220! an increase of 100 per cent. in ten years while the whole increase in population is only 6,122,423, or about 40 per cent. Should not these figures and facts attract the attention of our statesmen and philanthropists and induce them, at least, to make an effort to arrest this awful calamity?—Millions of dollars are annually spent to provide homes, instruction, and assistance for this unfortunate class of individuals, and the minds of many of our generous citizens are devoted to an alleviation of their sufferings. This is as it should be; and every man whose heart contains a spark of sympathy for the afflicted of humanity bids them success in their benevolent efforts.—But may not also something be done to prevent the unprecedented increase of this dreadful national calamity? We think that much may be accomplished in this direction, and to direct the friends of the unfortunate to the contemplation of the means by which it may be done is the object of our present feeble effort.

To remove an evil in the most judicious and expeditious manner, it first becomes necessary that we make suitable explorations in search of its cause. In some instances it is difficult to at once discover this; in the present case such are the conditions, so much greater is the necessity for the attempt.

It is quite apparent that the cause of the great increase of insanity and idiocy among us, is not—as some have supposed—to be attributed to the ten thousand trifling excitements that daily stimulate the mental faculties in this age of new things. Now and wonderful revelations may be made in all the arts and sciences; the student of natural philosophy may delve deep into the great store house of nature and bring forth the most exquisite fabrics of her production, but these are not calculated to so excite the mind as to drive it from its true balance and dash it into chaos. To these things we are from infancy accustomed, and the most wonderful inventions of man or developments of nature excite but a passing notice. Further into the great ocean of physics we must force our way; and "en passant," we would ask, is it possible, that "intoxicating liquors," with all the knowl evil that it has entailed on society, is still chargeable with a portion of this great crime against humanity? It may in part be, but we infer that there are other causes, such too as the great philanthropists and philosophers of the day do not even suspect of a participation, at work down deep in the great heart of society, undermining and sapping the physical as well as mental vitality of the race, and quietly and secretly leaping out the sepulchres that annually entomb this brilliant God-like principle of humanity. All the passions that grow rank in the corrupt heart of man may spend their powers upon this mental principle, if it is firmly planted it will be in vain, for something more is required to drive reason from its throne and plant furies in its seat.

In view of the human being is doubtless subject to many unnatural and disturbing forces which may give rise to derangements in the structure of the brain and other nervous centres sufficient to entail at least a predisposition to the calamity. Of these we shall not here attempt an elucidation, but confine ourselves to a notice of some of the causes that operate to produce this dire effect after birth.

One of the first customs of society which we arraign for a share (and a large one it is too) in producing the great increase of insanity is that of prematurely forcing the young intellect. The desire to see their children precocious is one of the greatest sins of "young America," and so far as insanity has the public mind been carried in this respect that the publishers of newspapers have inserted a department into the columns of their regular issue for the expressed purpose of heralding to the world the profound and brilliant sayings of infant philosophers! In our own limited experience we could produce several cases in which this pernicious custom has resulted in insanity. It is very seldom the case that precocious children ever attain rank as great men, while on the contrary nearly all the foremost men of the nation, were either neglected in their youth or were noted for unusual dullness of intellect. We have no hesitation in asserting that the method of education in this country is radically wrong. The custom of retaining children in school six or eight hours a day plying them continually with difficult questions and hard tasks both in and out of school, forcing the intellectual faculties, like the gardener forces the delicate hot house plant to the total neglect of the physical development is one of the chief causes of the appalling increase of insanity among us. We believe it to be a true physiological maxim, that a sound, strong and vigorous mind cannot be reared; it will not grow in a delicate, weakly, unseasoned body, and whatever tends to lessen the physical powers of the child or youth, also tends to impair the intellectual functions.