The Chestertown Transcript.

VOL. XV. CHESTERTOWN, FRIDAY, JANUARY 26, 1877. NO. 37.

THE FAST MAIL.

The revival of the fast mail brings up again the following capital piece by John H. Yates, which we believe first appeared in the Rochester Democrat:

Lay by the weekly, Betsey, it's old like you and I,
And read the morning's daily, with its pages scarcely dry.
While you and I were sleepin', they were printing them to-day,
In the city by the ocean, several hundred miles away.

"How'd I get it?" Bless you, Betsey, you needn't doubt and laugh,
It didn't drop down from the clouds nor come by telegraph;
I got it by the lightnin' mail we've read about, you know—
The mail that Jonathan got up about a month ago.

We farmers livin' 'round the hill went to the town to-day,
To see the fast mail catch the bags that hung beside the way;
Quick as a flash from thundering clouds, whose tempest swept the sky,
The bags were caught on board the train as it went roarin' by.

We are seein' many changes in our fast declinin' years;
Strange rumors now are soundin' in our hard-of-hearin' ears.
Ere the sleep that knows no wakin' comes to waft us o'er the stream,
Some great power may be taking all the self-conceit from steam.

Well do we remember, Betsey, when the postman carried mails,
Ridin' horseback through the forest 'long the lonely Indian trails,
How impatiently we waited—we were earnest lovers then—
For our letters coming slowly, many miles, through wood and glen.

Many times, you know, we missed them—for the postman never came—
Then, not knowing what had happened, we did each the other blame;
Long those lover quarrels lasted, but the God who melts the proud
Brought our strayin' hearts together and let the sunshine through the cloud.

Then, at last, the tidings reached us that the faithful postman fell
Before the forest savage with his wild, terrific yell.
And your letters lay and mouldered while the sweet birds sang above,
And I was sayin' bitter things about a woman's love.

Long and tedious were the journeys—few and far between the mails,
In the days when we were courting—when we threshed with wooden flails;
Now the white-winged cars are flying 'long the shores of inland seas,
And younger lovers read their letters 'mid luxury and ease.

We have witnessed many changes in our three score years and ten;
We no longer sit and wonder at the discoveries of men;
In the shadows of life's evening we rejoice that our boys
Are not called to meet the hardship that embittered half our joys.

Like the old mail through the forest, youthful years go slowly by;
Like the fast mail of the present, manhood's years how swift they fly;
We are sitting in the shadow: soon shall break life's brittle cord—
Soon shall come the welcome summons by the fast mail of the Lord.

☞ A man who was not clever at conundrums, in attempting to get off one at a tea party at his own house the other evening, became exceedingly mixed. He intended to ask the old question, 'Why is a woman like ivy?' the familiar but gallant answer to which is, 'Because the more you are ruined the closer she clings.' But he put it, 'Why is ivy like a woman?' which none of the ladies could tell, and so the unfortunate man told them himself that it was 'Because the closer it clings the more you are ruined.'

☞ 'Sure,' said Patrick, rubbing his head with delight at the prospect of a present from his employer, 'I always make to do my duty.'

'I believe you,' replied his employer, 'and therefore I shall make you a present of all you have stolen from me during the year.'

'I thank you, your honor,' replied Pat, 'and may all your friends and acquaintances treat you as liberally.'

☞ A man entirely bald except a little tuft of hair at the base of the brain behind the ears, frequently took off his hat and scratched his head back of his ears. A waggish backwoodsman thereupon shouted: 'Stranger drive 'em up in the clearing, and you can ketch 'em all in five minutes.'

☞ What letter would make every flower? U would make all flowers.

A Silver-Lined Cloud.

BY GRACE THORNTON.

Egbert Walton sat alone in his counting house. He had locked the door to prevent intrusion, and the busy movements of his clerks outside came to him faintly, as he sat his head buried in his hands, and an expression of abject misery marking his handsome face.

He had learned, within that hour, that he was a ruined man, and the consciousness had burst upon him with a stunning horror, for he was not alone to suffer.

But three months before, he had led to the altar the most beautiful and capricious belle of the season. He had been congratulated and envied by all his acquaintances, and after a fashionable wedding tour, wherein her marvelous trousseau was displayed to its best advantage, they had returned to the showy and splendid home he had fitted up for her reception, and a round of gaities had followed, in which she had shone the queen, and he had been considered the luckiest of bridegrooms.

Their life had been so filled with display and excitement heretofore that they really had not had much time to grow acquainted with each other. They had scarcely ever spent an evening alone altogether.—The hours he could spare from business had been occupied in dressing for various entertainments, the chief enjoyment of which had been, to him, to hear his wife called the handsomest woman present; and even that delight had begun to pale, and a vague longing for something better than dazzle and show had begun to assert itself within his mind.

Dora had been an orphan, brought up by a fashionable aunt, with expensive tastes and a passion for gay society.

She had brought Egbert no fortune beyond the trifle saved from her showy education, which her aunt said, would serve as pin-money for the first year or two; but that was no consideration to the rich and generous young husband, whose prosperous speculation promised soon to make him a millionaire.

Now all was lost. A cloud, at first no larger than a man's hand, had spread into a hurricane of desolation and despair.

A whisper of suspension, on the part of a great banking house with which he was deeply concerned, had swelled into positive assurance within the hour. His investments were widely spread, and boldly ventured; there was no possibility of a recall. The crash could not be resisted—the blow must and did fall.

"Only for Dora," he muttered to himself, as he raised his ghastly white face from its drooping position, and flung back his damp hair, 'I could meet it like a man—only for her.'

He recalled her butter-fly life of gaiety and splendor—her passion for excitement and admiration; and then shuddered to face the dreary reality before them.

'If she were a widow, she would marry again. There are other fortunes that may be hers, if you will make her free,' whispered the temper, and Egbart's despairing eyes glanced toward the pistol-case hidden in his desk.

He sprang up and locked it quickly.—He would not entertain so base and cowardly a thought.

'It must be done sooner or later,' he said, decidedly. 'She must know it, and it is cruel to let it reach her through any means but mine.'

He composed his face, and passed out among his employees, looking but little shaken, except in his loss of color, and they whispered among each other how well he bore it.

He walked toward home and as he entered its elegant hall, his wife passed him with a rich lace shawl thrown over her shoulders.

'You are just in time to see a perfect gem,' she cried, gaily. 'Come back into the parlor, where I can display it to a better advantage. See—is it not rarely beautiful? The Blanks' imported it expressly to my order.'

'Vain and frivolous,' was his inward comment, as he turned aside with a look of wretchedness, and thought. 'What shall I do? How can I break such tidings to so unthinking a being—such a spoiled darling of fortune?'

'You are out of humor, it seems,' she said with a gaze of cold surprise, for his manner had piqued her, and she was too accustomed to adulation to brook neglect tamely.

He did not answer at first, but flung himself into a seat, and cast down his eyes upon the rich carpet.

'Is this a whim, or is it meant to annoy me?' she asked proudly.

Her tone stung her harrassed husband; he had meant to spare her to the utmost, but her lofty indifference overcame his resolution.

She swept past him with an offended air, but pausing at the door, she turned, and looking full upon him, asked once more:

'Will you explain what caprice has seized you, and why you play off severity and gloom upon me?'

'Yes, I will explain!' he exclaimed, springing to his feet, with white lips and shaking form. 'Since you demand to know, let we tell you that it means ruin—utter, entire, complete ruin! I was a rich man when I married you, and to-day I am a beggar. Not one cent that I called my own can be claimed by me any longer. The roof over our heads now belongs to strangers, and we must go forth homeless and penniless, to begin the world again.'

He spoke as he felt, in a high, excited key; his frame shook with the fervor of his words.

His wife stood gazing full in his eyes dilated widely, as if to take in a scene impossible for belief.

'Is this true?' she uttered, and her voice sounded low and husky.

'Too true—too true!' he returned, burying his face in his hands.

She sank into a chair, and taking off the splendid shawl mechanically, carefully returned it to its original folds. Then she sat still, looking steadily before her with a blank stare.

Once or twice Egbert looked up expectantly and uneasily, but there was no change in her expression, and his eyes dropped again.

At length he rose, and going toward her, put his arm around her neck, and bent over her in sad affection, to which she offered no response.

'I would to heaven the blow could have fallen on me alone!' he murmured. 'I feel that I have wronged you bitterly in subjecting you to so fearful a reverse; but I am young yet, Dora, and it your aunt will receive you in Paris, I will work hard that you may live with her in comparative comfort, until I have conquered misfortune, and risen above this dreadful crash.'

She shuddered and hid her face when he spoke thus, but still she made no response.

He left her side, and paced the room excitedly for a time, until her voice arrested his frenzied steps.

'Would it not be best to give up all at once?' she asked, quietly.

There was a strange and almost automaton-like composure about her, and her voice was very calm.

She looked at him in such an earnest business-like manner that it astonished him beyond the power of replying.

'You said we would give up everything to pay your creditors,' she continued in the same tone. 'Would it not be best to do it at once?'

'We must have time,' he answered, hastily. 'I cannot see you torn, without preparation, from the luxury that has always been yours—I cannot permit you to suffer anything that I can shield you from. Your aunt—'

Dora made an indignant gesture that her husband could not comprehend.

Before they could say more a servant appeared, with a message from the office for Mr. Walton.

It was long after midnight when he returned from his counting-room. His wife was asleep, and he would not disturb her but threw himself on a lounge in his dressing-room, to wait for day light, for in his then state of mind he looked on sleep as impossible.

He was mistaken, however, for just before morning he fell into a slumber that lasted for hours.

When he aworke, Dora had breakfasted and gone out, and again the pressure of business detained him away from her until after bedtime.

In the day, he had despatched her a note, in which he tried to be as cheerful as he could, and again he alluded to her aunt and a year in Paris as a place of refuge from the present cares and annoyances of their position.

She had no answer, and again seemed in a deep slumber when he entered their chamber.

'Poor darling!' he sighed, as he bent over her lovely face. 'Such beauty should have nothing to do with the coarse, hard, real world. Would to God I could have screened you from all its cares and sorrows!'

A hot tear fell on her smooth white brow, and she seemed to stir for a moment, but presently she was still again and he moved silently away.

In the hurry and distraction of his forced settlements, he had but little time for other thought; and yet it pained him bitterly to know that his wife avoided him—for nearly three days had now passed since they had spoken together.

Wearily he turned homeward on the afternoon of the third day.

By giving up everything he possessed, he would stand free from debt in the world, and bear an honest name.

He had at once resolved on this course, and immediately afterward received an offer of a position in the house of an old merchant—a friend of his father's—who warmly applauded his resolution. This would be a terrible change to Dora, and he would make any sacrifice rather than have her meet it. Paris would be an escape, and painful as the separation must prove, he would urge it with all the strength of his unselfish nature.

He was weary and despondent, as he entered the house, but he tried to meet her cheerfully.

She was not there. A little note lay on his dressing table, directed to him, in his wife's writing, and filled with a vague alarm, he rang the bell for her maid before opening it.

An elderly and trusty woman responded. She was a sort of housekeeper and general factotum of Dora's, and before Mr. Walton could ask a question, she anticipated him.

'Mrs. Walton explained to the servants that business troubles would render it necessary to give up the establishment at once, sir,' she said, 'so she paid and dismissed them all, except little Minnie, the errand-girl, whom she took with her. I am left in charge after the sale, sir.'

Egbert looked bewildered. He could not understand his wife's possessing such business abilities, and after turning her note over and over again in his hand, he opened it.

There was but one line.

"Come to the [illegible] No. 3, Sherwood Road. DORA."

'Sherward Road!' he repeated, as the woman retired. 'That is the road we drive out to the river. What can Dora be doing in cottage No. 9?'

He lost no time in endeavoring to discover, and soon reached the designated locality. It was of a row of pretty, though humble cottages, white in color, and surrounded by neatly cultivated gardens.

No. 9 was the centre one, and he had scarcely stepped on the porch, when the door flew open, and there in a tiny box of an entry, very unlike their grand, tiled hall, stood Dora, smiling as he had never seen her smile before.

She was dressed very plainly, and wore a white linen apron; but, with all the aid of silks and jewels, she had never seemed so beautiful to him.

'Come in, dear,' she cried, joyously—'come in, and see our new home, and do say a world, or try to kiss me till I tell you all about it!'

They were in a neat parlor, opening by folding-doors into a small dining-room, both apartments being embellished by bay windows and plenty of spring flowers.—Everything was fresh, pretty and simple—a very meagre, poor place, compared with the palace they had left, and yet a home, a true, dear home, in the very best sense fo the word—for there stood its mistress, with open arms, seeking her husband's love, in womanly fondness, as a devoted wife.

Egbert instantly disobeyed her command by catching her up in his arms and pressing her fondly to his heart.

'You must let me tell you!' she exclaimed, struggling and panting. 'I do not want to be loved until you feel that I deserve it a little for being ashamed of my self in the past—for living an idle self-indulgent life, without a thought save for the gratification of my own folly and caprices, and merely regarding you as the minister to all my selfish vanity. When, three days ago, the story of your losses burst upon me, they well nigh stunned me, in their sudden force. The awakening was painful. I felt all I had failed to be a true wife, and an unutterable hopelessness and self-reproach mingled with the knowledge. I was bowed to the earth, yet speechless to confess my error.'

Egbert, eager in his new-found joy, strove to interrupt her self-reproaches, but in vain.

'You must know how bad I've been—how stupidly selfish and exacting—so as to appreciate my new and better self, she protested.

'You were always good—always lovely darling!' he cried, rapturously; 'but somehow, you seem nearer to me now than ever before.

'That is because you are at home, and I'm going to be your housekeeper,' said Dora, laughing. 'See our pretty cottage and just think, it is all bought and paid for by that pin money I could never get an opportunity to spend, and that, besides it, we have enough to keep house economically for a year to come, you and I and Minnie.'

'This is delightful—this is rest after a storm, my darling wife,' cried Egbert, fondly. 'It is worth all that has gone. I would not receive a fortune in exchange for this.'

'You will not send me to Paris, to stay with my aunt?' asked Dora.

'No. I could not lose you now for worlds!'

'Wait until you taste the nice dinner Minnie and I have prepared,' she said, proudly, and ran away to see that it was properly served.

'And this is the angel that I so misjudged,' mused the happy husband.—'While I weakly shrank from facing the truth, she had met and conquered it. God bless her! I feel this blow will be a blessing in disguise. I never felt in our grand house as I feel in this bird-cage of a cottage. It must be as Dora says—the spirit at home!'

Back came Dora carrying a dish stake, while Minnie followed her with the vegetables.

'Sit down, Egbert, while everything is hot and nice, for I expect you to do justice to the meal, and commend the cook, she said gaily.

A mountain load had been lifted off the husband's heart, and he complied with a joyous countenance.

'Remember, you are not to look on this as a mere freak, darling,' she said, seriously. 'It is not the novelty of appearing in a new character, but a profound desire to do my duty, to which I have so lately awakened, that sustains me. Besides,' she added, 'I expect it will not be all easy work. See—I have hurt my fingers already, and I am quite certain that my hands will be injured a little; but they will be useful, and that will console me me for their loss of beauty.'

And so it did. As she said, Dora Walton found her new life full of efforts: but she was equal to it, and her husband's love sustained her, as well as he own conscience, and made her struggle sweet.

He was not a man to remain long quiescent to poverty or misfortune: his native energy and perseverance soon built up again the foundation of a new fortune, and Dora could have returned once more to a life of idle splendor before her beauty had lost its bloom; but she never did. She had discovered a better, truer existence—a higher and less selfish career—through the cloud that appeared to have a silver lining.

WANTED.—A coffin to bury the Dead Sea. The saucer into which the cup of misery overflowed. A nightcap to fit the head of a river. The match that kindled the fire of love. A pair of spectacles to suit the eyes of justice. A remedy to cure the deafness in the ears of corn.—The broom with which the storm sweeps [illegible] over the sea.

To the Editor of the Courier-Journal.

BILL ARP ON THE SITUATION.

ROME, GA., Nov. 17, 1876.—You must excuse me, but it is impossible to suppress myself altogether at this time. I feel like a little crowin' will open the pores and help digestion, and do me good generally. And didn't we lick 'em; and didn't you say his name was Hayes? and is he the man who said he didn't mind it himself, but his heart bled for the poor nigger? Priests and levites of Jericho! how much will he bleed his pocket. Why bless your soul the nigger is free. He can go to Ohio if he wants to. We haven't got 'em penned up. If Hayes, or whatever his name is, will call 'em, they'll come. Ain't it curious these darkies don't go to their friends? Ain't it curious their friends don't come down to see them if they are so everlastin' sorry? Maybe they are intimidated. The truth is, Mr. Watterson, them Radicals give the nigger suffrage to humble us and outvote us, but they never counted on it givin' us 30 more votes in makin' a president. The nigger voted for Hayes, if that's his name, and elected Mr. Tilden. Hurray for the nigger. Next thing you hear of these Radicals will be tryin' to take away his vote, or colonize him in some furrin land.

But it's too late—the dog is dead. They may talk about intimidation and countin' out, and holdin' on, but it can't be did. Knaves don't take kings in this game. They stocked the cards and had the shuffle and deal, and we won it, and the stakes we are bound to have. Two hundred and fifty thousand majority has settled this question. As General Gordon said: 'Stand up, my countrymen, stand up; don't wilt nor wither; we have met the enemy and they are ours—that is if we can keep 'em. I know they are as slippery as eels, but we must hold 'em. The life of the nation depends on it. Liberty and free speech and habeas corpus are all in peril. Four more years of Radical rule and this country will be as lifeless as an Egyptian mummy. They musn't be allowed to steer the old ship any longer. Its agin natur. Its agin the law of Moses, and of Revelation, and the Shorter Catechism, and the long-meter doxology.

Mr. Watterson, sur, we have patiently bided our time. We saw this galorious event a comin'. If it wasn't a star in the East, it was a roarin' borealis in the North. We knowed there was justice and generosity in the bosoms of the Northern democrats. For a long time we've been listenin' to the rumblin' thunder of their indignation. Ever and anon it has vibrated upon the air like the shake of a young earthquake, and we've lived in hope and defied despair until at last the pent-up storm came down upon 'em like an Alpine avalanche, or a simoon in the desert, or a typhoon of the tropics, or a cyclone of the raging seas. Oh it was terrible, terrible! Excuse me for growin' eloquent if you please, for it still seems to me I hear the mighty voices of three millions of honest Democrats exclaimin' with trumpet tongues, 'Get out of these Augean stables and let us turn the Potomac in. The stench of your corruption has overspread the land. Ye have made the rich richer and the poor poorer. Ye have smothered honesty, garroted industry and sown discord among kindred. Ye have put your Southern brethren in a pit and died their shirts in pokeberry juice, and called it blood to deceive the people, but like Joseph of old, they will yet be put in power and save the land from ruin and destruction. Joseph's brethren repented in tears and sorrow, but ye will not repent. They did not steal his silver cup, but ye will steal and carry away in your carpet bags not only the cups, but the saucers and spoons.'

Mr. Watterson, sur, Uncle Sammy Tilden is agoin to take his seat in that cheer—if he lives. There's doubts about a heap of things in this subloonary world, but there ain't no doubt about that. Let 'em rip and roar and snort and cavort like a dyin' alligator if they want to, but my private opinion is a heap of 'em had better be marshalin' their assets for transportation to some furrin and unknown clime. Intimidation! Oh, my country! Amazin' impudence! Who has been intimidated for the last ten years? Haven't they kept us under bayonets all the time. Haven't they divided the army about half-and-half between us and the Injuns? Let 'em hunt for intimidation nearer home. Why, sur, there were thousands of humble Democrats in Ohio and Pennsylvania who wanted to vote for Mr. Tilden, but their bread and meat depended on not doing it. How about all of the workmen in the shops, mills and factories that belonged to the Radicals who made their bloated fortunes out of the late war? There was no intimidation, of course, but the boss calls them all up and says: 'You can all vote as you please, but if you don't vote for Hayes (didn't you say that was his last name) you can come up to the captain's office and settle, and get your walkin' papers.'

Now for the other side of the picture. These Radicals made the poor [illegible] believe that if Mr. Tilden [illegible] would all be p[illegible] and lose [illegible] *believe a lie and put in fear of losin' their liberty*, and if that wasn't intimidation what was it? Why, sur, in the last ten days 17 of 'em have axed me to buy 'em when the sale comes off, but I'm afeerd to do it. They have follered these Radicals so long I'm afeerd they would steal everything I've got. Sur, if there was some high and mighty arbiter of these issues who would speak to us from the clouds—some great and supreme judge a settin' on the topmost peak of the Rocky mountains a lookin' down with majestic wisdom upon this bedeviled and bewildered land, he would throw out every nigger vote that such intimidation carried to Hayes, which they say is his name. Sur, the intimidation was all on the other side. Even the carpet-baggers and scalawags who roost about us like buzzards watchin' a sick horse, would have voted for Uncle Sam, if they hadn't been a feerd of loosin their offices. They was intimidated, and now they are lamentin' they didn't do like Sam Bard, and flee from the wrath to come before it was too late, and make themselves unanimous.

Sur, I know that all of us, more or less, are liviu' under a measure of intimidation. The fear of the law, the fear of society, the fear of the devil, or some other fear, keeps us all intimidated. There are some men I would lick if I wasn't afeerd they would lick me. There's mighty few men living in a state of perfect freedom. Our domestic and commercial relations give the lie to it every day. You know how it is yourself; but are all these relations to be busted up on that account? No sur by no means. A reasonable quantity of intimidation is a wholesome thing for beast and man.

No, let 'em count us out if they dare to. I know they can beat the almanac and the multiplication table and the devil himself on a count when they want to. Their only chance to get out of his kingdom when he gets 'em is to fool him on the count some evening at dress-parade.

But we've got some long heads a watchin' of 'em, and they'll be caught at their rascality. Joe Brown and Sam Bard have gone to Florida, and Joe is a whale. He's some on a count himself. He's counted votes before, and haint forgot the lick. Whether he learned from Bullock or Bullock learned from him, I don't know; but Joe didn't jine Gideon's band for nothing. He slipped in and slipped out just as easy, and nobody knew when it was done. Sam Bard doesn't do that way. He tumbles in and tumbles out with a regular sommerset, and makes as much noise in doin' it as jumpin' into a millpond. But Joseph is all right now, and our folks are bettin' on him.

One thing is shore and certain—we are not goin' to have the other to rule over us—and did you say his name was Hayes?

Yours jubilantly, BILL ARP.

☞ A gentleman, wishing some bushes removed from his garden, told his gardener, a Hibernian, to pull them up by the roots. Some time after he went into the garden, and found the gardener digging trenches around the bushes.

"Why, Patrick," he said, "you need not dig around these small bushes in that way. You are strong enough to pull them up by the roots."

"Oh, yes, Sir," replied the gardener, "I am strong enough; but I must dig a little before I can get hold of the roots. If you had told me to pull them up by the branches, I could easily have removed them without digging."

☞ As gardening has been the inclination of kings and the choice of philosophers, so it has been the common favorite of the public and private men; a pleasure of the greatest, and the care of the meanest; and, indeed, an employment and a possession for which no man is too high nor too low.

☞ Peace does not dwell in outward things, but within the soul. We may preserve it in the midst of the bitterest pain, if our will remain firm and submissive. Peace in this life springs from acquiescence even in disagreeable things, not in an exemption from suffering.

☞ Children must have love inside the house and fresh air, and good play and some good companionship outside—otherwise young life runs the greatest danger in the world of withering or growing stunted, or at best permanently old and turned inward on itself.

☞ A citizen of Huntington, Va., has a cat which is in the habit of going into a stable on cold winter nights and getting on the back of one of the cows and remaining there during the night, having discovered that this is an effective way to keep [illegible]

[illegible] her [illegible] four o'clock, made a [illegible] the, prepared the [illegible] all the [illegible] before [illegible] was.

The engineer [illegible] ran over and killed [illegible] was at once [illegible] Club.

The Judges are [illegible] best wins.

For the Transcript.

TALKS WITH THE BOYS AND GIRLS.

ABOUT NATURAL HISTORY, STONES, PLANTS, ANIMALS.

In my last talk with you about Trees I hinted that it might be followed by others of the same nature. All we know, and all we can know about the earth and what is upon it is called Natural History. The earth itself, its rocks and soils and stones and ores is known as the mineral kingdom, the study of which is called Geology, and is not only deeply interesting but highly useful. This department is also said to be Inorganic, or without organs. I will explain. An organ does not always mean a musical instrument, it may mean an instrument of any kind. Your pet kitten has eyes, ears, teeth, feet, and claws, as you well know. These are all organs. A rock or stone, a lump of coal or nugget of gold has nothing of the kind. Your kitten is organized; the rock and lump of gold is not. Your dog or cat can move from place to place as they please; the stone cannot move. It must keep one place. The dog has a *will*, the stone has none. The stone was formed; the dog, cat, horse, and tree grow. It would be of no use to plant a lump of silver or gold, it would not increase or grow, but a single grain of wheat or corn put into the ground will sprout and grow and make a great many similar grains. You can see at once how widely the organic world differs from the inorganic. Both, it is true, consist of inorganic matter or minerals, but the organic is under the influence of life, while the inorganic is not. In your own body may be found iron, lime, sulphur, salt, &c., but you have life, while iron, lime, &c., have not. You increase in size and weight, iron does not; you can move from place to place, iron cannot.

The little nut which you dropped out of your pocket fell upon the soft earth, and being covered up by the decaying leaves will grow to be a large tree, and loaded with just such brown nuts as the one you dropped, probably before you become a man; it has life. But the silver thimble which your little sister Mary dropped in the flower border has not sprouted, it never will, though it should lie there undisturbed for a thousand years. This organic world may again be divided into the animal and the vegetable kingdoms or departments. The difference between these two would seem to be so great that no one could possibly make a mistake. Any little boy would know the difference between a horse and a cabbage. Every little girl must know that her canary bird is not a rose. Yet the difference is not so great as it seems to be. The horse and the bird can move from place to place, the cabbage and bird cannot. The [illegible] and horse have a will, the rose and [illegible] bage have not. In the first the [illegible] ments are plainly seen, in the others [illegible] motions are [illegible] apparent. Both have organs, and [illegible] food, but in different ways. [illegible] takes his food into a cavity called the stomach where it is converted into blood. The cabbage takes its food from the soil by its roots, and from the air by its leaves which is changed into sap. Go into the corn field on a still, sultry night, listen attentively; crack, crack, snap, snap, like a thousand little whips. What is it? The corn is taking its evening meal!

But as you descend in the scale of animal nature the difference between the animal and vegetable becomes less distinct, and finally disappears. Many animals have no power of locomotion, that is, cannot change place, such as polypi, barnacles, coral insects, oysters, &c., while many plants, such as the Mimosa, Dionœa Muscipula and others can move themselves rapidly, yet cannot change their place. The plant called Venus, Fly-trap, Dionœa, will catch and crush a fly quicker than your kitty will capture a mouse, and having caught one it will slowly open its prickly leaves to catch another. Some of the Mimosa Family or sensitive plants will shrink from the touch and wilt as though about to die, yet very soon assume their former lively appearance. It is, however, mainly in their lowest forms, and where the microscope is required to observe them, that the difference between animals and vegetables becomes so little as to be scarcely recognized at all. One difference always exists. Plants of all kinds live on minerals and gases, and not on vegetables, while animals live on vegetables and on each other, but never on minerals. So if you are puzzled to know whether an object is animal or vegetable find out its diet.

Now, dear little folks, can you tell what is meant by Natural History, and how many departments or kingdoms there are in it?

What makes the difference between a diamond and a strawberry? Between a rabbit and a melon? Is an oyster a vegetable or an animal? To which kingdom of nature do sponges belong?

When you have fully understood this little talk we will, with the approbation of the Editor of this paper, have another chat about Plants.

Your friend,
UNCLE SAM'S SON.

☞ Great pain and little gain man weary.

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