

knew the inquisitive character of Mrs. K., procured a billy-goat, and placed him in a closet that was kept as a reservoir for the secret things. He then informed the lady of the wishes of the lodge, and requested her to come early next morning, as he would then be at leisure to show her what was and what was not to be done.

Morning came, and then with it, Madame K. with her broom, brushes, pails, tubs, etc., prepared and armed for the job, and found the guardian waiting for her.

"Now, madam," said he, "I will tell you what we want done, and how we came to employ you. The brothers said it was difficult to get anybody to do the job, and not be meddling with the secrets in that little closet; we have lost the key, and cannot find it to lock the door. I assured them that you could be depended upon."

"Depended upon!" said she, "I guess I can.—My poor dead and gone husband, who belonged to the Free Masons, or Anti-Masons, I don't know which, used to tell me all the secrets, and when he showed me the marks the grid iron made when he was initiated, and told me how they fixed poor Morgan, I never told a living soul to this day; if nobody troubles your closet to find out your secrets till I do, they'll lay there till they rot—they will."

"I thought so," said the guardian, and now I want you to commence in that corner and give the whole room a decent cleaning; and I have pledged my word and honor for your fidelity to your promise. Now, don't go into that closet!" and left the lady to herself.

No sooner had she heard the sound of his feet on the last step of the stairs, than she exclaimed:

"Don't go into that closet! Why what on earth can there be in that closet? I'll warrant there is a pig, grid-iron, or some nonsense, just like the Anti-Masons, for all the world, I'll be bound. I will just take one peep, and nobody will be any the wiser, as I can keep it to myself."

Suiting the action to the word, she stepped lightly to the forbidden closet, turned the button, which no sooner done, than b-a-h! went the billy-goat, with a spring to regain his liberty, which came high upsetting her ladyship. Both started for the door, but it was filled with implements of house cleaning, and all were swept clear from their position, down to the bottom of the stairs.

The noise and confusion occasioned by such unceremonious coming down stairs, drew half the town to witness Mrs. K.'s efforts to get from under the goat and pile of pails, tubs, brooms and brushes, in the street.

Who should be first on the spot but the rascally door-keeper, who, after releasing the goat, which was a cripple for life, and uplifting the other rubbish that bound the good woman to the earth, anxiously inquired if she had been taking the degrees.

"Taking the degrees!" exclaimed the lady, "If you call tumbling from the top to the bottom of the stairs, with the devil after ye, taking things by degrees, I have them; and if ye frighten folks as bad as ye have me, and hurt to boot, I'll warrant they'll make as much noise as I did."

"I hope you did not open the closet, madam," said the door-keeper.

"Open the closet! Eve ate the apple she was forbidden! If you want a woman to do anything, tell her not to do it, and she'll do it certain. I could not stand the temptation. The secret was there—I wanted to know it—I opened the door, and out popped the tarnal critter right into my face. I thought the devil had me, and I broke for the stairs with the devil butting me at every jump. I fell over the tub, and got down stairs as you found us—all in a heap."

"But madam," said the door-keeper, "you are in possession of the great secret of the Order, and must go up and be initiated, sworn, and ride the goat in the regular way."

"Regular way!" exclaimed the lady, "and do you suppose I'm going near the tarnal place again, and ride that critter without a bridle and lady's saddle? No, never! I don't want nothing to do with the man that rides it. I'd look nice perched on a billy-goat, wouldn't I? No, no, never! I'll never go nigh it again, or your hall nuther. If I can prevent it, no lady shall ever join the Odd-Fellows. Why, I'd sooner be a Free Mason, and broiled on a grid-iron as long as fire could be kept under it, and pulled from garret to cellar, with a halter, in a pair of old breeches and slippers, just as my poor, dear husband was! And he lived over it too, but I never could live over such another ride as I took to-day."—[Ex.]

The Run on the Blanktown Bank.

A TRUE STORY. . . . BY V. Z.

Mr. Pompador Lofty was the millionaire of Blanktown. He had inherited vast wealth from his father, to which he had added largely, and was still labouring to make it more. Gold had exalted him, and, out of gratitude, he was anxious in return to elevate gold, or rather, perhaps, himself, as its representative. Money, in his opinion, was power, and power, he thought, must remain power, and never abdicate its rights and privileges and might and jurisdiction. He held with the proverb which is called Flemish, but which, in truth, is universal, of all ages and all countries:

"In dumb gold
What virtue lies!
Makes young the old,
The crooked straight,
And blockhead wise."

The consequence was that Mr. Pompador Lofty rather set up as an autocrat of society, and was very sententious, pretentious, and dogmatical in company. But that was only natural. Your millionaire is generally, if not universally, a dogmatical animal. I recollect a case in point, in the great town of Muddleborough, which I once visited. At the table of a third party I met one of its clergy, the Rev. Jedediah Rasper, and one of its wealthiest merchants, Mr. Goldust.

Goldust was a 'big dog' in his way, the head of a political party, and possessed of all the influence and self-confidence which a long and strong purse imparts to its owner. He often gave dinners, at which the Rev. Jedediah aforesaid, being a clever and amusing man, was a frequent guest. On the occasion to which I refer, Goldust, after the cloth was drawn and the ladies had retired, was holding forth and laying down the law in his own magnificent way. 'I tell you,' he said, amongst other observations, to his silent and obsequious listeners, 'I tell you that Mr. Brilliant Flash is the only man to rule this country at the present moment. Sir Simon Solid is all very well in his way, a commonplace man for commonplace times, but no more to be compared to Brilliant Flash than midnight is to noonday.' This was repeated more than once, when suddenly the Rev. Jedediah, being a man who had a strong affection for inductive reasoning, was fond of a syllogism, and loved an argument better than a good dinner, although he had no objection to that, broke in with the remark, 'Well, well, Mr. Goldust, Mr. Brilliant Flash may be, as you say, a superior man to Sir Simon Solid, but give us your reasons for so thinking.' The merchant prince, who seemed to recognize a coming revolution or deluge in this audacious inquiry, indignantly stammered out, in reply, 'My reasons, sir, my reasons, did you ask? It is my opinion, sir, I say it, Perhaps he had no reasons to give, or, perhaps, had they been as plentiful as blackberries with him, he was like Falstaff, and would not give a single one 'on compulsion.' However that may have been, the Rev. Jedediah was not to be easily shaken off. He instantly and incorrigibly, returned to the charge with 'Yes! yes! Mr. Goldust, it is all very well for you or anybody else;—there was profanity and flat blasphemy in thus classing old money-bags with the common herd,—it is very well for you or any one else to tell us, 'it is my opinion,' and 'I say it,' but I always like to hear a man's reasons before I endorse his assertions.' A bombshell or a thunderbolt could not have been more effective. The whole company rebelled and positively tittered at the great man's confusion and discomfiture, while, horrified, disgusted, and 'shut up' into silence, he could only look daggers and hatchets and no-more-dinners-at-my-table at the triumphant Jedediah. And no more dinners had the Rev. Jedediah Rasper within the four walls of Mr. Goldust. He was henceforth a banished man, a very Lazarus in the eyes of Dives. Dives, however, and not Lazarus, was the looser by this 'war to the knife' and fork. For certainly one day spent in Jedediah's society was worth a thousand dinners at Goldust's sumptuous board. But we must go back to our dogmatical friend at Blanktown.

Mr. Pompador Lofty was cold and stiff, and formal, even in doing the honors of his own table. Everything upon it was ever of the best, but his parties invariably wanted the sauce piquant of the giver's inspiration. He had a perfect horror of anything bordering upon a joke, or even going beyond the tenets of hard prose and matter of fact. He would have thought the pillory far too good for such a man as Sydney Smith, and would have condemned him at once to the penal colonies, if not to the gallows itself. In business he was cautious and prudent to a proverb. He had 'no speculation in his eye,' nor in his heart either, and suspiciously eschewed all dealings with those who left the Pacific Ocean of commerce to sail on such stormy and dangerous seas; and as carefully did he avoid all who were in the slightest degree given to fly their 'paper kites' in the bill market.

In engaging his workmen he gave the lowest possible rates of wages, at the same time giving them to understand that 'he was determined to have his halfpenny's worth for his halfpenny.' It was a grand treat on a Sunday to see Mr. Pompador Lofty in the family pew at church, accompanied by his handsome, noble-looking, intelligent, clever Christian wife, and their small children. He was regular at morning and evening service, and made it a point of conscience never to disturb the congregation by arriving late. He was always in his pew before the clergyman appeared in his reading-desk. He did not leave the clerk to be his representative. His 'Amen' echoed through the church. He gave the responses in a loud, clear voice, joined in the psalmody, never lounged on the seat when he ought to be kneeling, and was a most attentive listener to the sermon. With regard to this last item, indeed, he was the terror both of the rector and the curates. He had a most tenacious memory, and it could always be understood, by a certain expression of his countenance, when he recognized the too speedy revival of an old friend, even if it reappeared with a new face, that is, another text, or, as Lionel Pattle used wickedly to phrase it, 'with a new front and tail-piece.' He was also well-read in sermon lore, from Tillotson downwards, and the same look used to settle on his features if the unhappy preacher of the day ventured to exhibit any borrowed lights in the pulpit.

En passant, on one occasion, the rector, who was no enemy to good eating and drinking, preached a very remarkable sermon, worthy of Soyer himself, on the subject, in which he told us that, while both men and beasts were blessed with food by a kind and merciful Providence, a great and decided distinction was made in favor of the former by the gift of the art of cookery, which enabled them in their eating to please their several tastes and likings. We all stared, and, I am afraid, some of us smiled. On leaving the church, Mrs. Lofty whispered to Rattle, taking care that her solemn husband should not overhear the wicked levity, 'Did you think the rector quite orthodox to-day?' 'Why not?' replied Rattle, to draw out what he knew would be worth hearing. 'Only,' she answered quietly, as she glided away, 'I thought the general notion, confirmed by a proverb, was, that, if our meat came from one quarter, the cooks were from another.'

I must not forget to add, that if Pompador L.

asserted 'the rights of property,' he also felt 'its duties.' He was a large subscriber to all the charitable societies and institutions of the place. I have already said that he engaged all his workmen on the screw principle. But it must be told likewise, that if accident or illness overtook them or any members of their families, his kindness towards them was munificence itself. Not only medical attendance, but all the comforts and even luxuries of life, were forwarded to the invalid's room at his expense. Wherever, indeed, there was sickness or helpless poverty, far and wide, in the parish, some mysterious agency was ever at work to bring relief and help in the hour of need. In many instances this could be openly traced to Pompador, and in all it was suspected that his 'ministering spirits' in some way or other had done this angel's work. So that Mr. Pompador Lofty was a man of contradictions, a moral mosaic work, a social paradox, a composite character, not unlike that mixture of contraries which Englishmen call punch, and which an astonished Frenchman thus describes:—'They put into it rum to make it strong and water to make it weak, sugar to make it sweet and lemon-juice to make it sour.' This definition is equally applicable to Punch and Pompador.—[Albion.]

JOHNNIE.

Work on brave boy, work on!
Under the broad blue sky;
Sweet flowers are springing near thee,
Bird-songs float round to cheer thee,
And from above, the All-seeing eye
Is ever watching silently.

On a sunny April morning, I went out for my usual walk. The air was cool but the sky was bright, and the birds were pouring forth their songs with unusual power and sweetness. At length, after threading several streets, I turned into a green lane, where I espied an old acquaintance in an adjoining lot.

'Good morning, Johnnie,' I said, 'you are out bright and early.'

'Yes, ma'm, I'm picking dandelions, and if I don't begin pretty early I can't get my basket full before school-time. My basket holds a good many,' said he, lifting it up.

'Yes, and it is rather slow work to gather dandelions when they are so small; but you will have a nice dinner of them.'

'Oh, I'm picking them to sell,' said the little fellow, his eyes sparkling with animation. 'Mrs. Harris buys a basket-full every morning, and she says she will take them of me as long as they last. And she pays me six cents a basket,' added he, emphasizing the six as if the word denoted untold treasures.

Of all things I like to see a contented spirit, and my heart warmed towards my little friend more than ever. Some boys would have said with a whining tone, 'I don't get but just six cents for them!' But the words had such a full magnificent sound in Johnnie's mouth that I replied—

'Why, John, you will get to be quite rich one of these days! What will you do with all your money? You must get something useful with it, and not fritter it away in candy and such like things.'

'Oh, I carry it all to my mother,' answered he, with something of reproach in his tone, as if grieved that I should suppose he could do anything else with it.

Noble Johnnie! I had undervalued his generous heart, and I felt my eyes moisten as I thought of the mother's blessedness in such a son. She was poor in what the world calls riches, but the wealthy mother of many a selfish, ungrateful, ungovernable boy, might well envy her the treasure of such a son as Johnnie. Industrious, persevering, contented and generous he had shown himself to be, and before we parted, I discovered another admirable trait.

During this conversation I had been leaning on the fence, while he worked near me on the opposite side; and at last he said, giving the dandelions a great squeeze into the basket.

'I guess I'll pick a few more. I don't think Mrs. Harris would find any fault with these, but I'll give her a good snug basket-full anyhow.'

O Johnnie! God grant that you may always remain as honest, and though man should not see the deficiency, be careful in all your dealings with your fellow-men to give them a good snug basket-full. Then will you be that invaluable citizen who is honest because it is right, and not from fear of detection.

Thinking it might not do Johnnie any good to praise him, I kept these thoughts to myself, and said:

'I should hardly think you would have time to pick a basket-full and carry them to Mrs. Harris's, for it is quite a walk there.'

'Why you see, Miss C., I get up just as soon as it is light every morning, and pick before breakfast. I'm only putting on the finishing stroke now; there was most enough before breakfast. It was pretty cold, too, this morning before sunrise.'

'And you worked all the harder for that,' said I, smiling.

'Yes, ma'm. And now I've got enough, I must run home and wash my hands, and start off. I go from Mrs. Harris's to school across lots.'

So Johnnie and I parted. I felt a genuine respect for his honesty, and his love for his mother, which led him to forget all the hardships of his lot in the pleasure of ministering to her necessities. I felt grateful to Johnnie, likewise, for, poor and young though he was, this little interview with him had cheered and encouraged me. I was surrounded by natural loveliness; the springing grass, the swelling buds and flowers, and the blue sky with its floating drapery of clouds, were all very beautiful to my eye; and the crowing of the cocks, the cooing of the doves, the gushing song of Robin-red-breast, and the sweet sighing of the winds in the tree-tops, were all very delightful to my ear; but the moral beauty I had seen shining out in Johnnie's actions rejoiced my heart more than all the rest, it was beauty of a higher kind. So I went on my way with a light heart; I

could not forbear wishing some of my little friends knew Johnnie. 'I wonder,' thought I, as I walked along, 'if little Tommy Ravel who rises about eight o'clock, and is so ill-natured if there are not hot cakes and coffee ready for him, would not become amiable if he were to get up before sunrise, and take the fresh morning air two hours before breakfast.'

I wondered, too, if Fred. Stapleton's whining tone might not be changed to a more agreeable one by some arrangement; and if he would not feel more grateful for his beautiful and costly play-things, if he were to earn six cents for somebody every day before school-time. I could not tell certainly, but this I know, at present they give him none of the rich pure enjoyment that fills Johnnie's heart when he walks over to Mrs. Harris's with a basket full of dandelions, and returns with six cents in his pocket for his mother.

Wonders of the Atmosphere.

The atmosphere forms a spherical shell surrounding the earth to a depth unknown to us by a reason of its growing tenuity, as it is released from the pressure of its own superincumbent mass. Its upper surface cannot be nearer to us than fifty, and can scarcely be more than five hundred miles.

It surrounds us on all sides, yet we see it not; it presses on us with a load of fifteen pounds on every square inch of surface of our bodies, or from seventy to one hundred tons on us all, yet we do not as much as feel its weight.

Softer than the finest down—more impalpable than the finest gossamer—it leaves the cobweb undisturbed, and scarcely stirs the slightest flower that feeds on the dew it supplies; yet it bears the fleets of nations on its wings around the world, and crushes the most refractory substances with its weight.

When in motion its force is sufficient to level the most stately forests and stable buildings with the earth—to raise the waters of the ocean into ridges like mountains, and dash the strongest ships to pieces like toys. It warms and cools by turns the earth and the living creatures that inhabit it.

It draws up vapors from the sea and land, retains them dissolved in itself or suspended in cisterns of clouds, and throws them down again as rain or dew when they are required. It bends the rays of the sun from their path to give us the twilight of evening and of dawn—it disperses and refracts their various tints to beautify the approach and the retreat of the orb of day.

But for the atmosphere, sunshine would burst upon us and sail us at once—and at once remove us from midnight darkness to the blaze of the noon. We would have no twilight to soften and beautify the landscape—no clouds to shade us from the scorching heat—but the bald earth, as it revolved on its axis, would turn its tanned and weathered front to the full and unmitigated rays of the lord of day.

It affords the gas which vivifies and warms our frames, and receives into itself that which had been polluted by use, and is thrown off as noxious. It feeds the flame of life as it does that of fire—it is in both cases consumed and affords the food of consumption; in both cases it becomes combined with charcoal, which requires it for combustion, and is removed by it when this is over.

'It is only the girdling, encircling air,' says a writer in the North British Review, 'that flows above and around us, that makes the whole world kin. The carbonic acid with which our breathing fills the air, to-morrow seeks its way round the world. The date trees that grow round the falls of the Nile will drink it in by their leaves; cedars of Lebanon will take of it to add to their stature; the cocoa nuts of Tahiti will grow rapidly upon it; and the palms and bananas of Japan will change it into flowers.'

The oxygen we are breathing was distilled for us some short time ago by the magnolias of the Susquehanna, and the great trees that skirt the Orinoco and the Amazon—the rhododendrons of the Himalays contributed to it, and the roses and myrtles of Cashmere, the cinnamon-tree of Ceylon, and the forests older than the flood, buried deep in the heart of Africa, far behind the Mountains of the Moon. The rain we see descending was thawed for us out of the icebergs which have watched the Polar star for ages; and the lotus lilies have soaked up from the Nile, and exhaled as vapor, snows that rested on the summits of the Alps.

'The atmosphere,' says Mann, 'which forms the outer surface of the habitable world, is a vast reservoir, into which the supply of food designed for living creatures is thrown—or, in one word, it is itself the food in its simple form of all living creatures.'

The animal grinds down the fibre and the tissue of the plant, or the nutritious store that has been laid up within its cells, and converts these into the substance of which its own organs are composed.

The plant acquires the organs and nutritious stores thus yielded up as food to the animal, from the invulnerable air surrounding it. But animals are furnished with the means of locomotion and of seizure—they can approach their food, lay hold of and swallow it; plants must wait till their food comes to them.

No solid particles find access to their frames; the restless ambient air, which rushes past them loaded with the carbon, the hydrogen, the oxygen, the water—everything they need in shape of supplies, is constantly at hand to minister to their wants, not only to afford them food in due season, but in the shape and fashion in which it alone can avail them.'—[Ex.]

To be cast down by undeserved censure, or elated by unmerited compliment is alike proof of weakness.

The more solicitous a man is to be informed of a secret, the more desirous he is to reveal it.