

THE TURN OF LIFE.

From the age of sixty, a man who properly regulates himself may be considered as in the prime of life. His matured strength of constitution renders him almost impervious to the attacks of disease, and experience has given him the soundness of almost infallibility. His mind is resolute, firm and equal; and his functions are in the highest order. He assumes the mastery over business; builds up a competence on the foundation he has formed in early manhood, and passes through a period of life attended by many gratifications.

Having gone a year or two past sixty, he arrives at a critical period in the road of existence; the river of death flows before him, and he remains at a standstill. Apathy this river is a viaduct, called "The Turn of Life," which, if crossed in safety, leads to the valley of "Old Age," round which the river winds, and then flows beyond without a boat or causeway to effect its passage. The bridge is, however, constructed of fragile materials, and it depends upon how it is trodden whether it bends or breaks. Gout, apoplexy, and other bad characters, are also in the vicinity to waylay the traveler, and thrust him from the pass; but let him gird up his loins, and provide himself with perfect composure. To quit a metaphor, the "Turn of Life" is a turn either into a prolonged walk or into the grave. The system and power having reached their utmost expansion, now begin either to close like flowers at sunset, or break down at once. One injudicious stimulant—a single fatal excitement—may force it beyond its strength; while a careful supply of proper food, and the withdrawal of all that tends to force a plant, will sustain it in beauty and in vigor until night has entirely set in. *Ex.*

IRISH HUMOR.

There are two kinds of Irish wit—the intentional and the unintentional. Of this latter class there is an absolutely limitless supply, afforded by the redundancy of metaphor and illustration common to the national mind, and productive of absurdities and hyperbole delightful to study. Take the personation for instance, of a clergyman describing the joyful death of a Christian: "My brethren, he leaps into the arms of death, and makes his hollow jaws ring with eternal hallelujahs!" And the destiny of the wicked, "When death, with his quiver full of arrows, mows them down with the besom of destruction." A poor law guardian in the north of Ireland, very lately surpassed these flowers of rhetoric, when he addressed his audience, "Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the board! The eyes of Europe are upon us. The apparent discord has been flung in our midst, and if it be not nipped in the bud, it will burst into a conflagration which will deluge the world!"

At all times the richness of Irish phraseology borders on the grotesque. An English squire would be amazed at receiving the good wishes expressed once, to our knowledge, to an Irish one: "Long life to your honor forever! and long may you reign in splendor!" A petition addressed to the writer's father, was couched in these words: "As I am shortly going to make my exit from this vale of tears, I hope your honor will send me two and sixpence by return of post."

The queer ideas which enter the fertile brain of Hibernians at all times are sufficiently astonishing. A school of poor children, having read in their chapter in the Bible the denunciations against hypocrites who "strain at a gnat and swallow a camel," were afterwards examined by the beneficent patroness, Lady E., as to their recollections of the chapter. "What in particular could bear the palm from that of a priest, who, having preached a sermon on miracles, was asked by one of his congregation, walking homeward, to explain a little more lucidly what a miracle meant. 'Is it a miracle you want to understand?'" said the priest. "Walk on there for instance, and I'll think how I can explain it to you." The man walked on, and the priest came behind him and gave him a tremendous kick. "Ugh!" roared the sufferer, "why did you do that?" "Did you feel it?" said the priest. To be sure I did," replied the unhappy disciple. "Well, then, remember this; it would have been a miracle if you had not."—*Hours of Work and Play, by Miss F. P. Cobbe.*

A DOMESTIC AND EDUCATED OTTER.—L. B. Smith has a young male otter, that from its thoroughly domesticated habits, is a great curiosity—the more so that otters have always been considered untamable. Barnum gained possession of a seal which he displayed in an immense tank, but instead of being docile and tractable, it was also found necessary to bring him into view by means of a false bottom that was raised by machinery, but a tame otter has, we believe, never been exhibited in this country. This one was captured in Chrystal Lake by the Chippewa Indians. The animal is now about two feet in length, and having been thoroughly domesticated, is not only perfectly harmless, but appears to have the greatest affection for children, and is motionless for hours if permitted to lie by a child's side. Its food consists of bread and milk, fresh meat and fish, all of which it eats with avidity, but does not care for water unless the weather is hot. It follows its owner to the river every day, and will swim off a few yards from shore and swim until a fish comes swimming past, when it will dart for its prey so rapidly that the eye can scarcely follow it. It makes but two kinds of noise; the first like that of a piping chicken, only more shrill, and the second that of grief, resembling, more than anything else, the crying of a child. It is very playful, and, lying upon its back, will play with a string or stick for hours.—*Detroit (Michigan) Post.*

Superstitious Iowa farmers harvest their wheat at night, from an impression that the moonlight makes the straw soft and easier to be handled. The condition of the atmosphere has more to do with it than the moon.

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