

## Poetry.

## HOUSE-CLEANING.

"The melancholy days have come, the saddest of the year,"  
Of cleaning paint and scrubbing floors, and  
scouring far and near;  
Heaped in the corners of the room, the ancient  
dirt lay quiet,  
But now the carpets all are up, and from the  
staircase top  
The mistress calls to man and maid to wield the  
broom and mop.  
Where are those rooms, those quiet rooms, the  
house but now presented,  
Wherein we dwell, nor dreamed of dirt, so cosy  
and contented?  
Alas! they're turned all upside down, that quiet  
suite of rooms,  
With sops, and suds, and soap, and sand, and  
tubs, and pails, and brooms;  
Chairs, tables, stands are standing round at  
sixes and at sevens,  
While wife and housemaids fly about like  
meteors in the heavens.  
The parlor and the chamber floor were cleaned  
a week ago,  
The carpets shook and windows washed, as all  
the neighbors know;  
But still the sanctum had escaped—the table  
piled with books,  
Pens, ink, and paper all about, peace in its very  
looks—  
Till fell the women on them all, as falls the  
plague on men,  
And when they vanished all away—books,  
papers, ink, and pen.  
And now when comes the master home, as come  
he must of nights,  
To find all things are "set to wrongs" that they  
have "set to rights!"  
When the sound of driving tacks is heard,  
though the house is far from still,  
And the carpet woman on the stairs, that har-  
binger of ill—  
He looks for papers, books, or bills, that all were  
there before,  
And sighs to find them on the desk or in the  
drawer no more.  
And then he grimly thinks of her who set this  
fuss about,  
And wishes she were out at sea in a very leaky  
boat;  
He meets her at the parlor door, with hair and  
cap awry,  
With sleeves tucked up and broom in hand,  
defiance in her eye;  
He feels quite small, and knows full well there's  
nothing to be said,  
So holds his tongue, and drinks his tea, and  
sneaks away to bed.  
—[N. Y. Post.]

## THE LIVING PRESENT.

BY ALICE CARY.

Friends, let us slight no pleasant spring  
That bubbles up in life's dry sands,  
And yet be careful what good thing  
We touch with sacrilegious hands.  
Our blessings should be *tough*, not *claimed*,  
Cherished, not watched with jealous eye;  
Love is too precious to be named,  
Save with a reverence, deep and high,  
In all that lives, exists the power  
To avenge the invasion of its right;  
We cannot bruise and break our flower,  
And have our flower, alive and bright.  
Let us think less of what appears,  
More of what is—for this, hold I,  
It is the sentence no man hears  
That makes us live, or makes us die.  
Trust hearsay less, seek more to prove  
And know if things be what they seem;  
Not sink supinely in some grove,  
And hope and hope, and dream and dream.  
Some days must needs be full of gloom,  
Yet must we use them as we may;  
Talk less about the years to come—  
Live, love, and labor more, to-day.  
What our hand findeth, do with might;  
Ask less for help, but stand or fall,  
Each one of us, in life's great fight,  
As if himself, and God, were all.

[Written for the DESERT NEWS.]

SCRAPS FROM THE NOTE BOOK  
OF AN OLD REPORTER.

His talk was like a stream which runs  
With rapid course from rocks to roses;  
And slides from politics to puns—  
Deriding, Mahomet or Moses.  
VICAR.  
While hard to tell, so coarse a dabb he lays  
Which sullies most—the slander or the praise.  
SPRAGUE.  
Strange events transpire in the every-  
day life of a News-monger. Indeed, it  
is poor times for him, if the record of  
twenty-four hours does not turn up  
something worthy of his notice; and,  
should there be nothing new, his busi-  
ness is of that nature, that he is obliged  
to draw on the resources of past occur-  
rences, so that he may not fail to pro-  
vide his share of matter, as copy for the

locals of the newspaper with which he  
is connected. Being placed in this  
dilemma, one cold stormy morning, in  
the January of 18—, I thought, for the  
first time, of inventing a story from the  
barren imaginings of my own brain.  
Prior to this time I had been found  
fault with by Mr. Jinks, the editor, for  
being too matter-of-fact in describing  
events requiring embellishment, and  
which were of no interest without the  
brush of Mr. Bellows. "There," he  
would say, "your scroll containing an  
account of the bridge falling at the great  
riot in G—, although given in detail,  
and was all truthful enough, yet you  
see what Bellows made of it, by narra-  
ting the condition of the people in the  
river, their mental despair, their cries  
for help, and the remorseless cruelty of  
the cavalry, who would not suffer the  
humane portion of the enraged mob to  
rescue them from a watery grave. All  
this, and a great deal more, respecting  
the carelessness of the authorities he  
pointed at, which, you know, must be  
done, in order to gain the approbation  
of the reading public."

These reflections led me now, and  
again, to try my hand at painting, al-  
though I never in my own estimation  
had the ability to color up any thing to  
my own satisfaction; there was still a  
drawback on my mind, as to the evil of  
publishing a fabrication entirely with-  
out a foundation. However, as neces-  
sity has no law, I sat down, determined,  
if there was any thing in me like inven-  
tion, out it should come, no matter  
what kind of characters, true or false,  
good or bad, high or low, something I  
must write, or my place was at stake.

There was a very odd old fellow, a  
barber, I had often thought of, a rela-  
tion by my wife's side of the house, who,  
for his eccentricity and general inquisi-  
tiveness, led me to form some ideas of  
character, which would be, as I thought,  
both amusing and instructive.

I had merely scrawled a few sheets,  
and was getting my ideas arranged,  
when, who should tap at the door of my  
sanctum but Bellows,—which nearly  
paralyzed all my inventive proclivities.  
He was in full uniform, that is,  
dressed up in a new fashionable suit,  
purchased from the ready-made. I  
knew, in a moment, there was some-  
thing out of joint, from the deep purple  
of his swelled proboscis, and the whim-  
sical leer of his large, dark grey eyes,  
that were glazed with the varnish of  
alcohol. Another gentleman accom-  
panied him, with whom I was but par-  
tially acquainted. I seated them the best  
I could, having only two chairs and an  
old trunk in the apartment, the latter  
being my desk, and portfolio.

I was about making an apology, and  
a fib, by telling him that my wife was  
from home, but my conscience and the  
stormy morning forbade the excuse. I  
was just preparing something for this  
morning's paper. "Indeed," he said,  
taking up the sheet, and quizzing it  
over, "why King, you are writing  
novels, are you?" "Well, not exactly,"  
said I, "just a few ideas to fill up, you  
know, by way of copy." "Pretty good!"  
a barber for your hero, too; new con-  
trivance, something in the soap line;  
quite original; and on he soliloquized  
satirically, looking occasionally at the  
paper, then at me, and then at the  
stranger. I took the sheets out of his  
hand, and apologized by saying, that,  
as I had nothing new for the columns of  
the *Dwarf*, I thought of forging a sheet  
or two of something novel, but my con-  
science made it tardy work. "Pshaw,  
King," he replied, with some warmth,  
"you'll never be anything of an author,  
until you can write without scruple or  
compunction. Were I to take these  
silly drawbacks into the consideration  
of conscience, as you term it, why no-  
thing would be read in the *Dwarf* to at-  
tract attention. Mere common-place  
relations may do well enough to fill up  
a corner, but novelty—novelty, King—  
is the mainspring of literature."

What is novelty, I replied, but truth  
disguised. It may look something new,  
to be sure, and please the lovers of  
fiction, but, after all, it is not the simple,  
honest, straight-forward truth,—which  
ought always to be told.

"Hold there, my friend," said he,  
"truth was once a naked thing, sup-  
posed by the ancients to have been a  
personage, and would do well enough  
even now for little children, who do  
not know their own shame, but, for  
grown people in this enlightened age,  
truth must be clothed in ornaments  
of gaudy attire, to meet the reception  
and approbation of this refined age. It  
is for this reason that you are paid one  
penny per line for your naked truths,  
and I pounds, for your shillings! And  
for what? Why? for dressing up your  
meagre descriptions in language and ex-  
pression, and placing your scraps in a  
form worthy of being read."

This was spoken in such a sarcastic  
way, and with all so truthful in respect  
to himself, that I felt considerably  
nettled at his remarks, and was search-  
ing, in the dark corners of my cranium,  
for an answer to his sophistry, when he  
relieved me from my embarrassment by  
rising abruptly from the trunk on which  
he was seated, and drew out of his  
pocket a small vial, labelled "bitters,"  
which he scientifically turned up to  
his large vest-pocket of a mouth, when  
I heard the gurgling liquid as it ran  
down his throat at every gulp, crying  
out,—fudge—fudge—fudge!

I was forcibly struck with the idea,  
that I would have a torrent of invective  
immediately from the inspiration of  
the pandora of his genius being libera-  
ted from its glass case, to the capa-  
cious organs of his heated imagination.

He, being fully primed, again re-  
sumed his remarks, by saying, "King,  
my boy, now for you, on *naked truth*;  
ha, ha, ha! Well, [here he made a full  
stop, as if choked with the idea] you  
are a rare specimen of dry weather.  
King, no moistening dews ever refresh  
the foliage of your brain. Novels are  
founded on fact, (hic) although they  
sometimes border on (hic) romance, and  
this is necessary (hic) in coloring a sub-  
ject."

At this unpleasant juncture in his  
articulation, I remembered a saying of  
my grandmother's, that a drink of  
water, unasked, would stop the wind-  
storm of his empty gasometer, so I  
handed him a pitcher of aqua font, after  
which he proceeded without interrup-  
tion.

"Why, King, don't you remember the  
words of Solomon, that 'there is no-  
thing new under the sun.' Is there a  
thought, an action, a character? Is  
there a conception of honesty, villainy,  
jealousy, mistrust or faithfulness, but  
does belong to human nature, and have  
formed the history of mankind in all  
ages? And to form the rudiments of a  
tale, you only require to write your  
best, and worst ideas of human nature,  
no matter how far-fetched. Whether  
novel, or romance looking, readers will  
admire your conception, and after ages  
will give you a niche in the temple of  
fame."

"But," said I, "what has this to do  
with the business of a reporter, in the  
daily occurrence of life—the news of to-  
day for instance? All your embellished  
reports of public speeches, frauds, de-  
linquencies, riots, fires, public execu-  
tions, accidents, offences, etc., etc.  
What are they, but a jumble of truth  
and falsehood—lies, libels on the living  
and the dead; and, in general, a gross  
misrepresentation of things as they  
are."

"Ah! I exclaimed, 'Mr. Bellows, (get-  
ting rather warm) don't you remember  
Mrs. —, who was hanged for murder—  
when her examination was heard  
before the Sheriff, you published a long  
account of the court procedure, and from  
the circumstantial evidence brought  
forward on that occasion, you then sup-  
posed and published her guilty in the  
first degree. You, sir, had gone to the  
village where the crime was committed  
—was at the exhumation of the body—  
the coroner's inquest—the trial, and  
finally at the execution, yet, you never-  
theless prejudiced the prosecutor—the  
judges the jury and the public against  
her."

And to shew the extreme wickedness  
of her character, a caste was taken of  
her head, and exhibited in a traveling  
museum; where the destructive develop-  
ments of her animal propensities were  
amply descanted on by a phrenologist!  
All of which was endorsed by you.  
And if this had been all, it would have  
had a less damning effect had she been  
guilty. But behold! Not two years had  
elapsed till her daughter, who had  
taken her mother's wickedness so much  
to heart, as was supposed, fell sick of,—  
what? Grief and shame for her mother's  
crime; shame of her hardened obstinacy  
—the obloquy and disgrace on the  
family? No!—But that she was the  
person who administered the poison to  
the man for whom her mother was  
hanged! There, sir, was the evil con-  
sequences of your prejudged, florid,  
animadversions; and, in fact, villainous  
accusations, to say the least, of that  
shameful affair.

Bellows was one of those cool, de-  
liberate men, who could take a scolding,  
or a rebuff, with as much calmness, and  
pass it off in jocularly, as would stimu-  
late another man to draw his revolver.

"Yes, yes," said he, "you matter-of-  
fact men, endeavor to run down literary  
genius, and when a case such as you  
have described, turns up in the secret  
workings of an unseen fatality, the hue  
and cry is raised against judges, jury,  
publishers and reporters, and all who  
may have acted honorably to do justice,

and to state the whole affair to the pub-  
lic as it then transpired."

"But," said I, "Mr. Bellows, your ideas  
of embellishing, and novel writing, or  
rather false representations, are highly  
prejudicial to individuals, and quite  
foreign to the general good of mankind.  
Your leading characters, when virtuous,  
or criminally vicious, are so far above or  
below ordinary character, that no simi-  
litude exists in life of such men and  
women. The former characters are  
generally drawn without a blemish, and  
the latter without a redeeming quality;  
and so horribly despicable, that neither  
virtue nor vice, in such presentations,  
can effect the sensible reader, more  
than with disgust."

Bellows again pulled out his pocket  
companion, but the sound of the liquid  
ran so fast, that I could not distinctly  
phonograph it into words. It was  
something, however, like the noise of  
water rushing down a broken cistern-  
pipe, when the valve is unhinged—  
glut, glut, glutting over the palate, with-  
out an effort naturally to stop its pro-  
gress.

During this libation I could perceive  
by the twinkle of his eye, that some-  
thing was agitating his brain, of an  
argumentative and philosophical nature,  
as well as critical, and I may add satiri-  
cal, for he grew like a herculeus in men-  
tal strength under the influence of  
Bacchus, until his conceptions were  
wrapt in the idealism of a magic world,  
such as no fancy opium eater could  
imagine; to make a comparison, he  
was, in his rapid fanciful career—com-  
paratively speaking, like a shot star,  
that darts forth in all the brilliancy of a  
heavenly body, and after illuminating  
the upper deep in its sudden descent,  
bursts into many fragments of burning  
lights of beautiful colors, dazzling the  
beholder with its noisy fall, its bril-  
liancy and final exit. Such was the re-  
nowned Bellows, mentally speaking!

"Now King," he resumed, "you are ac-  
quainted somewhat with history, with  
novel writings, and romance; tell me  
then, what comparison there is between  
Robertson the historian, and Scott the  
novelist? The history of Scotland by  
the former is a dry, torpid, wearisome  
production, compared with the mag-  
nificent, splendid research of the  
other. Is it not? Why sir, novelty of  
expression, loftiness of style, grandeur  
of conception, mark the great disparity.  
Pshaw! there's no comparison what-  
ever. Why, sir, the great wizard of his-  
torical romance leads us into the living  
ages of chivalry, their castles—their  
dungeons. We see the haughty nobles  
and beautiful dames, their gorgeous  
pageantry, their burning cities, their  
victorious armies, their captives, their  
rejoicings, their!"

"Hold," said I, "tis my treat, just take  
your breath, Mr. Bellows, until I get  
my bottle. I believe there is some-  
thing in John Barley corn after all that  
is said against its inspiration. I should  
like to hear this gentleman's opinion  
also, and as neither of us have had any  
spirits during this long debate, just al-  
low me to retire, for a few minutes."

"Certainly, certainly, Mr. King," re-  
sponded the embellisher.

I had hardly reached the foot of the  
staircase, when Jinks, Puffy and the  
devil, rushed past me, and in three  
minutes, Bellows was on the street, arm  
in arm, with the pair, led off to the attic  
above the office to finish up the report  
of a public dinner, for which Jinks had  
been pre-paid, and with which, in  
part, he had furnished Bellows with  
a new suit!

Left alone to ruminate over what had  
been advanced in favor of novel writing,  
I instinctively drew the paper towards  
me, and read the title of my first tale,  
which was "The life of Gilbert Wabble-  
houghs, hairdresser," written by him-  
self. The bottle of Ferintosh pre-  
sented a very inviting attitude, and to  
try what the spirit of romance would  
do for me, I partook of her kindly in-  
fluence, and sat down to my tale which  
may be forthcoming at some future  
period, if, casualties like, the unfortu-  
nate Bellows does not stand in my way.

—A curious case is about to be tried in  
Paris. A lady is about to prove in open  
court that she is not the mother of her  
children, or rather the children which  
her husband attributes to her. This  
matter is to be demonstrated by decisi-  
ble arguments, the lady herself demand-  
ing to plead.

—The largest glass painting in exist-  
ence is the one ordered by the Prince of  
Prussia for Cologne Cathedral. It is to  
be placed in the principal portal, be-  
tween the two towers, at the completion  
of the building, and its subject is to be  
"The Last Judgment," after Cornelius's  
Cartoon, designed for the Berlic Campo  
Santo.