

Truth and Falsehood.

BY JOHN PIERPONT.

On the page that is immortal
We the brilliant promise see:
'Ye shall know the truth my people,
And its might shall make you free.'

For the truth then let us battle,
Whatsoever fate betide!
Long the boast that we are freemen,
We have made and published wide.

He who has the Truth and keeps it,
Keeps not what to him belongs,
But performs a selfish action,
That his fellow mortal wrongs.

He who seeks the Truth and trembles,
At the danger he must brave,
Is not fit to be a freeman;
He, at best, is but a slave.

He who bears the Truth and places
Its high promptings under ban,
Loud may boast of all that's manly,
But can never be a Man.

Friend, this simple lay who readest,
Be thou not like either them—
But to Truth give utmost freedom,
And the tide it raises stem.

Bold in speech and bold in action,
Be forever!—Time will test,
Of the free-souled and the slavish,
Which fulfils life's mission best.

Be thou like the noble Ancient—
Scorn the threat that bids the fear;
Speak! no matter what betide thee!
Let them strike, but make them hear!

Be thou like the first Apostles;
Be thou like heroic Paul;
If a free thought seeks expression,
Speak it boldly! Speak it all!

Face thine enemies, 'accusers';
Scorn the prison, rack or rod!
And if thou hast a Truth to utter,
Speak and leave the rest to God.

[From Graham's Magazine.]

My Neighbor—A Window Study.

BY R. H. STODDARD.

I have two rooms at my present lodging, one fronting the street, the other the backs of my neighbors' houses. From my front window—to tell the truth it is a dormer window in the attic—I see what my neighbors are doing in the street, their world-life; and from my back window what they are doing in their own houses, their home-life, the life of their hearts and souls. When I rise in the morning I dress myself, and sit at my front window until breakfast is ready. I see my neighbors waiting for their breakfast, or already at it, sitting around their tables in the front basements.

The milkman gives his accustomed morning whoop, and ladies out his chalk and molasses by the two and three penny's worth. The iceman thunders his huge wagon over the rough pavement, stopping abruptly before the few houses that take ice of him. I hear the jingle of his tongs, the dull crash of his axe in the ice, and see the white blocks deposited in the area.

By and by the doors over the way open and shut, and the men depart for their places of business. Few are in business on their own account, and those are not always the richest, or the happiest looking. My friend, Andrews, the jobber, is a jollier man than my acquaintance, Henderson, the importer; my chum, Simpkins, the book-keeper, is jollier than either. And yet his means are smaller, and his family larger than theirs. For my very good friend Mrs. Simpkins—but I have no right to expose the domestic matters of that illustrious family, so I leave the sentence unfinished. But this I will say, I cannot for my life see how Simpkins can be jolly with seven children, and only six hundred a year!

But there goes the eldest scion of the house, Mr. James, a black-eyed, merry-hearted lad, just turning eighteen. From the way in which he peeps into Henderson's window as he passes—I wonder if he saw Kate behind the blinds?—and the pride and manhood of his step, I think he must be older than he seems. I have an eye on you, Mr. James; and on you, too, Miss Catharine. But there is my breakfast bell. Again. The ro's must be getting cold. Good morning then, my neighbors, and you, my neighbors' windows!—The bell invites me.

I am, as I said, or meant to say, an author, a poor author, one who writes for a living, stories, essays, dramas, and whatever else will pay.—Could I have my choice I would prefer being rich, because I could then write whatever I pleased, and for fame: poems as rare as those of Tennyson, presupposing that I have his genius; romance as weird as 'The Scarlet Letter'; or essays as charming as Goldsmith's.

There would, however, be this disadvantage about wealth. It would lead me into a more fashionable neighborhood, and bring me in contact with a different set of neighbors. I might see happy faces peeping between heavy damask curtains, and catch glimpses of paintings beyond, but they would not be as suggestive as the black square of a poor man's window, and the white blank of his chamber walls. Let me stick to my attic then, and be a poor author with all the grace I can.

As soon as I finish my breakfast I shut myself up in my back attic, and commence writing. The back attic is not as the front one, but I can work there better than anywhere else. The view before me is too dreary and monotonous to lure me from my task, even for a moment. I see no pleasure out of doors, so I have to conjure it in the chambers of my brain.

I sit at my small table, dip my blunted goose quill—I hate your sharp steel pens—in my six-penny inkstand, and urge my hand across the long sheets of foolscap; now describing the interior of an Eastern palace, into which I purpose introducing one of my heroes, and now revelling in the depths of a tropic forest. Knowing nothing of tropic forests, and Eastern palaces, and seeing nothing that can be construed into the faintest resemblance to either, I am, of course, a highly imaginative writer. My publishers think me a little too imaginative, and advise me to try my hand at poetry, but as they seldom purchase poetry I wisely decline.

When my hand grows weary of traveling over the sheets of foolscap, and my brain aches with its forced activity, I throw down my pen, rise from my little table, and rest myself by walking up and down the attic, now halting suddenly, and now peering curiously out of my window. I have several good engravings, copies of the best works of the old masters, and I admire them hugely. But that view from my attic window, a changeful Flemish picture of the city life of the poor, a bad original, the work of many hands—I look at that the longest, wonder over it the most, and when I turn from it and resume my seat at the table, I often find my heart indignant, and my eyes brimming with tears!

I pity the poor, especially the poor of cities. There is such a sameness in their lot. From birth to death they see the same things, think the same thoughts, live the same negative, unprogressive lives. What has my neighbor yonder to live for, working as she does, from dawn till midnight?

It was one o'clock last night before I went to bed, yet there she sat at the window, (the lamp threw the shadow of her hands on the wall,) sewing as if her life depended upon it. 'Stop, neighbor, do stop, if only for a minute! Lean out of the window and feel the fresh air, and drink in the light of the stars!' But my neighbor heard me not. She went on sewing, sewing, and I went to bed.

I dreamed about my neighbor.

It seemed to me that I was in a farm house, in a small New England village. The village could not have been in the vicinity of a city, for there were no improvements in it; no embankment for a future railroad, no lyceum for lecturers and negro minstrels, and no saloons to manufacture country bumpkins into sots. The houses were all old and weather-beaten, showing only the faintest remains of paint, while the rough-boarded barns and stores were bleached fairly white, and as mossy as the stone fence along the road. The public buildings were a dilapidated Town House and two churches, one with a tall steeple, and one with a low belfry.

The horse-sheds at the back of the churches were dreary enough. The posts which supported the roof had long since been pushed out of the perpendicular by the grazing of heavy wagon wheels; the roof in many places was open to the sky and the rain; and the row of mangers, eaten half away by hungry horses—how bare and forlorn they looked! I knew that these things were so, although I could not have seen them in my dream, because I was in the farm-house, the windows of which were darkened. I was in a sick room.

It was late in the afternoon, I judged, the afternoon of a dull autumnal day. The room was so dim that I could not see across it, except when the shimmering logs threw out momentary flames. By the flickering light I saw the high-backed, leather-bottomed chairs, the fly papers on the ceiling, the tall desk-bureau, the cupboard on the left of the chimney, the uncarpeted, unpainted floor starred with knobby knots, and the vials of medicine on the stand beside the bed.

A sick woman lay in that bed, a dying woman. Her head was propped up with pillows, and she picked the counterpane nervously. The gray hair that straggled from under her cap—her hollow, mournful eyes, her sunken furrowed features—I read her history at a glance. She was a plain, hard-working woman, a farmer's widow. Her husband died a few years previous, leaving her a mortgaged farm and two children.

The children are by her now, a boy about ten years old, and a girl of fourteen, a thoughtful womanly little housekeeper. It is my neighbor, my neighbor a girl again.

'Children,' said the pale woman, supporting herself on her elbow; 'my poor children I am dying. Let me fold you in my arms and kiss you before I go. Where are you, daughter?'

'Here, mother,' answered my neighbor, lifting the sick woman's arm around the neck of her weeping brother.

'You must be good; when I am gone.'

'We will try, mother,' said my brave little neighbor, patting her brother on the head.

'Have me buried near father.'

'Yes, mother, I will.'

'And Willie, take care of him.'

I saw my neighbor press her mother's hand, but the flame at that moment dying, I could not see the unswerving light which I knew must be in her eyes. I stood in darkness. The logs on the hearth simmered, the ghostly smoke climbed the black chimney; finally the flame shot out and lighted the room again. I saw the high-backed chairs, the old desk-bureau, the bed on which the dead woman lay. My neighbor wept now, and I—it seemed to me in my dream that I wept also. At any rate when I woke this morning my eyes were red.

When I first came into my present lodgings I was for a time at a loss for something to interest myself in. I mastered the surroundings of the neighborhood; knew the number of chimneys in the whole block, the sum total of the panes of glass in all the windows, the knot-holes in the fences; and other similar trifles. But I found no opening for human sympathy, no form that attracted me, no face that told a story, until I saw my neighbor sewing at her window. I saw my neighbor felt that she had a history.

Well, you say, so have we all, if you come to that. I have a history myself.

I dare say, but not like my neighbor's. You have not worked month in and month out, year in and year out, for the paltriest pay imaginable. You know not the toil that my neighbor undergoes, ay, and thousands beside my neighbor, to keep body and soul together. You wear good clothes, and pride yourself upon them; but did it ever occur to you that they were once made, made by the needle, stitch by stitch, seam by seam, gusset by gusset, band by band?

You go to your tailor, sir, and looking over his stock of seasonable goods, give your order, and there the matter ends with you. And madam goes to her milliner, and gives her order, (I hope her bills are moderate!) and there the matter ends with her. But the matter does not end there. That love of a bonnet, that stylish coat and vest must be made before you can wear them. Who makes them?

Really you have no idea.

But I have. I have been behind the counter in my day—perhaps I am a literary tailor—and I know. The poor make your clothes, sir, and yours, madam, the poor like my neighbor.

After my neighbor's mother died, (so runs my dream) the girl and boy gave up the old homestead, for what could two children do with a heavily-mortgaged farm? and removed to New York. They had relatives here, but they were not to be depended on. Few like to be troubled with dead folks' children.

My neighbor could not have been fifteen when she came to New York, but she had the sense and energy of a woman of thirty. She hired a couple of rooms in a pleasant neighborhood, (rents were not as dear, then, as now) and furnishing them with the old home furniture, she and the boy kept house together. They lived in a narrow little street on the North River side of the town. There was a beech tree before the door, a line of willows opposite, and at the end of the street the steel-blue river.

Behind the house was a little garden, in which grew real vegetables. There were ten hills of potatoes, a dozen or more cabbages, and a whole row of Indian corn—tall stalks, green tassels, and all that, you know. It was really countryfied. For my part I would have preferred it over and over again to that dull old New England village. But my neighbor and her brother liked the last best. But then I have no mother in that village church-yard—nor in any other, God be thanked!—so I suppose I am no judge of their feelings.

My neighbor was fond of flowers, so she sowed a few flower seeds in a strip of earth at the back of the yard, and trained the neglected morning glories at the door till they ran all over the porch, and crept up and peeped in at her window. She had a pot of verbena in the window, which she had brought from the old homestead. You and I would not have given sixpence for it, but my neighbor would not have sold it for sums of money.

It was her mother's! Close by the verbena—when the weather was warm enough for him to hang out of doors—there was an old rosin in a cage, another remnant of my neighbor's childhood. The robin has long since joined his red-breasted ancestry, but the verbena lives still. I see it in my neighbor's window.

I have already mentioned the leather-bottomed chairs, and the desk-bureau; these, and a cherry table, a plain rag carpet, and a few dishes, furnished my neighbor's rooms. The old family Bible lay on a stand between the windows, and a picture of the Lord's Supper hung over the mantel-piece. A bunch of dried grass wreathed the top of the looking-glass. So ends the inventory of my neighbor's worldly goods.

As soon as they were comfortably settled in their new home, she sent Master Willie to school, and hunted up a milliner in want of an apprentice. The milliner's work was light, and the wages good; but my neighbor had some old-fashioned notions of her own, so she did not stay with her long. It was not because the young ladies in the work-room made fun of my neighbor, that she cared little about, but because she preferred a more select style of conversation, and less equivocal conduct. The ladies voted her a fool, and perhaps she was; but not so big a fool as some of the ladies themselves. Certainly she was wiser than the one I passed in Broadway this morning, and yet the latter was dressed in satin, and was as plump as a partridge, while my neighbor is thin and pale, and wears only calico, or that single crape gown of hers.

The family from whom my neighbor hired her rooms were very kind to her. A simple-hearted, honest old pair, with no children of their own, they would have adopted her and Master Will, had either been willing to have a second father and mother. When they let my neighbor their second story, they were fresh in the city themselves, 'old farmers, both of us,' they said; hence the potatoes and cabbages in the back-yard. My neighbor told me the reason of her leaving the milliner's and the old dame said she was right, even though the child owed her a month's rent, which she could not pay.

By and by my neighbor found herself—(it was winter, I remember wood was six dollars a load that year)—working for the sloop shops of Cherry and Water streets.

You know those dingy dens. They are sandwiched between sailor boarding-houses and low grogeries. They are generally shaded by awnings, from which, as from a gallows, hangs a string of hardened tarpaulins, pea-jackets, blue shirts and overhauls—a perpetual Tyburn of sloop work. The cross beams under the awnings are equally populous, and woe to the unhappy wretch who attempts to pass them in a hurry.

If the wind is at all high—and it always is high there—he is kicked in the face by the legs of duck trousers, his eyes are punched by the sleeves of flannel shirts, and his small ribs are poked at uncomfortably by dangling sheath-knives. The windows of these shops—(I am speaking of a tip-top one)—are as gorgeous as vulgar taste can make them. Calico dress shirts, illuminated with

blue anchors or purple ships, warranted to wash; bales of bandanna handkerchiefs, of an unearthly red and yellow; very short-legged hose of the Zebra pattern: blue and green stocks and neck-cloths, supposed to be figured satin; and such magnificent silk vests, with shiny buttons! You can't name an article of fancy wearing apparel, that a gentleman shouldn't wear, that's not to be found in the great sloop shops.

For the liberal minded proprietors of these elegant establishments, my poor neighbor drudged during that hard winter, making shirts for six cents apiece, and drawers for four ditto! And not always getting her pay at that. For these liberal, etc., have rather artistic ideas of what a sixpenny shirt ought to be, and sometimes wake to the fact, especially in the case of children like my neighbor, that their ideals are not reached. So, instead of paying the starving seamstress for her work, they demand pay for their spoiled material.

Of course they do not get it, whereat they wax indignant, and threaten to shove the seamstress into the street. One of these gentlemen, a member of the Hebrew faith, once laid hold of my neighbor for that purpose, but a jolly tar, who had drifted in to buy a sheath-knife, entered a protest in the shape of a back-hander behind the ear, so he postponed it until he came out of the hospital, which was a month from that day. I have embalmed the memory of that sainted mariner in my thrilling nautical drama, 'The Wreckers of Madagascar.'

I often think of my neighbor in that hard winter, sewing by the window in the cold gray days, while her brother huddled over the scanty fire in the chimney-corner. The wind rattles the panes and whistles around the corner of the house wild with glee. The trees are spiked with icicles; the side-walks are ridged with freezing sleet; and the streets are quarries of snow.

My neighbor rubs her fingers when they grow too numb to hold the needle, and joins her brother for a moment over the fire. He looks up in her face sadly, but she kisses him, and smiles a cheery smile. When she returns to her work by the window, there is something like a tear in her eye. But her fingers fly again; the needle glides in and out; long threads become short threads; seams are closed; sleeves cut and made; collars and wristbands are fitted; buttons are sewed on; and at last—but how long it takes!—a shirt is finished.

Slowly, slowly pass the hours. It is noon. It is eve. It is night. But there sits my neighbor still, sewing by the light of the flickering candle. The boy is asleep. Lights die out in the houses around—window after window disappearing. Lights die out in the street, engulfed in the silent blackness. But my neighbor's candle still burns, and my neighbor's fingers still fly.

'Oh, men, with sisters dear!

Oh, men, with mothers and wives,

It is not linen you're wearing out,

But human creatures' lives!

It would not be worth while to unwind here the whole thread of my neighbor's life. Be sure she did not work forever on sloop-work, nor live forever in that little street by the river. The poor change their labor often, and in a nomadic city like this, their dwelling still oftener. Their love for and memory of localities is small. Not so with my neighbor. Whatever else she may have forgotten, she still remembers her first city home.

She sees nothing near so pretty now. For her window, like my own, looks over a dreary range of yards. There is a grass-plot in the centre of each yard, but no grass—the thick wet planks in the paths are greener than the few straggling blades of verdure. Sheltered by the fences, a few common flowers, pinks, marigolds, four-o'clocks, and the like, are striving to bloom. Spiders weave their webs from bush to bush, and worms and insects eat their fill of leaves. The fences are old, and wofully in need of whitewash, and from the rusty nails in their posts stretch innumerable clothes lines, crossing each other at all possible angles. Every yard seems to have been wheedled into holding an eternal cat's cradle. No, neighbor, our prospect is not picturesque!

I was sitting in my back attic one day, in the early part of last spring, planning my great oriental romance, and wondering where I should find a lover for my heroine, whom I had just cast ashore on a desert island, when, casting my eye in their direction, I saw my neighbor and a sailor-looking person standing at my neighbor's window. I jumped at a conclusion instantly—

'She has a lover,' I said. 'And that lover is a sailor. And he has returned. What a capital scene that will make in 'The Wreckers of Madagascar.'

Then I proceeded to imagine the love between the two. How they had plighted their troth in youth. How the sailor was rowed off to his ship, waving his handkerchief the while to my neighbor. How my neighbor went home and wept profusely. How letters came to her with foreign post-marks. How the good ship ploughed the deep with belying sails. How the sailor stood at the helm on moonlight nights, dreaming of my neighbor. How the good ship performed her voyage, and came home again. And how, when she reached the port, the impatient lover leaped ashore, without his baggage, rushed into my neighbor's room, and strained her to his manly bosom, dancing a hornpipe in his excitement!

I was wrong, entirely. The sailor-looking person was not a lover, but my neighbor's brother, the boy that huddled over the fire in that hard winter—that Willie that she promised to take care of. I never quite understood that boy, whether he was constitutionally feeble and unable to work, or whether he was unconsciously idle and selfish. He was no help to his sister, but always a draw back, a dead-weight.

Imagine one of the Siamese Twins sick, or on a strike, and the other doing all the business of life, except spending the money, and you have the