

kind landlady's, and put on a comfortable bed-gown, also lent by her.

There was no longer the old, anxious, seared look—there was peace on the brow, and a smile on the lip. The doll lay by her side, but was not, as usual, clasped to her breast.

The nurse said she had opened her eyes once, and had drunk a cup of gruel, but had immediately dropped asleep again.

"You know her delusion, nurse?" said Jack. "You know that for years she has looked upon that doll as a real, living child. Did she not ask for it, or hug it?"

"She took no notice of it, sir," said the nurse, "and she seemed as gentle and rational as I am this blessed moment. La, sir! who can tell but what the sight of blood she's lost from her poor dear head mayn't have set her right? Such things have been before, and may, with God's blessing, be again."

Jack stood for a moment, his face hidden in his hands, praying that it might indeed be so, and then he stole out of the room, and hastened to breakfast.

How he enjoyed the good tea, the rounds of buttered toast, the new-laid eggs, and the savoury rasher, in that cheerful inn parlour, no pen can describe!

CHAPTER LL

Rich the treasure!
Sweet the pleasure!
Sweet is pleasure after pain.—DRYDEN.

By the time Jack had finished his breakfast the last bell was inviting the villagers to church, and the people were passing the bay window on their way thither. Jack resolved to go too, and for the first time for fifteen years Jack found himself on his way to church. He felt strangely overcome when he left the bright sunshine and fresh breeze for the dim religious light and cloistered air of the old village church; such hosts of memories came crowding on his heart and brain, such a tempest of emotion shook his frame, such agonies of regret and remorse rent his bosom!

His cheek grew deadly pale; large tears filled his eyes; his knees shook under him; his hands trembled. A kind woman, in a cushioned pew, invited him to sit down (she thought he was an invalid). She lent him her salts, a prayer-book, and a hymn-book; and Jack, as he knelt and prayed, found comfort steal into his heart, led on by those twin angels, Repentance and Faith.

How he poured out his heart during the service! and what comfort was there for him in the simple sermon, of which the text was—

"There is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance."

On his return, the landlady met him with a smile, to tell him that the lady was awake, and quite rational.

She had asked whence came that doll which had been placed beside her, and had begged that it might be removed.

The doctor came just at this time, and Jack consulted him about the course to be pursued with the patient. Jack owned that he had some agitating disclosures to make, and asked whether it would be safe to make them just yet.

The doctor strongly urged a delay of some days. Jack acquiesced, and heard, in answer to his questions about Heart's-ease Hall, that some of the poor lunatics had escaped when the roof fell in, and, having been found rushing half naked across the fields, had been taken by the police to the county lunatic asylum; that the bodies of Dr. Douce Smyles and his wife, frightfully burnt and crushed, had been identified by Samson, as also that of Dan Underdun; that of many inmates nothing remained but charred bones; and that the whole building was a ruin.

Samson returned soon after the doctor's departure, and Jack and he sat down to a good dinner together. After dinner, Samson said that, as he was "no scholar," and Jack was, he would get him to write to Mr. Wylie Oldacre, the lawyer, who always paid every expense for the poor lady. "I've got his name and address," he said; "I think you'd better say what's happened, and state that the lady was saved by the two head-keepers, who had got her to the Black Doe, at Wynside, and they're willing to take charge of her there for the present, but that funds will be required; and that, so far, the change seems to have done the lady good, as, through keeping her bed from a severe hurt to her temple the night of the fire, she's much more rational in her mind, which the loss of blood might prove beneficial."

Jack wrote the required letter; and then, while Samson smoked his pipe in the bar, Jack took a quiet stroll in the sweet fields and through the beautiful lanes, and "looked through Nature up to Nature's God!"

(To be continued.)

John Cassell's Prize Essays on Social Science.

ON INDISCREET MARRIAGES.

ESSAY XVIII.—BY LOUISA BELL, SEMPSTRESS, WIDOW OF AN OPERATIVE.

To whom was awarded a Prize of £5.

THE INEXPERIENCE OF YOUTH.

By early marriages are generally understood those contracted between parties on the very threshold of adult existence—who having, in short, only just emerged from childhood, have had no experience of life, or the duties and obligations of youth, nor of the pleasures peculiar to that blissful period of human existence. Such persons, indeed, plunging at once into the cares and anxieties of the world, at an age when they should simply be preparing to understand how best to meet them, know nothing of that sweet time about which poets have delighted most to sing, and which even retrospective philosophy cannot refrain from regretting when lost. There is something almost sublime in the contemplation of youthful simplicity (removed from folly) and its inexperience. It is, too, the direct personification of Hope. The future lies all before it—a future not viewed in the cold, leaden colours in which middle age contemplates it, but radiant in rose-coloured light, shifting into rainbow hues; hoping and trusting, despite disappointment and the inevitable ills and trials of existence.

IMPRUDENT MARRIAGES.

It is often argued that, where mutual affection exists, it is better for young persons to share the griefs and pleasures of life together. But it may be urged, that constancy, even in affection, is not always an attribute of youth. Versatility, indeed, is more frequently its characteristic. It can adapt itself to circumstances; but it is also prompt in evading them when repulsive. It resists coercion; and perhaps these qualities, peculiar to such a season, when the sense of enjoyment is keen, and reflection is yet dormant, is one reason why we hear of so many unhappy marriages among the working classes, who are especially prone to contract early and imprudent unions. It is no uncommon thing among the operative class to see a couple present themselves for marriage whose united ages do not amount perhaps to thirty-four years—the girl-wife sixteen; the boy-husband two years her senior. All the money they can collect or save is spent in making holiday on the wedding-day. Their home is one poor room, void of all furniture, save a bed of the humblest description, a chair or two, and a table, with one or two cooking utensils. The earnings of both—for in these cases, the wife is generally employed at some of the slop work so prevalent in London—work for which the very lowest amount of remuneration is given—can barely sustain their mutual wants. When children come, what with the utter inexperience of the mother, and the reckless habits of the premature father, all speedily in that poor household becomes dirt, waste, confusion, and misery. The young pair have known no youth, none of the freedom from the yoke of care, which should be one of the especial privileges of that happy time; but all becomes faded, wan, spent. The gloom of middle age comes on, when life should be in its first promise of spring; and age ensues in the middle of existence—age and premature decay. Being the very nature of immaturity to be fickle, boys and girls rashly fancy they love; and not understanding the nature of true affection, its endurance and devotion, without which it is not worthy of the name, they unite themselves in irrevocable bonds, grow soon after mutually weary and disgusted, and ultimately part, even after dwelling together for years, having shared the precocious troubles which they have brought on their own heads.

DOMESTIC DUTIES.

It is evidently the intention of Nature that the season of youth should be preparatory, both by observation and initiation. The young girl who is the eldest of a large family, helps her mother with the little ones—free, herself, from a mother's cares and

anxieties—and so serves an apprenticeship to the comprehension of her own duties; when, in due course, maternity arrives to her, at an age when her principles and habits are well grounded and sustained. The loss of infant life, for want of the mother's knowing the commonest duties of life, is incalculable; and it is to be deplored that, as regards the female education of the operative class, more attention is not paid to the teaching of common things—common home duties—the requirements and charge of infants—so that, at least, when early marriage ensues, the *child-wife* may not be so pitifully ignorant of every obligation demanded by her early-imposed relations.

WIFE-BEATING.

The existence of youth is, or should be, imaginative—that is to say, without losing sight of the duties of the present, there should be a strong tendency to plan and imagine happiness for the future. When very young men marry, caught by some momentary fancy, they speedily become disenchanted; and then their future becomes either stained with guilt, or a blank! When men exorcise their own folly in too early incurring the obligations of matrimony, they testify their disappointment by ceasing to treat their wives with all observance of love or respect. The ill-treatment of, and brutality towards, woman, arising often from unavailing regret, and difficulty in supporting a family, have added odium to the name of working Englishmen, as the oppressors and tyrants of the weak and helpless. Hundreds of poor women, covered with bruises, and blackened and degraded by furious blows, appear before the sitting magistrates of London, to complain of their partner's cruelty—thus the idea becomes general.

PHYSIOLOGICAL OBJECTIONS.

There are also physiological objections to those early marriages, which the previous remarks will show are, in so many instances, indiscreet ones. When marriage is contracted before adult life has really set in, or the physical constitution is settled in stamina, the offspring of such unions are certain to be weakly; to be stunted in growth; to be feeble in intellect, as well as health. Young women become mothers before their strength is matured, or they are calculated for maternal duties; the seeds of consumption are thus sown, and the offspring inherit this tendency—living painful lives, and finding premature graves.

IMPROVIDENCE.

To marry without the fair means of subsistence, or the prospect of future employment, is nothing else than inconsiderate selfishness. Even if means of living are easy, what do very young girls know of the proper management of wages? The improvidence of the working classes need not be marvelled at, when the continual effects of boy and girl marriages occur daily before our eyes. Every farthing is spent before Monday morning comes round, and for the rest of the week the pawnbroker is resorted to; the habit of going to pawn-shops being something like that of visiting a gin-shop, not easily overcome. The imprudent couple will feast one day and fast the next two or three after; or, they will spend in jaunting on Sundays and holidays as much as would keep them the entire week. Early responsibilities do not seem to teach prudent habits or saving ways. Such couples, in fact, have never learned to rule themselves; they have no idea of the real uses and purposes of life—no views of self-improvement. They regard work as a bore, and believe the amusements and recreations of their class limited to the threepenny gallery of a minor theatre, riotous fairs, and demoralised dancing-rooms and public-house concerts.

As regards marriage, the views of young people alter greatly as they progress in life. There are fewer single women in the working classes, because heedless marriages are more frequent. If (as an extreme case) she knows her duty, and strives to do it, a woman of this station, married while almost a child, is overwhelmed with the burdens of life; she is a slave to her husband, a slave to her children—rarely has she the energy, or even the knowledge proper, for bringing up a family; if she is well disposed, she becomes a drudge; if evil, a slattern and a tarmagant; or, worse—she neglects her little ones, and falls a willing victim to intemperance—a vice too frequent among the women of her class.

Having thus shown the mischief of unconsidered marriage between persons of unripe age, and who possess little more than the experience of childhood, let us contemplate the wedded state at a period when it should naturally take place, and when, in the interests of public morality, it is certainly desirable that it should be no longer delayed.

(To be continued.)

were alone, Primrose (by Lady Beech's advice) told him of her engagement to her cousin. Lady Beech, who was both shrewd and romantic, thought this quite necessary, when she noted how bright his large eyes became, and how his cheek changed tempestuously as he and Primrose talked of the past; and how Sim, though apparently listening to the little earl's remarks on the landscape, grew white and watchful, and did not lose one word of what was said by Herbert and Primrose.

CHAPTER LXI.

Oh leave the gay, the festive scene,
The halls! the balls of dazzling light,
And roam with me through forests green,
Beneath the silent night!—BALLAD.

THE bells of Ashbrook are ringing a merry peal; the sun is shining brightly in a cloudless sky of turquoise blue; the soft western breeze waves the green plumes of the larch, and the delicate boughs of "the lady of the woods" (the graceful, weeping birch), and stirs the darker foliage of the oak and the elm; a gay-coloured tent is pitched on an open expanse of emerald green in the park, and small marquees dot the lawn.

A lively band is playing, and betimes all the inhabitants of Ashbrook, Greenfields, Sunnyside, and many from Bristol and other parts, where the squire had tenants, came flocking in in Sunday attire, and with bright holiday smiles.

Lady Beech purposely, knowing the squire's animosity to the Hazeldans, only presented Sim as "Mr. Seymour;" and as for Primrose, probably, as the squire had not a long memory for services rendered him, he had quite forgotten the little gentle girl whose visit had mainly contributed to restore his heir to health and life.

Primrose was very glad he had forgotten her. She felt a good deal afraid of him, and kept as much as possible out of his way. We have said that the bells rang, the band played, the soft breeze waved the flags on the tents, and the gay new ribbons of the village belles. There were numbers of pretty rosy girls—there always are in every village meeting in England—and there were a great many tenants of the squires who were strangers at Ashbrook. Among these, was a tall handsome man, in the prime of life, who wore a wide-awake pulled over his brows, but which could not conceal a pair of large blue eyes, fringed with black lashes, and a finely-shaped nose. His companion was a tall, slender, delicate woman, about nine-and-thirty, quietly dressed in black silk, and a large shawl, wearing a Spanish hat and thick veil. They kept close together, and sat down among the humbler guests at the lower table when the banquet was served.

No expense was spared; barrels of fine old home-brewed ale were broached; an ox and several sheep were roasted whole; and games of every description (mostly old English ones) were promoted.

But this was before the banquet, at which the heir's health was proposed with the most absurd and fulsome praise of himself and the old squire, by Lord Vacant Stare, seconded by Sir Lackwitt Ogle (they liked their quarters, and wished to be asked to prolong their stay). The health was drunk with enthusiasm. The young squire acknowledged the compliment in a very brief, modest speech; and then Lord Vacant Stare, who had constituted himself toastmaster, proposed the health of Squire Proudfoot.

This, too, was seconded by Sir Lackwitt Ogle. The old squire returned thanks in a very prosy, pompous manner; and after a few more toasts, the dancers chose their partners, and paired off.

Herbert had to open the ball with the chief tenant's daughter, a bright-eyed milk-maid beauty, in white muslin and cherry-coloured ribbons. Hector, Vacant Stare, and Lackwitt Ogle, all tried to get pretty Primrose as a partner, but she was engaged to Seymour.

However, in order not to attract attention, Primrose only danced one dance with him, and then Seymour returned to the side of the little earl. Weary of the noise, the glare, and the bustle, the little earl proposed to Sim to take a turn with him in the wood as far as the fishing-house—that very fishing-house which so long ago had been a favourite place of rendezvous for Anora Proudfoot and her lover, Gentleman Seymour.

"Before we go, Sim," said the little earl, "whisper to Primrose that she had better slip away and join us there; she will be glad to escape the stares and compliments, and unwelcome attentions of those three coxcombs."

Sim drew near to Primrose, who was leaning against an old pollard oak; he whispered

to her to slip away and join them at the fishing-house, as soon as she had danced with the "three fops." He had no idea that behind that tree Vacant Stare was listening to every word he said.

When Sim and the little earl were gone, Vacant Stare claimed Primrose's hand, but made no allusion to Sim.

The dance over, she was claimed by Lackwitt Ogle, and finally by Hector.

CHAPTER LVII.

Like to a double cherry, that seemeth parted,
But yet a union in partition.

SHAKESPEARE.

AMONG the prettiest girls at this *fête* was Minnie, Primrose's schoolfellow of the Ashley Down Asylum. Minnie was now living with the old aunt who had brought her up, and who had been Herbert's nurse.

They lived in one of the little old almshouses, in the same row with Keziah and Tabitha Crowe.

Minnie, with her aged aunt and the two old Crowes, had come to the *fête* in the baker's tilted cart; and Hector, who found Primrose gave him no encouragement to flirt with her, transferred his empty attentions to pretty Minnie.

No sooner was his dance with Primrose over, than he led Minnie out; and Primrose, seeing no impediment, rose, drew her scarf around her, and gliding unperceived from the crowd, stole, like a moonbeam, from tree to tree, till she entered the shrubbery, on her way to the fishing-house.

The evening was closing in, and although it was light enough on the open glade where they were dancing, it seemed very dark as she sped along the paths over which the boughs of the trees were intertwined.

At about the centre of the shrubbery there was a large, cave-like grotto. It was in a sort of hollow, and the path on either side sloped down to it.

It was composed of fragments of rock and spar, and had several rude pillars and arches; but on its top was earth, trees, a sort of bridge, and a path which led also across the shrubbery, but at right angles with that through the cave.

Primrose had intended to take the path over the grotto, but she had forgotten the right way, and suddenly found herself at the entrance of the cave.

It was so cool, dark, and sepulchral, that she felt a sort of fear, which she tried to conquer; and she was hurrying through the grotto with a beating heart and burning cheek, when suddenly a strong arm was thrown round her waist, and a voice, in which she recognised the lisp of Lord Vacant Stare, exclaimed, "So I've caught you at last, my pretty Primrose, my little prude; now you must begin by paying the toll with a kiss, and then listen to me, like a dear, good little girl."

But Primrose, although at first dumb with terror, soon recovered her power of speech, and set up a piercing shriek; at the sound of her voice, Seymour, letting himself down, at great risk of life and limb, from the bridge above, where he was awaiting her, rushed into the grotto to rescue her.

At the same moment the tall figure of a man in a "wide-awake" hat, who had also heard that terrible cry of woman's wildest dread and deepest distress, appeared, a lighted lantern in his hand, which revealed to Sim his darling, his Primrose, his affianced bride, struggling in the arms of Vacant Stare.

All the haughty blood of all the Seymours, and that not less warm of the brave yeoman race of Hazeldan, boiled in Seymour's veins, as he threw himself upon Lord Vacant Stare, tore Primrose from his grasp, and closed with him in a deadly struggle, dealing him blow upon blow, so fast and so fiercely, that Lord Vacant Stare fell to the ground, after striking out in vain; and in falling, his head came in contact with a sharp point of rock-work. A ghastly pallor overspread his face, blood gushed from his mouth and ears, and Sim, though he clasped his rescued Primrose to his heart, grew faint and sick when the man with the lantern, throwing its light on the grim, ghastly face of Lord Vacant Stare, said, "I fear you've done for him and for yourself, too, my lad,—he's dead!"

"Oh, no! no! not dead! not dead!" cried Sim; and "Oh, not dead!" echoed Primrose, wringing her hands and weeping bitterly, while a tall lady, in a Spanish hat and thick veil, who had glided in, vainly tried to comfort her.

By this time some of the guests straying near the shrubbery, had caught the alarm; it spread like wild-fire.

Soon the grotto began to fill, and at last Squire Proudfoot arrived.

He no sooner understood that a Seymour Hazeldan had struck a lord, Lord Vacant Stare, and in

all probability a fatal blow, than he refused to hear one word in explanation; but ordering that two constables, who were in the grounds, should instantly take Seymour in charge, he was, for the nonce, locked up in a strong room in the Hall, preparatory to going the next day before a magistrate.

Lord Vacant Stare was carried to the Hall, put to bed, and immediately attended by the parish doctor, who, luckily, had just arrived at the *fête*.

This disastrous event put an end to the rejoicings.

Old Crowe, as she took her place in the tilted cart with Minnie, her aunt, and Tabitha, shivered and shook her head, and said, "Solo had not howled for nothing."

And, indeed, after every other sound was hushed, and the surgeon and the squire had bent over the form of Lord Stare, and Sim paced up and down the strong-room, and Primrose wept and prayed, and every eye was wakeful, and every heart beat thick, the only sound to be heard in the air was Solo's protracted howl.

(To be continued.)

John Cassell's Prize Essays on Social Science.

ON INDISCREET MARRIAGES.

ESSAY XVIII.—BY LOUISA BELL, SEMPRESS, WIDOW OF AN OPERATIVE.

To whom was awarded a Prize of £5.

(Concluded from page 52.)

WHAT MAKES A MARRIAGE HAPPY.

THERE must be something wrong in our social system when young men and women are told they must not marry young. Early marriage is, doubtless, a preventive of immorality, and if persons must wait till a period which they are apt to consider old, they cannot expect to live long enough to rear a family. Though we cannot suddenly alter our present social system, it yet, doubtless, needs great and serious reform; and, meanwhile, prudence and self-control are virtues which young men and women may always safely cultivate. To control his passions is man's first and highest duty. That he should wait for competence to marry would be altogether saying too much. In the first place, the ideas of persons as to what really is competence vary so greatly. To some it means the necessities of life; to others, its superfluities. To wait till every necessity was provided for, every superfluous fancy likely to be gratified, would be wrong; and would savour of a distrust of Providence. But no one, at all events, should enter wedlock without being able to provide a decent and moderately comfortable home, or without having learned to be self-denying—without, further, some prospects of regular work; and, above all, without the positive attachment—warm, earnest, sincere, and self-sacrificing—which is contained in the true meaning of the word love—a passion too apt to be influenced by the worst feelings of humanity, as well as its best; making, indeed, often the very element of all spiritual life the cause of social evil and moral degradation.

THE PROPER TIME TO MARRY.

One-and-twenty years is the earliest period allowed by prudence for the union of marriage. Five-and-twenty, the meridian of youth, is a wise age for a man to marry, and the wife should be at least two or three years his junior. To all rules there arise, of course, particular exceptions; disparity of age may not, under peculiar circumstances, affect happiness, but, as a rule, it always does. A great source of discomfort in marriage, which is contracted in middle life, arises from the fact of habits being then formed and almost impossible to be altered; at least without great self-sacrifice and inconvenience. Two persons, who have hitherto lived perfectly alone, become united, and habits extremely opposite, combined with self-will, soon destroy all mutual comfort. This is one of the commonest causes of wedded misery; therefore, where marriage is desired—if it can be entered on without too great privation or imprudence—an early age, the one above indicated, is far preferable to waiting until selfish feelings mingle largely with genuine attachments. Late marriages, in short, have their inconveniences and elements of discord, as well as too early ones, and are, therefore, quite as liable to be classed under the head of indiscreet unions. Hope must still be bright—hearts still warm—to secure happiness in marriage. To collect comforts together, by mutual aid and economy, is even better than to wait till you

can sit down, surrounded by conveniences which it is too late to enjoy.

THE LOVE OF FINERY.

Young people, also, must measure well their own strength—whether they are prepared for those daily trials, far keener in married life than single. The great moral blessing of marriage is, that it is a check to selfishness, and gives a holy and a sanctifying influence and incitement to labour. A man may be reckless about himself, but he dares not be so, if he has a good wife, and loving, obedient children. A woman who loves purely and devotedly, will strain every nerve to make her husband a good home, and to bring her children up in the way they should go. Working mothers have the maternal instinct as strongly as the higher classes of their sex; but, unfortunately, their education is seldom or never directed to the important duty of training the infant mind at that period of life when a mother's influence is all-powerful in forming the future disposition. Working men are much too apt to choose their wives without any reference to their former domestic lives and habits. Bitterly enough sometimes they repent this precipitancy. A working man's wife should have been well and diligently brought up by good parents. She should know how to perform every household duty, and be able to make or mend the clothes of the family. Her health should likewise be good. Ill-health and over-delicacy of constitution sound very interesting in some of the highly-strained fictions of which our working women are so fond; but in real, common, every-day life, strength and health in an operative's wife are beyond all sentimental notions of refinement and beauty. The beauty of good, sound health is far beyond the poetical idea of pale cheeks, slender figures, and fragile strength. No working man in his senses should incur the trial of a sick, ailing wife. Many such women, it is true, attract love and regard, and it seems hard to assert such affection may not be indulged; only let not temptation be voluntarily sought. Above all, the working man who chooses a wife, should narrowly observe if she be bitten with the prevailing mania of the day—a fondness for fine dress. Fatal is this passion in either sex; but its extravagances may be carried to greater excess with women than in the opposite sex. The woman who indulges in finery beyond her station, will sacrifice anything and everything to obtain the frivolities she desires. Neatness and a due attention to dress are not only commendable, but imperative on every woman and man also; but dressing must not be carried beyond the due bounds necessary to self-respect and the regards of others. A working woman's pride should be to possess a good stock of neatly-made under-clothing, and a couple of gowns, or at most three, may then well suffice her. With economy, these three gowns will last a long time; but if she longs after every new fashion she sees in the shop-windows—if she continually requires new ribbons, new bonnets, and gay shawls—her personal expenses must be far above what her own or her husband's earnings ought to afford. Yet the wives of artisans are seldom contented unless they are their superiors who have twenty times the income. Smartness and fashion are now the aim of working women, who, so long as they have a fine upper dress to wear, care not what is the state of the clothing beneath. Cleanliness and simplicity should be the height of their ambition, instead of the cheap finery which in a week's space becomes soiled and unfit to be worn.

Very few of the working class of women, unless dressmakers by trade, know how to make their own attire. Many are perfectly helpless in this respect. The sums they are compelled to pay in putting out such work would educate the children, and provide better fare for the family. It is no excuse to urge, as many do, that they pinch themselves and families in food or firing to provide fine clothes. Working people require good nourishment; and to subtract from a husband's dinner to buy a new bonnet or a new dress, is no apology, but adds to the folly and selfishness of a passion which at all risks must be gratified.

CHEAP THINGS NOT ECONOMICAL.

Marketing is another art, for art it is, in which a workman's wife is woefully deficient; and lacking it, her weekly money will seldom go far, or yield satisfactory returns. She buys inferior meat, because she can get more for her money, forgetting that it wastes in proportion to its inferiority. She buys the bony portions of an ox or sheep, because it is apparently cheaper, and never takes into account the dead loss of the bone, for the very slender portion of skill she possesses in cooking is insufficient to teach her how to convert even bones into nutriment. In this latter accomplishment she has

neither experience, nor any desire to gain it. She boils her stews, and makes them hard and indigestible. She cannot, in fact, cook even a potato fit to be eaten, and is utterly incompetent to render the cheap parts of meat nourishing and tender. Yet such knowledge goes far to render the working man's home replete with comfort and happiness. Savoury meals and palatable food are regarded by all, rich or poor, as one of the elements of domestic comfort—and not unreasonably; wanting these, the workman surely seeks solace in the tap-room or the liquor-vaults. And if a working man's chance of home comfort is slender (from the ignorance of our working women) when he marries at a mature age, what can it be when he, youthful and inconsiderate himself, weds a child in years, who is also a child in all that is useful to herself and her family? Of all his wants, the want of a thorough good wife is perhaps the greatest of the operative; not that women fail mostly through want of love, or want of will, but chiefly through ignorance and indolence—two influences always fatal to the best interests of the hewers of wood and drawers of water, who make up our social working-day world.

THE SLAVERY OF DEBT.

When people marry, they require often to obtain furniture and clothes by degrees, and on easy terms. This necessity of the working classes has led to the establishment of an extensive, and, to some extent, of a surreptitious trade. Certain dealers make it their business to go about to working men's houses—generally when the husband is out; they offer the young wife facilities to provide herself with the goods she needs, taking the price in weekly payments. These men seldom meet refusal. The display of dress is a temptation too great; and in the belief that they can screw the money out of their house-keeping, they succumb—willing prey—and so become entangled in hopeless, endless debt. In the first place, these women commit a breach of confidence towards their husbands, whom they fear to tell of the debt incurred. Sometimes work fails suddenly—so do then the weekly payments; the tallyman, from civil obsequiousness, becomes transformed into the bullying creditor; and ultimately the husband finds himself a debtor for a sum, increased by law expenses. Nor is it the money which forms so much his real loss, as the want of trust he has, ever after, in his wife's truth and candour.

People may assert—and with some show of reason—that poor persons could scarcely get goods at all, save on this plan of weekly payment, which involves purchasing the most inferior articles at the very highest price; but if they had enough self-control to put by the amount they are forced to pay the tallyman, they might make better purchases, free from trouble, danger, or falsehood.

CONCLUSION.

These things, making part and parcel of the working man's life—and bearing on his prudence or imprudence in marriage—will not, it is hoped, be deemed out of place here. May the time come, when working men and women—giving due reflection to the importance of this question of indiscreet marriages, as affecting largely the well-doing of their class—will pause to see if reason waits on inclination! and after years will then spare them the illustration of that proverb, which, like most old sayings, has truth for its foundation—"Marry in haste, and repent at leisure."

The German Language

CLEARLY TAUGHT AND QUICKLY LEARNT.

TO CORRESPONDENTS ON THE SUBJECT OF THE GERMAN LESSONS.—In the German Lesson No. 24, and in the fifth paragraph, read "an dem" for "au dem," and "vom," for "dom."

LESSON XXVII.

THE adverb *meinetwegen* can only be rendered in English by several words—viz., by "as far as regards me." Ex.: *Sie mögen es meinerwegen haben*, "You may have it as far as regards me."

Nichts weniger als means "anything but." Ex.: *Er ist nichts weniger als tapfer*, "He is anything but brave."

Hin and *wieder* are used for "here" and "there." *Ohnehin* means "besides." Ex.: *Es ist ohnehin zu früh*, "besides, it is too early."

Immer or *immerhin* is sometimes used to express permission, or that the person speaking has no objection. Ex.: *Sitst nur immer*, "Sit if you like."

Durchaus is sometimes used for the verb "to insist." Ex.: *Sie soll es durchaus thun*, "I insist upon her doing it."

Sometimes adverbs and prepositions are united: for instance, in the words *hiermit*, *damit*, &c., "herewith," "therewith."

Adverbs may follow prepositions. Ex.: *Von hier*, "from here;" *von da*, "from there;" *von oben*, "from above;" *von unten*, "from below;" *seit gestern*, "since yesterday;" *auf heute*, "for to-day;" *für morgen*, "for to-morrow;" *bis hieher*, "till now;" *bis dahin*, "till then;" *seit wann*, "since when."

There are prepositions that are used as adverbs. Ex.: *Durch und durch*, "through and through;" *für und für*, "for ever and ever;" *nach und nach*, "gradually;" *um und um*, "on all sides;" *über und über*, "over and over."

The following compounded words are also used as adverbs:—*Durchaus*, "throughout;" *vorwärts*, "beforehand;" *überaus*, "exceedingly;" *vorüber*, "over;" *mitunter*, "now and then;" *inzwischen*, "in the meantime."

Sometimes you may hear the word *mitaus* used by Germans for "without;" but it is illiterate. *Ohne* is the proper German word for "without."

FAMILIAR DIALOGUE.

It is twelve (noon).	Es ist zwölf Uhr (Mittag).
That is true. You are right.	Das ist wahr. Sie haben Recht.
How old is the little girl?	Wie alt ist die Kleine?
She is just four.	Sie ist erst vier Jahre alt.
She was born in the month of June.	Sie ist im Monat Juni geboren.
In what year?	In welchem Jahre?
In the year 1856.	Im Jahre 1856.
She is very tall of her age.	Sie ist für ihr Alter sehr groß.
How old is your sister?	Wie alt ist Ihre Schwester?
She is just ten.	Sie ist erst zehn.
She speaks French well, but you speak much better.	Sie spricht Französisch gut, aber Sie sprechen viel besser.
How many brothers have you?	Wie viele Brüder haben Sie?
I have two.	Ich habe zwei.
You are called.	Wan ruft Sie.
Some one knocks.	Man klopft.
Go and see who it is.	Sehen Sie, wer es ist.
Open the door.	Öffnen Sie die Thür.

FADED BRIGHTNESS.

THE shadows tangle green with gold,
And soft the west winds sigh;
I tarry as they kiss my cheek,
And bear their fragrance by;
While sleepless memory wanders back
To blessed days of yore,
Ere hope and joy, and youthful fire
Were fled for evermore.
Oh! gorgons were the summer skies,
And perfect were the flowers!
And every breath awoke a thrill
In those delightful hours!
The earth was rich and beautiful,
Fresh from the hand of God;
And lightly pressed my happy feet
The green enamelled sod.

To-day I'm sad; the world is dark;
A score of wrinkles plough
My once fair cheek, and age has set
Its seal upon my brow;
I look around for those dear ones
To help me bear my pain;
I call—the chillness of the tomb
But echoes back again!
I stand upon a lonely strand,
Stand silent and alone,
While the great solemn sea of Death
Utters its mighty moan!
I see a boat with snow-white sails,
And pilot stern and pale—
His garments flowing grey and sad
Out on the languid gale.
Grim sailor, to thy beck and nod
I yield my hapless fate;
For thy right hand upholds the key
That opens heaven's gate!
Safe with the throng for ever young,
I shall no more look back
Upon the happiness that fled
And left a blighted track!