THE STAR AND BANNER.

BY D. A. & C. H. BUEHLER. "FEARLESS AND FREE." TWO DOLLARS PER ANNUM.

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MILTON, THE PATRIOT.

The patriotic phase of the character of the author of "Paradise Lost" is thus eloquently sketched by a writer in the October number of The Nassau Literary Magazine:

"Great men," says Carlyle, "take them as you will, are profitable company.—Could we see them well, we should get some sight into the very marrow of the world's history." It is well for us that there is something so attractive in the society of the great men of the earth—that our thoughts so frequently revert to them—so earnestly dwell upon them. All associations and recollections connected with them may not be pleasant or profitable, yet we may find, for the most part, in their recorded thoughts and deeds, matters well worthy of our earnest contemplation. Clear conceptions of the true dignity of man—strong convictions of the superiority of duty to interest—some glimpses of the power of truth in restraining, sustaining, and elevating, the soul—an idea of the influence which an individual mind may wield, and of the responsibility for its exercise—all these, and many other lessons, may be deduced, for our encouragement and admonition, from those bright examples of greatness and goodness which shine from the firmament of the past. It is our hope that some one of these teachings may be impressed upon us by a glance which we are about to cast at a single point in the life of one of the truly great men of the world.

Two hundred years ago, in a small house on one of the most frequented streets of the city of London, there lived a man whose poetic fame is one of the brightest gems in the crown of England's glory.—An eventful period in that man's life we shall attempt to bring before you. A period eventful not to him alone, but to England and humanity momentous. There are times in the lives of nearly all when the feelings of a lifetime seem to concentrate in a single moment—when all the past and all the future, with their mighty waves of memory and anticipation, beat with a violence resistless upon a point of time. This is the turning period of that "tide in the affairs of men" on whose ebb or flood depend their dearest interests.—With the full consciousness that he had come to such a point at the time of which we speak, sat John Milton, that poet of immortal fame. Though not old, severe study and his intense interest in the revolutionary cause had placed some wrinkles on his lofty brow, and given his pleasing countenance a care-worn look. But those who were accustomed to the deep thoughtfulness of his features might have then seen a deeper anxiety than was usual even there. A struggle was going on within which he can only understand who fully comprehends the mind and soul breathing through Paradise Lost. Within a short time the powerful argument of Salmasius in behalf of the beheaded Charles had appeared before the people of Europe, and had begun to work to the prejudice and injury of the republican cause. It demanded therefore an answer. Parliament knew well to whom they best might turn. Cromwell's Latin Secretary was already distinguished in the controversies of the times, as well as by the publication of his earlier poems. He was, therefore, publicly requested to take up the gauntlet against the most learned man of the world, for the defence of the Commonwealth and Republicanism. It was the evening of the day on which the request was made. His physicians had assured him that the weakness of sight which had long been stealing over him would, in case of his compliance, be speedily changed for total blindness. Should he do it? This was the question which caused a deeper shade to cover his brow, an anxious thoughtfulness to mark his features. What would follow his refusal? Then error and falsehood, clothed in the garb of truth, would stalk through the world unnoticed and unrefuted. Those true and noble principles for which he had been so long contending would be misrepresented and reviled, and none would stand up in their defence. And he would have the consciousness of confining within himself those thoughts of mighty power which had been given not for himself alone. But should he comply, what then? He looked around upon the loved faces so familiar to his view, and then he thought that no more would glances of love meet his eye. He turned that eye towards the declining sun, which was casting a serene and gentle light around him, and he felt how awful it would be to see these beams no more. To this deep-hearted poet there was a special terror in the idea of blindness. Nature had for him such fair, deep beauty, in every scene as about men do not see. The cheerful sunlight—the mild brilliancy of the stars—the varied hues which earth puts on thro' the shifting seasons, were to him as the smiling of the Creator's face. Was it wonderful, then, that he should hesitate ere he thought of the time when he should be compelled to sing,

"not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
But cloud instead and ever-during dark
Surround me."

Yet he could not hesitate. He was too steadfast in his devotion to truth to quench the burning thoughts that struggled within him for expression. He had too strong a conviction of his responsibility to exercise his mighty mind to allow its powers to lie dormant. He had too pure a patriotism to be content for the dearest of his interests, to neglect aught that might benefit his country. And he made his decision. *Defensio pro populo Anglicano*" was written, Salmasius was answered, and the cause of the English Republicans vindicated.

And what followed of Milton himself? True it was that the blindness came over his eyes, but there was the light of a peaceful conscience within his soul. True it was he saw no more the beatiful face of nature, but he could still gaze in rapt adoration upon him who dwells in light on which human eye shall never look. Fancy and imagination became the sole sources of his vision. And who shall say how many of the sublimer conceptions of the Paradise Lost may be owing to the blindness of his latter days, which, shutting out all earthly objects, left him to the entire contemplation of things invisible.—Blind old Milton! Grand and glorious is he, not only as the worthy peer of the blind bard of Scio's rocky isle, but as the fit associate of Hamden and Sidney, who in the field and on the block won for themselves the crown of political martyrdom. May we, who enjoy that government which he so much desired for his own loved England, never fail to cherish the memory of Milton the Patriot!

MASTER AND SLAVE.—In looking over the Constitution of some of the Southern States, the tenacity with which the question of slavery is clung to, is almost surprising. Even in Maryland, for instance, one of the nearest bordering on the *free* States, the Constitution renders it almost impossible that slavery should ever be abolished. The section of their constitution, (being an amendment) is as follows:

"The relation of Master and Slave in this State shall not be abolished, unless a bill, so to abolish the same, shall be passed by a *unanimous* vote of the members of each branch of the general assembly, and shall be published at least three months before a new election of delegates, and shall be confirmed by a *unanimous* vote of each brach of the general assembly at the next regular constitutional session after such new election, nor then, without full compensation to the master for the property of which he shall thereby be deprived."

This amendment was made more than half a century after that declaration of Independence which the people of Maryland, in common with others, had celebrated with so much happiness every fourth of July—"that *all* men are endowed by their Creator with unalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." It is true that most of those who had been engaged in the work of Independence had gone to a glorious grave, or been removed by age from the active duties of life, and many persons from other quarters had settled with a view to engage in the slave business. May we not think it was much owing to the influence of the latter, rather than the will of the people themselves, that slavery should be so permanently established amongst them?—*N. York Sun.*

VIVID ELECTRIC LIGHT.—Mr. Staite, an American, has been producing an electric light, which casts the resinated hydrogen light which illuminates the Astor House, into the shade. He lately exhibited it in England from the Sunderland Light-house, where it was witnessed by thousands of admiring spectators. At the distance of three miles, it gave light sufficient to read a letter by, and enable several people to read a newspaper on the stand. The Commissioners of Light-houses went seven miles to sea and thence looked to the shore. The pier light was invisible; but the electric light remained unshorn of its beams and shone as bright as ever—so bright that the captain might have consulted his chart by it! These are very curious and valuable facts in experimental Science.

A HIGH JACK.—The Boston Post, which is always a trump card among newspapers, has the following good one:—A number of well dressed boys were once tormenting a drunken sailor, who was vainly endeavoring to keep them off with a broken spade handle, which he was using for a club, when a gentleman called out to them, "Boys, if Jack is high, it is rather a low business to be making game of him." Jack, whose wits were as sharp as a diamond—(the principal difficulty seemed to be in the lightness of his feet or the unsteadiness of the ground under them, which made his easiest mode of progression to be on all fours)—immediately responded: "Then we are even. I'm high Jack to their low game. But clubs is trumps,—and the deuce is in me if I don't beat 'em yet to my heart's content."

The *Albany Dutchman* says with more homely truth than poetry, that the only people that hope, are the poor. The rich live in fear. Reduce a man to one pair of breeches, and his view of futurity is as buoyant as a cork. Make a millionaire of him, and he will worry from year end to year end. Every gale of wind not only sinks his vessels, but his spirits, and the same conflagration that only breaks up the nap of the loafer, fills the mind of the rich man with fear and trembling for the stock he owns in some insurance company

The following lines, which were written by J. P. R. James, during the war between England and China, shows that the English novelist was quite as prompt to censure the misdeeds of Mother Bull as he was to denounce what he considered those of Brother Jonathan:

"Full-loving England like a quaff
Would force the men of tea,
To swallow opium they don't lack
All for a filthy fee.
Sharp practice this, good Master Bull,
As you may some day learn,
Fate's roundabout is not so full,
But you may have your turn.
With bullets and with sharpened steel,
You make poor Tartars run,
But 'tis some day the same you feel,
You'll find time much fun."

A gentleman a few evenings since, was expatiating eloquently to a young lady, on the merits of a poetically inclined acquaintance, who he said had Burns at his tongue's end.

"Oh, la!" said she, "I've had burns at my tongue's end, many a time."

QUESTION AND ANSWER.—A boy, who was sent to inquire how an old lady named Wilkins was in health, asked her servant, "Please, marm, my missus wants to know how old Mrs. Wilkins is to-day," to which the latter replied, "she is just seventy-four to-day."

THE FATAL JOKE.

BY HELEN C. GAGE.

I was once present—where a small party of young persons were warmly discussing the subject of *practical joking*. After a long and interesting debate the question seemed about to be decided in its favor, when a gentleman, whose singularly melancholy and dejected air at once attracted our attention, related the following story:—

"In my younger days I was remarkable for my fondness for practical joking, even to such a degree that I never allowed a good opportunity to pass unimproved.

"My orphan cousin, Robert, to whom I was fondly attached, was of a different nature from this. He was sober, sedate, and grave almost to a fault, very thoughtful and very bashful. This stupidity, as I called it, was often a check to my natural gaiety, and it was seldom that I could induce him to join my boyish sports, tho' he sometimes did, merely to gratify me. Poor Robert! the green turf of his native valley, on whose bosom the fairest flowers that New England could boast of, have blossomed and withered, and passed away to eternity, leaving behind them a lasting impress of their loviness, now covers his mouldering ashes. Yes; Robert is dead, and I am the unhappy cause of his untimely end, the circumstances of which will serve to convince you of the folly of "*practical joking*."

It was late one evening, early in September, that Robert and myself retired to our room to talk over the exciting scenes of the day, for it was the night after the election, and a fine holiday it had been to us. I had just returned from a visit to some friends in the city, and had, of course, brought with me many curious things which Robert had never seen, nor heard of. Among them was a mask, the use of which I explained to my unsophisticated cousin, who laughed and wondered why people could wish to look horridly enough to wear one.

I was in my gayest mood, just ready for an adventure, and seeing he was disposed to make fun of my mask, I proposed an experiment.

"What!" exclaimed my cousin, "you do not intend to wear it to bed, do you?"

"Far from it," I replied, "it is you should wear the mask; not I. I am quite ape enough without it."

"A very just remark, indeed," he observed gravely.

I had never seen him in better humor, and I thought it best to unfold my plans at once. At our next door lived a worthy gentleman, with whose daughter my bashful cousin was already smitten. That very night as we passed by, on our return from the village, he had called and bade her good night, and had received in return, one of the sweetest smiles from the happiest eyes and most charming lips I ever beheld. I was his bosom friend, and to me he always entrusted his secrets, (alas! how little had I deserved such confidence,) yet, he always blushed when I spoke of Julia.

"Some evil spirit, I know not what else it could have been, prompted me when I proposed to have a little sport, at her expense. My plans were these:—He was to dress himself in a suit of clothes to correspond with the mask, which by the way, was the most frightful looking thing I ever saw, repair to the dwelling of his lodge, and call her to the door by rapping. I was to stand near to witness the result, and participate in the joke.

He blushed, hung his head, and, of course, refused. I had expected this, but flattered myself that I could easily persuade him to the contrary. It was, however, a harder task than I had anticipated, for his unwillingness seemed greater than ever; the reasons I readily understood.

I pob'd and p'shaw'd, and finally threatened to expose to all the boys his cowardly disposition, as I pleased to term it, and tender feelings toward Julia, which as yet, none of them had discovered. This last argument proved more successful than the other, for he well knew that I never suffered the least threat to remain unfulfilled; and the fear of being laughed at—beside betraying that which he most wished to conceal, conquered, and he yielded, though reluctantly, his consent. At that moment—I even exulted over my triumph, though I have often since wished my lips had been struck dumb, before I had uttered those words that sealed the after fate of two pure beings. But in my thoughtlessness, I rushed heedlessly on in whatever I undertook, regardless of consequences. My wild reckless spirit had never been tamed.

Finding that there was but one alternative, and that to submit cheerfully to my whim, he suffered himself to be arrayed as my fancy suggested, with good grace, and even laughed quite heartily, as I added garment after garment, in order to make him look as frightful as possible; yet, after all, I could see that his mind was ill at ease; and I condemned myself for being the cause of his unhappiness.

"When at length all was arranged to my satisfaction, I placed the horrid mask over his face and led him to the mirror.—He started back and involuntary placed his hand to his head, as if to take it away, but my interference prevented. He even pleaded that the penalty I had threatened to inflict, in case he refused to go, might be spared him. But I was inexorable. I was anxious to see the result, and the delay caused by his unwillingness vexed me.

A renewal of my threats of exposure succeeded in removing all obstacles, and we immediately set about our adventure.—Cautiously as thieves, we crept through the yard, and each took his station, Robert at the door, and I at the window nearest him.

The curtain was partially drawn aside, so that I could easily distinguish every object in the room. As I had anticipated, she was alone. The domestic had retired, and I knew her old father too well to believe that he was any where but in the arms of Somnus; for he was one of those sensible persons whose maxim is—"early to bed, and early to rise."

Julia—I never shall forget how lovely she was—sat beside a small table in the centre of the room, apparently deeply absorbed in a book. Her fair hand supported her head, and her hair fell gracefully down upon her neck, in beautiful natural ringlets. She was a delicate wild-flower, that had budded add blossomed under the shelter of a father's roof; and the sunshine of gladness, and the dews of affection, had ever lighted and cheered her way.

At length I gave a signal, and a loud rap was given. She paused for a moment, listened attentively, and then, laying down her book, arose and approached the door. As she opened it, the mask stepped boldly in, according to my directions. How shall I describe the scene that followed? Even now I shudder to think of it! Instantly all earthly hue fled from her face, and, with a piercing shriek, she staggered back a few paces, and fell heavily to the floor. Quicker than lightning I sprang through the door, and knelt at her side. I grasped her wrist; its pulsation had ceased! I placed my hand upon her heart; that also was still. She was dead!

* * * * * * *

I can recall but little else that took place that night. The domestics, who slept in an adjoining room, had been awakened by that terrible shriek, and came rushing in to learn the cause of the uproar. I could not have spoken, even had explanation been necessary. I was overwhelmed with grief and self condemnation. I could only point at the lifeless form of poor Julia, and at the mask, which Robert had torn from his face, and dashed to the floor. *He* stood gazing at me, with a cold, vacant stare, that I but too well understood. More I cannot remember.

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Ten days passed, and I awoke from a raving delirium. They led him to my bedside; but, oh, what a change! I stretched out my clasped hands, in an agony of grief and remorse, to implore his forgiveness. He neither moved nor spoke; but that same unmeaning stare drove home to my heart the fearful conviction. Alas! he was a hopeless idot!

* * * * * * *

Fifteen years have elapsed since that never-to-be-forgotten era of my life. I never have, I never can, forgive myself for having been the cause of so much misery, though I have sought and hoped for forgiveness from on high. I never can look upon a mask without a shudder, or hear its use denounced, without alluding to my experience. And you, my young friends, when you are tempted to play tricks upon others, I am sure, will stop to consider, that what seems to you so innocent and harmless, may, perhaps, in the end, prove a "FATAL JOKE."—*Yankee Blade.*

CALIFORNIA.—Edwin Bell, Esq., formerly editor of the Hagerstown Torch Light, writing from San Francisco to a friend in Virginia, says:

"I regret (should this ever reach you) that I cannot give you more encouragement than, I shall be expected to give.—Sincerely and frankly, I cannot advise you to come out here. You may succeed, or you may fail, the failures being ten to one in proportion to the success. The great mass would be glad to go home, if they had money enough to carry them back. I know you well, and I have an indistinct knowledge of things here, and if you wish my advice, will tell you to stay where you are, and be content with your lot."

PREVENTING A VETO.—A story is told of Mr. Van Buren, that while on a tour through the West, in 1840, he was upset in a stage coach, and as he stood up in the mud, and asked the driver, how the accident happened, was told by that personage, that he had already upset eleven members of Congress, and by so doing, he secured the votes of every one of them for appropriations to the National Road, and as he never before had had a President for a passenger, he thought he would improve the opportunity of doing his duty to the West, in endeavoring to prevent a veto, in case another appropriation should pass.

AFRICAN COLONIZATION.—The Colonization Herald has received an interesting letter from Elliott Cresson, Esq., at London, principally in reference to Liberia, in which he strongly urges the appointment, by the United States Government, of a consul to Monrovia; and more especially as England has in her behalf, now appointed one—the Rev. A. W. Hanson, a native of Africa. The letter represents the prospects of Liberia as very flattering, notwithstanding the smallness of the sums appropriated for the benefit of that colony.

TEMPERANCE IN FRANCE.—Le Briton, a Nantes journal, asserts that there are in France three hundred and sixty thousand Cabarets, or tippling houses: "the tippling housekeepers" outnumber all the priests, teachers and magistrates in the country. The revenues derived by government from these houses amount to 62,000,000 francs, but the immorality and misery produced by them cost public and private charity twice that sum.

An anecdote is told of Gov. Jones, of Tennessee, which is too good to be lost. Whilst making a speech some two years since a rowdy fellow hissed him. Immediately the cry, "turn him out—turn him out," arose from various parts of the crowd. Just at the time an ass near by commenced braying, when the Governor remarked to the audience, "let him alone, gentlemen, his father is calling him and he will soon leave."

Peter M. Deshong, the celebrated mathematician, was lately found dead in his berth on board the steamer plying between Kingston and Toronto, Canada West.—He is said to have died of apoplexy.

The cholera, we are pleased to learn, has entirely disappeared from Steubenville, Ohio, and that town now enjoys its usual health.

The Mania for Tulips in Holland.

The inordinate passion, which at one time prevailed for Tulips, amounted to actual madness, and well deserved the name of Tulipomania, by which it is distinguished. The Tulip was introduced into Europe from Constantinople in the year 1559, according to Gesner. After it became known to the Dutch merchants and nobility at Vienna, it became a most important branch of trade in Holland, and they sent frequently to Constantinople for roots and seeds of the flower. In the year 1624, and for three years after, little else was thought of in Holland but this traffic; all embarked in it, from the noble man to the common laborer, and so successful were many that they rose rapidly from abject poverty to affluence, and those who had been barely able to procure the most scanty means of subsistence were enabled to set up their carriages, and enjoy every convenience and luxury of life. Indeed, when we read of the enormous sums paid for a single root, we can feel no surprise at the immense and rapid fortunes which were made. It is on record that one wealthy merchant gave his daughter no other portion to secure an eligible match than a single root. The plant to this day bears the name of the "marriage portion."

We find that 2 hogsheads of wine, 4 tons of beer, 2 lasts of wheat, 4 lasts of rye, 2 tons of butter, 1000 pounds of cheese, 4 fat oxen, 8 fat swine, 12 fat sheep, a complete bed, a suit of clothes, a silver beaker, valued at 2500 florins, were given in exchange for a single root of the tulip called the Viceroy. This mode of barter, being attended with inconvenience, could not be general, and gave place to sale by weight, by which immense sums were made. Single roots have sold for 4400 florins; 2000 florins was a common price for a root of the Semper Augustus; and it happened that once, when only two roots of this species could be procured, the one at Amsterdam, and the other at Haarlem, 4600 florins, and a new carriage, and a pair of horses, with complete harness, were given for one; and for the other an exchange made of 12 acres of land: indeed, land was frequently parted with when cash could not be advanced for the purchase of a desired root; and houses, cattle, furniture, and even clothes, were all sacrificed to the Tulipomania. In the course of four months, a person has been known to realize 60,000 florins. These curious bargains took place in taverns, where notaries and clerks were regularly paid for attending; and after the contracts were completed, the traders of all ranks sat down together to a splendid entertainment. At these sales, the usual price of a root of the Viceroy was £250; a root of the Admiral Liefkens, £440; a root of the Admiral Von Eyk, £160; a root of the Semper Agustus, £550. A collection of Tulips of Wouter Brockholminster was disposed of by his executors for £9000, but they sold a root of the Semper Agustus, for which they got £300, and a very fine Spanish cabinet, valued at £1000. The Semper Agustus was, indeed, in great request.—A gentleman received £3000 for three roots which he sold; he had also the offer of £1500 a year for his plants for seven years, with an engagement that it should be given up as found, the increase alone having been retained during the period. One gentleman made £6000 in the space of six months. It was ascertained that the trade of Tulips in one city alone, in Holland, amounted to £1,000,000 sterling. To such an extent was this extraordinary traffic carried on, that a system of stock-jobbing was introduced; and Tulips which were bought and sold for much more than their weight in gold, were nominally purchased without changing hands at all.—Beckman, in describing this curious traffic, for which all other merchandise and pursuit was neglected, mentions that engagements were entered into, which were to be fulfilled in six months, and not to be affected by any change in the value of the root during that time. Thus, a bargain might be made with a merchant for a root at the price of 1000 florins. At the time specified for its delivery, it value may have risen 1500 florins, the purchaser being a gainer of 500 florins. Should it on the contrary, have fallen to 800 florins, the purchaser was then a loser to the amount of 200 florins. If there had been no fluctuation in the market, the bargain terminated without an exchange of the money for the root, so that it became a species of gambling, at which immense sums were lost and won. The decline of the mania was as unexpected as its rise had been surprising. When settling day came, there were many defaulters, some from inability to meet their engagements, and many from dishonesty. Persons began to speculate more cautiously, and the more respectable to feel that the system of gambling, in which they were engaged, was by no means creditable. The Tulip-holders then wished to dispose of their merchandise really and not *nominally*, but found to their disappointment, that the demand had decreased. Prices fell—contracts were violated—appeals were made to the magistrates in vain; and, after violent contentions, in which the venders claimed, and the purchasers resisted payment, the State interposed, and issued an order invalidating the contracts, which put an end at once to the stock-jobbing; and the roots, which had been valued at £5000 each, were now to be had for £5; and thus ended the most strange commerce in which Europe had ever been engaged.

Some curious anecdotes connected with the mania may be found. Among them is one of a burgomaster, who had made interest for a friend, and succeeded in obtaining a very lucrative situation for him. The friend anxious to testify his gratitude, entreated of the burgomaster to allow him to show it by some substantial proof. His generous benefactor would accept no favor in return; all he asked was the gratification of seeing his flower-garden, which was readily granted.—The friends did not meet again for two years. At the end of that time, the gentleman went to visit the burgomaster. On going into his garden, the first thing that attracted his observation was a rare Tulip of great value, which he instantly knew must have been purloined from his garden, when his treacherous friend had been admitted into it, two years before.—He gave vent to the most frantic passion—immediately resigned his place of £1000 per annum—returned to his house merely to tear up his flower-garden—and, having completed the work of destruction, left it, never to return.

We have read of a sailor, who had brought a heavy load to the warehouse of a merchant, who only gave him a herring as payment, and refreshment. This was very inadequate to satisfy the man's hunger, but perceiving, as he thought, some onions lying before him, he snatched up one, and bit it. It happened to be a Tulip-root, worth a king's ransom; so we may conceive the consternation of the merchant, which is said to have nearly deprived him of reason.

It has been said that John Barclay, the author of the romance of "Angenia," was driven by the Tulipomania. Nothing could induce him to quit the house to which his flower-garden was attached, though the situation was so unwholesome that he ran the risk of having his health destroyed. He kept two fierce mastiffs to guard his flowers, which he determined never to abandon.

The passion for Tulips was at its height in England toward the close of the seventeenth and the commencement of the eighteenth century. The tulip is a native of the Levant, and of many of the eastern countries. Though common in Persia, it is highly esteemed, and considered an emblem of love. Chardin tells us, that when a young Persian wishes to make his sentiments known to his mistress, he presents her with one of these flowers, which, of course, must be the plain-colored one, with black anthers, so often seen in our gardens; as Chardin adds, "He thus gives her to understand, that he is all on fire with her beauty, and his heart burned to a coal." The flower is still highly esteemed by florists, and has its place among the few named florists' flowers. Many suppose it to be "the Lily of the Field," mentioned in the Sermon on the Mount, from its growing in wild profusion in Syria, and from the extreme delicacy of the texture of its petals, and from the wonderful variety and dazzling beauty of its colors. It may be so; and the flower acquires from this an interest which nothing else could give.

WILL FIGURES LIE, OR WILL THEY NOT?—The mathematicians and algebraists of St. Louis have had this subject under grave consideration. We confess the question has two sides to it, and state the case, in order that the learned may solve the problem, if they can:

"Two farmers went to market, last week, each with thirty turkies. One sold his two for a dollar; the other sold his, three for a dollar; that is both got twenty-five dollars together. Each pocketed his money and went home. Well, the buyer contracted with each of them for the same quantity at the same rate, the next morning. The next day the one said to the other, 'Look here, there is no use for us both to go to market, neighbor; you take my turkies along with yours. Mine, you know, are two for a dollar, that is you let him have but five for two dollars, and bring back his money.' Upon dividing the money, at night, they fell into a quarrel, because there were only sixty turkies, and five is in sixty, twelve times only; and that made a sum of only twenty-four dollars, while the previous day they had twenty-five dollars. How is it? Who'll tell?

POISONED CONFECTIONERY.—A confectioner was admitted to the City Hospital, N. York, a few days ago, affected with paralysis of both arms caused by the lead with which he colored the candies. Poisonous pigments are used to a great extent in coloring confectionery, and the danger to children eating such toys is manifest when even working with the paints will produce such deplorable effects.

The population of Philadelphia is expected to reach about 450,000—in 1840 it was 258,037. Pittsburg with its suburbs, has about 80,000—in 1840, 46,000. Lancaster about 18,000—in 1840, 8,417.—Reading 15,931—in 1840, 9,410. It is estimated that the entire population of Pennsylvania will be shown to be not far from 2,300,000, and that of Ohio about 2,200,000.

INTOXICATING DRINKS.—President Jefferson once said, "The habit of using ardent spirits by men in office, has occasioned more injury to the public, and more trouble to me, than all other causes. And were I to commence my administration again, with the experience I now have, the first question I would ask respecting a candidate would be, "Does he use ardent spirits?"

AN OLD WOMAN died near New Orleans a few days since. She was a native of Africa, and from records in the possession of her late master, Alex. Grant, Esq., she is supposed to have been 130 years old. She leaves a husband only a little over 80 years of age.

Old bachelors do not live as long as other men. They have nobody to mend their clothes and darn their stockings. They catch cold, and there is nobody to make them peppermint tea, consequently they drop off.

A recent London Medical Periodical makes the following declaration:—"There never lived that conqueror, who, with sword or lance, slew one quarter of the myriads that have died of lancet and leech."

Certain carpenters, lately, who struck for higher wages at Liverdum, France, have been sentenced to periods of imprisonment varying from two to six months.

Lola Montes, according to the last account, was thinking of retiring to a convent. This puts us in mind of the couplet:

The devil got sick; the devil a monk would be;
The devil got well; the devil a monk was he.

AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS.

STEAM PLOW.—A late London paper contains the following account of a Steam Plow which has lately been invented and used in England; a sketch of it may not be uninteresting to some of our agricultural readers:

The engine moves across the centre of the field on a light portable railway. The plows are placed and recede on either side of the railway, at right angles to it.

The plows employed consist of four ordinary and four subsoil plows, fixed in a frame. It is directed by a person standing upon a small platform.

Two such plows, one on either side the railway, alternately advance and recede—the advancing plow working, the other being idle until it reaches its proper position for plowing the next four rows. On the completion of the four furrows both ways, the engines and side frames advance each three feet.

The plows are attached to an endless chain, a hundred and fifty yards in length. They can be detached at pleasure, or shifted from one side of the chain to the other. They travel at the rate of five miles an hour. Provision is made in case they strike against any impediment.

Arrangements are made to suit irregularly shaped fields, and to increase or diminish the number of plows, if necessary. With regard to the value of the invention, the author quoted uses the following language:

In the present state of things, it is difficult to form a correct estimate of the value of the invention in a commercial point of view. I will only say that a machine of the power, and with the arrangement described, would perform the work usually done by sixteen plows, driven by as many men, and drawn by thirty-two horses. Requiring itself the attendance of eight men, and a horse to draw the water for the engine, it would thus save the labor of thirty two horses and eight men. Against this must be set an expense of five shillings a day for coals.

PREPARE YOUR WHEAT FOR WINTER.—A vast portion of winter-killed wheat comes in consequence of wanton neglect of the plainest dictates of common sense, while putting in the seed. Thousands of acres are sown every year upon hollow places in the field, which, even though the richest spots, are covered with a pool of water, whenever a heavy rain falls.

Without offering our own opinions, or stopping to discuss the question whether wheat will produce chess or not, we can safely say that all such spots in the wheat field will be much more likely to produce it than the adjoining ground that is free from standing water; and that spots are often to be seen at Harvest, covered with this worthless grain, where a single furrow, or fifteen minutes labor, would have opened a drain and kept the soil dry, and given the owner several bushels of sound wheat for such a small outlay of labor.

It is a wanton waste of labor and seed to throw it away upon a flat clayey surface without turning water furrows to carry off the winter rains as they fall. It is only upon such neglected spots that the advocates of transmutation contend the change takes place. And as wheat is so much more valuable than chess, it is perfectly surprising that any people will prepare the ground exactly right to produce the latter. So well do the wheat growers of Lower Virginia understand the benefits of drainage, that they sow almost universally in beds, and in many places these are only five feet wide; that is, the wheat is sown upon beds of the same width as Indian corn is planted, and the advocates of narrow beds contend that they can make more wheat than those who sow upon nine or fifteen foot beds.

Until American farmers learn the great value of underdraining, we must continually remind them of the necessity of keeping the surface dry by opening ditches. To every one of our readers, therefore, who has an acre of land which he wishes to sow, correctly, as at once and regardless whether any little pools of water stand after a shower, and we take steps immediately to drain it off as fast as it falls, for you cannot expect to grow wheat, though you may grow chess or weeds.

SHRINKAGE OF CORN.—Knowing that a great difference of opinion exists among farmers as to the loss of corn by shrinkage or drying, from the time it is cribbed in the fall, until spring, we the latter part of March, I determined to satisfy myself on this point—at least so far as one single experiment could determine. On the 23d of November last, the day on which we finished husking, I measured two bushels of ears to a standard bushel, as accurately as I could. I then weighed each bushel, found the weights 40 pounds respectively. The number of ears was 50 in one, and 50 in the other. I had one parcel shelled, and got 33½ lbs. by weight, and half a bushel and half a peck by measure, and 10 lbs. of cobs. The corn was spread in a dry, airy place, where it remained till a few days since, when it had lost just half a peck, or 50 per cent. by measure, and a fraction over 3lbs. or 10 per cent. in weight.

This shows a difference of 40 per cent. between the loss by weight and measure. How is this difference to be accounted for? It is owing to the minute division of the water in the corn, that when we find a loss in weight that should occupy a space less than three pints, there is an actual loss of eight pints in bulk. The cobs of the other parcel were accidentally destroyed; so that I was prevented from ascertaining the loss of the cob.

The other bushel of ears was kept in a dry, airy place, and shelled a few days ago, and gave just half a bushel of corn, weighing just 60½ pounds.

These are the facts, as gathered from my husking experiments. The corn was a variety of large white, between the gourd seed and some other variety, having from ten to twenty ears on a cob. The corn was in good condition for housing at the time we finished husking.—*Albany Cultivator.*

PLASTER FOR POTATOES.—The Newburyport Herald states that a West-Newbury farmer planted this season eight acres of potatoes, manuring six of them with plaster, on a piece of land in the hill; the seventh acre he left without plaster; six acres have turned out as usual, but the other two have been entirely destroyed by the rot.

What *other* Jenny is the inseparable travelling companion of Jenny Lind?—*Gene*-rosity.