

# The Meteor.

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Lucus a non lucendo.

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NO. 7.

## Religion at Harvard.

Under the head of "Religion at Harvard," the *Charleston Monthly Record* for October gives some late infidel utterances of Professor Fiske of Harvard University, and then very proudly contrasts with them certain devout words and acts of the great Agassiz, as detailed in a late number of the *Standard of the Cross*, with the *Standard's* reflections thereon which conclude thus:

It seems to us that this scene of Agassiz and his pupils, with heads bowed in silent prayer, for the blessing of the God of nature to be given to that school then opened for the study of nature, is a spectacle for some great artist to spread out worthily upon canvass and to be kept alive in the memories of mankind. What are coronations, royal pageants, the parade of armies, to a scene like this? It heralds the coming of the new heavens and the new earth; the golden age when nature and man shall be reconciled, and the conquests of truth shall supersede the conquests of brute force.

The *Standard of the Cross* and the *Monthly Record* have a perfect right to draw their own conclusions from the very interesting little drama enacted at the opening of the school on Penikese Island; and they would doubtless accord us the liberty to draw some of our own from their comments upon it. These then are they.

The jubilation which periodicals devoted to the defence of Christianity make over a very simple devotional act of a single great man, instead of "heralding the coming of the new heavens and the new earth," sounds to us much more like a lusty cheer, from the evangelicals, to keep their spirits up, as they proceed to draw in their already sadly contracted lines of defence; for Agassiz's acts and words were only an endorsement of natural religion. Not only was nothing said of Christianity, but there was an implied censure of an article of faith of all orthodox Christians. "I know" he said, among other things, "that I would not have any body pray for us at this moment."

While we think it fortunate for the world, and for Agassiz in particular, that the great naturalist has not gone the way of most scientists, we fail to detect in the circumstance any important barrier to the advance of that infidelity which multitudes of as highly endowed Christians have in vain endeavored to stay. In the earlier ages it was fortunate that mankind worshipped in any manner their Creator; but that a people once blessed with the full radiance of Christianity should be content with Deism, is opposed to all that we know of the law of mind. Revolu-

tions never go backward, because progress—in some direction—is a law of being. Higher and higher up the mountain of revealed truth must the soul mount, or deeper and still deeper must it descend in the mines of error, in a vain attempt to penetrate the infinity which lies beneath it, but which is as unfathomable to human powers as the realms of space above.

Our conviction is that the reign of infidelity has just begun. Some years ago its advocates could be reckoned upon the fingers and toes; now they count by hundreds and their followers by hundreds of thousands, and the day is not distant when they will reckon up their legions. Sad to say, eminent scientific men occupy the first place in their ranks. One of the causes of this is manifest: Students of natural science, instead of confining themselves to the discovery of proximate causes—their sole legitimate business—presume to sit in judgment upon the ultimate laws of being, although not one of them know or can by possibility conceive the simplest principles of spiritual existence; and, as they themselves, it seems to us, ought to know, their reasonings are vitiated by a resort to processes and methods applicable only to material things. The world can not, for this reason, "know God" by science; and if his revelation of himself be rejected there remains but an endless questioning of illusive phenomena.

## Prevention of Fires.

It is a matter of surprise that in the face of the destruction and misery which fires have of late caused, so little attention has been paid to a device recommended by the celebrated sculptor, Mr. Powers. It is simple, economical and, as proved by long trial of kindred appliances, under a variety of circumstances, efficient.

Mr. Powers affirms that if a thin sheet of iron be placed under each floor, little difficulty will be experienced, in structures of brick, in limiting the ravages of the destroying element to the room in which it originates.

In wooden houses it would probably be necessary to underlay, with the same material, the slats of every plastered wall and ceiling. But this would be a trifling expense compared with that of rendering a house fire-proof by the ordinary architectural expedients.

## Concentrated Milk.

In medical books no point is more persistently enforced than the importance of a proper diet for infants. The writers assert that very many infantile ailments originate in or are aggravated by improper nourishment. The experience at the Alabama Insane Hospital is that concentrated milk forms, by all odds, the best

substitute for the mother's breast. It has been tried here in numerous cases, and in no instance has it disagreed with the little patient. On the contrary, it has never failed to cause the most puny and debilitated children to gain flesh and become vigorous and robust. In several of these cases it was proved superior to the mother's milk. It is important that it be fresh and pure.

## Insanity and Vanity.

The great Dr. Rush is said to have pronounced vanity a prominent element in the causation of three-fourths of the cases of insanity. The egotism of the insane might, with some plausibility, be adduced in confirmation of this view, for a notorious feature of lunacy, and the one which especially renders its victim uninteresting as a companion, is the propensity to talk about himself. He and his affairs are the burden of every refrain he sings, and he will sing it from day-light to dark and through half the night if he can get a listener.

It must be borne in mind that it is Dr. Rush—not the writer—who is responsible for this alleged conclusion; But if our resurrection of that great man's opinion should have the effect of diminishing, in and out of hospitals, the number of those whom Josh Billings styles "persons of small calibres but great bores," we shall feel that we have accomplished a feat which should make us take rank as a public benefactor.

## What is Insanity?

At a meeting of the Medico-Psychological Society in Glasgow, Scotland, a bomb-shell was exploded by Prof. Gairdner's protest against the popular tenet which regards insanity a disease of the brain. In the discussion which ensued, so far as we are able to judge, little if any light was thrown upon the subject. The same point came up for discussion at the last meeting of Medical Superintendents of the United States. Here, as in Scotland, little addition was made to the ætiology of the malady. The great Esquirol, among others, was quoted as doubting if the brain was the seat of insanity. In the proceedings of the same body we encountered some most interesting facts which give promise of solving, at no distant day, the vexed problems of the disorder. Tetanus and hydrophobia have long been regarded functional diseases; that is, diseases which leave behind them no changes of structure. But the microscope has of late revealed very distinct deteriorations of nerve substance in both these diseases. It is no unfair, therefore, to suppose that important revelations await future investigations as to the relation of disease of the brain and disorder of the mind.

To return: Prof. Gairdner does not deny that brain-disease is a frequent and probably an invariable accompaniment of insanity, but thinks that too much prominence has been given to

the supposed organic changes and too little to the vicious habits of mind which so often produce them. There can not be a doubt that in many cases the progress of the disease is, as indicated by Prof. Gairdner, from the mental or spiritual to the physical or corporeal. Although such a view is by no means new, it may be, as the Professor contended, useful to bear the fact more steadily in mind.

The point has been mooted often if verse be essential to poetry. We think so. But if there is, in English, any work in prose which deserves to be termed poetry, it is "The Ages of Faith," by Kennel Digby, an Englishman.

Contributor.

## The Fine Arts.

A few years ago the assertion was in every body's mouth that, in the United States, the culture of the fine arts was neglected; so immersed were our people in schemes for the acquisition of money, that painting, engraving, music, sculpture and architecture were treated with indifference or contempt. Those utterances have not been devoid of effect; for to-day a notorious degree of attention is given to every one of these branches of liberal culture. Whether we have or have not arrived at that point of just balance between the useful and the ornamental which it is the part of wisdom to maintain, it is not our intention to discuss. It is sufficient for our present purpose to say that the importance of art is fully recognized by all our leading minds, and efforts, more or less vigorous and consistent in divers places, made to promote its advance.

But the fine art of the fine arts is rhetoric, and of its two branches, elocution and literature, it is unquestionable that the facts of the printing-press have given a most decided preponderance to the art of writing. The power of this for promoting the interests of commerce and virtue is immensely superior not only to oratory but to that of all other fine arts combined. It is therefore important that correct ideals be maintained by the instillation of just principles in the art, not only by rules prescribed to children at school but by the character of the works furnished the great, reading public. A jealous regard for the interests of their house is ordinarily sufficient to secure such results from public schools. Sometimes however such safeguards fail. Especially is this true of a religious character. We now and then encounter books, written by an orthodox, pious ignoramus, which are almost as disgraceful to religious literature as the effusions of the spirit-

itualists to the intelligence and common sense of disembodied souls. The circulation of bills of bad grammar, limp logic and deformed rhetoric over the signature of the Omniscient, is an absurdity too closely related to evil to be simply ridiculous.

### Tuskaloosa.

[The following is the conclusion of the intercepted letter written by a patient of this Hospital for a New York Journal.]

I have said nothing of the Press of Tuskaloosa because editors seize with avidity any pretence for a quarrel to justify a parade of their Gatling word ordinance, ammunition free. But I believe "I'll risk one eye;" so here goes for them.

Tuskaloosa boasts five newspapers. First the *Fount*. This is a cold water paper, edited by Dr. Buck. He is a minister of the Gospel and a Baptist. That a Baptist should be a cold water man is to me a great surprise. Gracious Heavens! thought I, when I first heard the name of his Church; that man is hard to satisfy. More water still! after a fellow has been put under head and heels! This is a clear violation of common sense and old times orthodox ways, which after one good ducking or sprinkling or pouring, as the case might be, went for whiskey straight. But as Dr. Buck ought to know, this custom is not to be derided, for it was based on Bible precedent. See how our Great Grand-pap, Noah, behaved after the general immersion in his day. He evidently thought the water business had been pushed quite far enough and so he went for wine.

Second the *Blade*. This is edited by J. Randolph, Esq. He is a noble and pungent writer, as his enemies can testify. Everybody says Randolph. He has gotten office, they say, for several Republicans, and they even accuse him of electing out by some cuts of a carpet-bagger to the limb of a tree. The fact that Randolph employed ought to have been hung for his execrable d-carving. I don't say these things my own responsibility. I have heard them, and intend to back are down if any body wants to doubt it. I am not afraid of Randolph for he has renounced chivalry and named his paper the *Blade* to indicate his preference for grain grass over cotton culture as a means to Southern prosperity. Nerves, however, see a snake in the grass, and—to vary my figure—are very shy of walking before the sixty-four pounder, lest a streak lightning, or something or other, should touch it off and blow them to Jericho.

Third the *Times*. How shall we judge its editor, Col. Taylor? To the reputation of oratory he adds that immense stores of knowledge.—His mind is one of those vast, spiriferous reservoirs which waste not a drop of anything that enters them. That he ever saw, all that he ever heard, all that he ever thought, all that he ever felt, he tells to-day, and can give the page,

the day, the circumstances. The furniture of such a mind must be enormous, and if tumbled on an adversary would be demolishing from its very bulk. That his immense stock is not stored so securely as to be proof against disarrangement, might seem to be proved by his late translation of Shakespeare's notabilities. A friend of Taylor's told me that the mistake was wilful, and perpetrated to prove that he was human, and not a walking encyclopaedia. He laughed heartily, I am told, at the *critiques* of his editorial confreres, some of whom, he declared, did not know the difference between Banquo and Sancho.

Fourth, the *Spectator*. This is published at Northport; but as that is a portion of Tuskaloosa which floated across the river in high water and has never gotten back, I consider it a part of the "city of oaks." The *Spectator* is edited by Judge, W. R. Smith, whose intellectual and oratorical prowess has been proved on the hustings, at the bar and in the halls of Congress. The Judge is also a literary man, and as familiar with the events of ancient times as the people of his village with their neighbors' business. His paper is eminently classical; abounds with allusions to ancient and mediæval personages. The eternal fitness of things is well illustrated in such a paper for Northport, the home of the proprietors of the fish-traps before alluded to, and an emporium of butter, chickens and pumpkins. See how the Judge has qualified with classic gold their modern brass. If you ask a dealer the price of chickens, he will discourse upon the status of the poultry trade in the ancient civilizations; possibly claim for his specimens a descent from the famous cock which Diogenes plucked to prove the fallacy of Plato's definition of man, "a featherless biped."

Fifth the *Meteor*. This is edited by a patient at the Insane Hospital. This fellow possesses the singular faculty of being crazy or not as the humor seizes. He wears spectacles under pretense of keeping his nose from wearing away the type-cases, or the type-cases from wearing off his nose; I forget now which. He writes articles laudatory of the Hospital, and then avails himself of every opportunity to impose leg-bail upon the officers, in order to make room for any patient decoyed there by his pen. He is manifestly a very *considerate* gentleman; is a real personage and not a myth, as some incredulous persons suppose.

### Private Insane Asylums.

The fact is notorious that the accommodations for the insane do not keep pace with the number afflicted with the dread disease. The causes of this disparity we shall discuss at another time. The fact is unquestionable, and as a consequence, private enterprise is arising to supplement State benevolence in the care and treatment of these unfortunates.

The prejudice against private Insane

Asylums will be—has been—overcome by the imperative demand for increased hospital accommodation, and we hear of more than one such establishment. There is no reason that these should not be humanely and wisely conducted; and we learn from reliable sources that they are proving worthy coadjutors of our many excellent State institutions in ministering to the happiness of "the most afflicted of all Gods creatures."

## THE METEOR.

Alabama Insane Hospital.

Edited by a Patient.

Tuskaloosa, Dec. 25, 1873.

The Meteor is published quarterly, at fifty cents per annum, in advance. It is printed in the Hospital, exclusively by the patients; and none but original articles by them are admitted into its columns.

### Christmas.

A merry Christmas to all readers of the METEOR, to the editors and attaches of our exchanges and all papers sent gratuitously to the Hospital! A merry Christmas to these and to all! A day illumed with the heart radiance of the child-lesson which the festival is intended to convey; for what is gladness, what is mirth, what is bliss, but the effluence of good-will to all? Far away then be banished all selfish anxieties! Let one twenty-four hours, at the least, be devoted to the unlaborious requirements of the season—hallowed gladness and mirth.

To the inmates of the Hospital, freed as they are from business and political solitudes, the task should be attractive, for they know, by long experience, what despicable wages the old miser, Care, pays for the most assiduous devotion to those untimely labors which he so delights to impose. But to encourage them in a more thorough abandonment to the sweet traffic of joy, large-hearted friends, mindful of the State's financial strait, have come to the assistance of the officers in procuring a generous store of those little trifles which are the gold and gems of festive occasions.

The inmates of hospitals in more favored regions will doubtless find the day a stage of joy in the long journey of life.

Those outside of hospitals—the forceful integers of the great world of business and society—should reflect, as they sit with a troop of loved ones around the glowing hearth or the loaded table, that by crop failures and monetary stringency, multitudes, South and North, have been reduced to the extremity of destitution. How easy for those more favored ones to intensify their enjoyment by a consciousness of having wrought in the heart of some destitute one the assurance that the day has been indeed to him or her a day of "good will."

Our usual round of diversions for the Winter has opened with rich promise of enjoyment through some of the long evenings of the short days. Assembly has succeeded assembly, fun and frolic frolic and fun, each occasion seeming to vie with its precursor for supremacy in gayety and innocent abandon. But as the only indisputable evidence of fulness is an overrun, our officers have determined, on Christmas, to charge to overflowing our measures of mirth, by the introduction of certain fantastic diversions, the broadly-defined humorous characteristics of which are admirably adapted to the weakened capacities of hospital unfortunates. We append a copy of the programme for the day, which has been printed in this office.

In this connection it is but just to acknowledge, in behalf of the inmates, Dr. Huger's assiduity in devising modes and means for their diversion. And while the Doctor is before us we will venture an additional remark or two. Our readers may remember that soon after his accession to the medical staff of the Hospital we inserted in our paper a brief but highly complimentary notice of him. We are most happy to write that the experience of the last twelve months has, in no degree, damped the ardor of our first expectations. Dr. Huger combines with the bloom, vivacity and vigor of youth the deliberation, perspicacity and firmness of more advanced years, and unsated with the advance already made in the science and practice of the noble art to which he has devoted his life, seems ever to bear in mind that modest but lordly principle which should be as a pole-star to all trades, all professions: "Nothing is rightly understood till all is known."

We have not, as our readers know, troubled them with the highly-prized compliments paid our little sheet by other journals. Nor have we been able, on account of our limited space to reciprocate the courtesy of very many editors in the reproduction of our articles. We give below, a copy of a letter received since our last issue, which as the opinion of an "expert" in reference to our METEOR enterprise and the success which has attended its conduct, is peculiarly gratifying. The writer is the Superintendent of one of our largest and best Hospitals for the insane.

Editor of the Meteor:—

I enclose one Dollar as subscription to the Meteor which I think is a credit to the Hospital, as it would be to any such institution. Many a more pretentious sheet would be vastly improved if it had half the dash, sense and ability of your modest little Meteor. May it long flash light and joy into the beclouded hearts and minds of those who find their best homes and friends in the Hospitals for the insane.

Very truly yours,

On the evening of the 28th Ult. Doctor and Mrs. Bryce celebrated the thirteenth anniversary of their marriage, by an entertainment given to the patients in the Amusement-hall. As on last year's celebration of the same event we exhausted our store of forcible and elegant terms in an endeavor to make a faithful and graphic report, we doubt if we can do more for the party of the 28th than by saying that it was exactly like it, "only more so."

## Alabama Insane Hospital.

## Governor Lewis.

We had heard and read much of Governor Lewis, and as a good citizen were desirous to behold the chief-magistrate of the State. Our wishes were fulfilled at the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees. Governor Lewis is of tall and commanding appearance, and we should say grave and reserved in manner. He will think, if this meets his eye, that we have forgotten his complimentary pleasantry about our paper; but we have not, for those were manifestly but flashes of mirth from the lowering cloud of responsibility and care which had settled upon his manner. Gov. Lewis, we believe, has had the good fortune to compel, for many of his gubernatorial acts, the approval of his opponents without abandoning the principles of his own party. In these days of fiercest political partizanship, the mere statement is high eulogium. His visit to the Hospital in the height of the financial panic and at a most trying juncture in the affairs of the Hospital, shows that he is not indifferent to the success of this State institution, nor unalive to its intimate connection with the happiness and dignity of our whole people.

## An Earnest Appeal.

To the Members of the Legislature:—

Have you examined, Gentlemen, the statistics of Insanity presented to you in the last Report of our Superintendent to the Governor? Does it not produce in your minds the most humbling and saddening effect to note the record of the numbers of our poor human kind affected with the direst of all diseases? Have you endeavored, in the remotest degree, to realize the broken hearts, the blasted hopes, the blighted ambition, the unfinished work, the dead affections, of this great company of stricken ones, without feeling very sad at heart?

The remembrance of them once roused up in the hearts of your noble predecessors a pity that might justly be called divine—a pity that assumed a most practical expression and form. They organized and erected a colossal structure expressly for the care and treatment of this unfortunate class, and up to this time their successors have kept pace with the civilized world in making provision for their continued amelioration.

We are told now that the State is bankrupt; alas we have too many evidences around us of its truth! But are we too poor to feed the hungry, to cloth the naked, to heal the sick and to restore to a fellow creature the only thing worth having, after all, in this life—a sound mind? Can an individual, much less a great State, do less than this?

Among all God's blessings, and we speak, be it remembered, from

addest experience, none call so loudly for gratitude, as the preservation of our reason. Of all the inequalities in the social condition there is none so affecting as its deprivation. God sees fit to cast upon your benevolent care those whom He visits with that fearful affliction, is it not alike UNFEELING and UNGRATEFUL to withhold it?

Mr. Seward, when Governor of New York, expressed in beautiful and truthful simplicity, the political economy of this Christian age, in a message to the Legislature, when he said "Nations are seldom impoverished by their liberality." Mr. Seward was recommending the erection of additional Hospitals for the insane; we ask for the bare necessities of life.

Gentlemen, the highest exponent of our Christian civilization and advancement, and the best and most enduring expression of our God-like nature, underlies the foundation of this magnificent Charity for the care and treatment of the insane. Your Schools, Colleges, Universities and Organizations for the development and culture of the minds of the people and resources of the Commonwealth, important as these are conceded to be, sink into utter insignificance in comparison with the moral grandeur of a scheme like this for the restoration of the enthralled human soul. "A healthy body" says Mr. Carlyle "is good, but a soul in right health;—it is the thing beyond all others to be prayed for; the blessedest thing this Earth receives from Heaven."

## Visit of the Trustees.

The annual visit of the Trustees is an event of great interest to the inmates of a hospital. It is usually heralded by additional care in cleaning up and furnishing—in giving to everything, in and about the institution, a holiday-garb air. In other respects there is little change. Applicants for permission to leave the Hospital are referred to the Superintendent, as the best judge of their state of health; some extra delicacies at meals, and one or two additional parties are given, and hospital life subsides into its usual routine.

## Our Ministers.

## Rev. W. H. Williams

Is the pastor of the Baptist Church in the city, and one of the regular occupants of the Hospital pulpit. His height is slightly below the average; his form is robust, his forehead high, his hair and eyes dark, and the hirsute appanage of his face is formed into a pair of black whiskers of moderate length and genteel form.

His sermon on the 16th Ulto, might be styled philosophical; a species for which we confess a predilection, for though not as devoted to pure demonstration as the mathematician whose test of literary excellence was something "proved," we dearly love "whys" and "wherefores," and think the public taste runs stronger in that direction than many ministers suppose. His text being an exclamation of Job's that the Lord had afflicted him and had softened his heart, Mr. Williams after declaring that the natural tendency of the human heart was to become insensible, pro-

ceeded to indicate the means used by the Creator to counteract this. The terrors of the moral law, the tragedy of Calvary, afflictions of various kinds, were severally shown to be His instruments for such purpose. The reverend gentleman next inquired why a soft heart was necessary, and showed that such a heart, and only such a heart, could render the individual docile to the impulses of the Divine mind and, like a well-appointed rudder, compel the whole structure of which it formed a part to prompt subservience of the master's designs.

Several times Mr. Williams invoked the aid of poetry to enforce a thought. It would therefore be natural to expect in the course of his sermon a display of rhetorical blossoms. The full gist of some of these we unfortunately lost, for though Mr. Williams' voice is sufficiently strong and his habitual animation of manner assumes, now and then the garb of passion, his articulation is not always distinct, and his choice of accental words, is occasionally, in our opinion, peculiar.

## Brevities.

The next number of the METEOR will be printed on beautifully tinted paper.—Our Airing-court is now deserted except on bright, warm days. We confess to missing the games of marbles, the throng of promenaders, in couples or alone, and the occasional oratorical spoutings. Before the return of Spring some of the poor fellows will be with the loved ones at home, and some doubtless with those who will cherish them more fondly and render them greater service than their poor earthly friends could ever do.—The *South Alabamian* gives an extract from the *Selma Times* to the effect that the ed t r had in his sanctum a potato 6 feet, 2 inches long.

The only absurdity we can see about the statement was prefacing it with the averment that it was the largest potato he had ever seen, and in the omission of the certificates of some Selmians that the editor was a truthful man, and the certificate of a Judge of Probate that these Selmians could be believed on oath. Seriously we don't see why a potato should not be 6 if parsnips grow to 30 feet. And Meechii says he had one that did; though Meechii they say is somewhat given to long-bowing on Agricultural topics.—L., who runs the cooper and mattress shop, had scruples of conscience about burning the State's coal, until the Doctor agreed to accept in payment draughts payable from the profits of some of the numerous gold mines which L. owns.—The entertainments during the visit of the Trustees were distinguished successes. Judge King participating only in the first, the stereoscopic exhibition; we did not have the pleasure of seeing him run. We like to see huge, middle-aged men *pick up* their feet in a hurry. When that lady patient tapped on the back the Hon. E. P. Jennings, our Trustee, that huge embodiment of North Alabamianism made tracks for her like a run away tempest. The explosions of laughter that signalized his running feats, have doubtless blown up numerous strongholds of lunacy

in the establishment.—President Lupton, of the University, finds our stereoscopic exhibitions superior to any he has seen in America or Europe. He affirms that the outlines of the figures are more accurately defined and the various colors and tones more distinctly and harmoniously brought out by our oxy-hydrogen light and apparatus than by any other it has been his fortune to meet with elsewhere.—The *Entaw Whig* has printed a series of articles against dancing. Plato is quoted as affirming that those alone dance who are incapable of rational conversation. That boit entirely misses us lunatics. We avail ourselves of our inactivity to say one word in behalf of the poor devils outside, whom not sufficiently formulated with tangle-foot politics, short cotton crops and the financial epidemic, the Entaw man wishes to plunge into the Gehenna of Puritanism. All the world acknowledge Plato's genius, but, but-but did he have three grains of common sense?—A Georgia farmer has taken a premium for raising five bales of cotton from one acre. He ought to have received instead of that a berth in the penitentiary, for if the present calamitous conditions of the South be due to half a bale per acre what does the villain deserve who raises five?—Two hundred copies of the Superintendent's annual Report were printed and bound in the *Meteor* office solely for the members of the Legislature.—We are in receipt of a complimentary card of invitation to the *Pi Omega* society of the University of the South at Se- wanee, Tenn. The *Meteor* folks return sincere thanks, but must ex- claim, after the manner of an out-door patient who, on hearing the whistle of a steam-boat, imagines it is the voice of his friends calling him to come home: I hear you and want to go but they won't let me.—Our good friend, Mrs. T. E. Roberts, and other ladies of Mobile contributed a barrel of oranges to our thanks-giving entertain- ment. The ladies of Mobile are noted for their thoughtfulness and liberality.—Some months since the *Meteor* chronicled the discovery of coal on the Hospital farm. Very lately a still more valuable deposit has been encountered. The vein is nearly three feet in thickness and of the very best quality.

## Dr. W. A. Hammond.

The *Expert* (?) whose testimony acquitted McFarland for the killing of Richardson, says in a recent paper on *Insanity in its relation to crime*, that

"An individual who has sufficient intelligence to know that pointing a loaded pistol at a human being, cocking it and pulling the trigger, are acts which will cause the death of a person, against whom they are directed, should be subjected to the same punishment for a homicide as would be awarded for a like offence committed by a sane person."

It is a question of some psychological interest to know where, and in what role "expert Hammond" will next appear.

## Poetry.

Multitudes of definitions of poetry have been proposed, but none have given universal satisfaction. The same, however might be said of many other attempts at defining. A definition is as a picture of the original, and however excellent, must in various respects come short. To define accurately is ever a most difficult task, for the reason that

Words are but heralds of the royal thing,  
Rounding the mental powers 't expect their king.

It would be a great error to brand as "mere rhyme" all verse which is not a celebration of some great event, noted character or important principle. As a house may deserve admiration as a palace, a mansion, a cottage or even a hen house, so there may be various grades of genuine poetry; from the sublimity of Homer and Shakespeare, the beauty of Virgil and Cowley, to the humour of Goldsmith in some of his smaller poems. It is important however that the vehicle accord with the subject—that the more trivial the topic the more briefly, in general, it be treated.

An essential characteristic of all verse, to justify the appellation of genuine poetry, is that in its whole course, from the beginning to the end, it shall seem as the pulsations of some virtuous emotion—a trill from the chords of the soul. Whatever accomplishes such a result is genuine poetry; that which comes short of it may be instructive or useful verse but is not a poem.

An indispensable element of poetry of the highest order is the tragic. All the greatest poets, in this respect, are faithful to the instincts of the soul. There is a vein of profoundest sadness which enters as an important factor into every life, which, in truth, runs through all created things and which St Paul has very forcibly depicted as the whole creation being in travail. The life of the angels, which must ever be to man the beau ideal of honor and bliss, has, linked indissolubly with its aspirations, the awful fate of legions of the heavenly host which kept not their first estate. Nor this alone; the Omnipotent is represented in the Scriptures as partaking of this profound sadness. Passing by the sorrowful life and cruel death of the God-man, we learn from holy writ that the Holy Spirit "maketh intercession for the saints with groanings unutterable."

## The Mind.

So much has been written of the strength of the human mind; its god-like endowments, its wonderful achievement—its sublime soars through the realms of unlimited space, its marvel-fathoms of the recesses of nature and being—that it is necessary, now and then, to present the other side, and show how weak it really is. What a length of time is spent even by bright children in acquiring the rudiments of science? How often had lessons to be gone over, each principle

attacked, and how easily forgotten after being thoroughly mastered; so that fully one-half of the average of lives is consumed in learning the intellectual tools with which their world-work is to be performed. Nay, it is generally admitted that when a young man leaves college his education has just begun, and yet he has then nearly lived out two-thirds of the time on Earth which he can, of right, call his own.

Many illustrations could be given of the difficulty with which men acquire new ideas, or arrive at just conclusions in novel or unexpected situations.—Most persons brought up in a house facing South or North associate the front of every dwelling in which they stay with that point of the compass, and are never really "square with the world" except in a house situated similarly to the home of their youth. The attachment of multitudes to the peculiar principles of their denomination or party—we mean those which distinguish it from others—has, probably, no more philosophical foundation than this. There could not be an art more simple than printing; an art which children have rudely practiced from the days of Cain and Abel. Yet how many thousand years elapsed before it was discovered! and this too in the presence of a wide spread demand for its products. How many myriads of your "nobly endowed" men had seen a pot top lifted by steam, without reflecting that a force which could do that could be converted into a most useful servant.

The number of playing cards in a deck is only fifty-two; yet the fewest persons, in playing a game of whist, will remember what cards have been played, although the division into four kinds with their gradations and the usual progress of the game are notoriously calculated to aid the memory. The simple combinations of the draught or checker board are thoroughly mastered by not more than one in twenty even of its devotees.

But to use a more familiar illustration, let a book of 100 pages be read in the hearing of a score of persons, and what will the mass of them retain of the contents? Perhaps a half-dozen or dozen distinct facts or principles. All the rest is a confused mass of dates, events, motives and principles.

Yet many of these bunglers at simple games or localities of town and country will pronounce dietatorially on religious and philosophical questions, the very integers of the forces of which none can understand; nay, are disposed to persecute others for arriving at conclusions different to their own. Now in all such problems the number of separate forces is countless and the field of their operations, at least to human faculties, boundless. Yet multitudes imagine that they have so thoroughly mastered them that they listen with impatience to any one who may presume to offer a new thought or to depart from the ruts in which their own minds are accustomed to run.

## North and South.

Mr. Editor:—

When slavery was abolished all barriers to an assimilation of the characters of the people of our two sections were broken down. In a few years it will be as difficult to tell a Northern man from a Southern as the fresh butter of many markets from a mixture of the ancient article with lard, suet &c. Regarding this assimilation as inevitable we think it a patriotic duty to promote it. The chief, perhaps the only reason why some patriots are averse to

any attempts at blending is from entertaining the erroneous idea that it is a big job. I undertake to show that it is not.

To begin: The climates of the two sections are said to be very unlike. I question this because I doubt if civilized humans can endure weather much colder than we have in Dixie. Cold! by Jehosaphat, if a white bear were turned loose on some of our winter days, he might, without subjecting himself to the imputation of being imaginative, conceive that he was in Greenland. I learn too that in Kentucky all persons above 45 years of age, on the return of Spring, brag of being alive, as if a survival of the Winter was a great vital feat. Moreover, a Russian lady-emigrant, finding the climate of New York trying to her constitution, started for balmy Dixie, by way of Cairo. She declared that the farther south she went the colder she became until reaching Louisiana she came very near freezing to death. I do not deny that the thermometer draws in its horn somewhat more north; but what has that to do with the matter? It is not the cold that effects quicksilver but the cold that affects the fingers and toes which concerns humanity. A thermometer can no more judge weather for an animal than a cow can sample diet for an alderman. The very popularity of the water cure at the north proves that the climate is not severe; for the idea that any but feathered bipeds should be addicted to hourly bathing except in moderate weather is a transparent absurdity. But they have more snow north. What of it? Snow is never indicative of extreme cold, but the reverse. Several Southerners, moreover, having lately invented ice-machines, Dixie will soon wheel into ranks on all refrigerating points.

The productions of the two sections differ. The Yanks raise more grain, grass and apples. They raise more grain doubtless because they plant more. The idea that ours is not a good grass country is contrary to every farmers experience. I speak what I well know, for, I once tried farming, and you bet I wished that it "warn't" good for grass, for this out-grown corn and cotton and anything else I ever planted, so that my chief concern as a planter was to keep the grass down. My neighbors' fields, too, more often resembled cottony grass fields than grassy cotton ones. As to Dixie being unsuited to apples, ask Mr. Langdon of Mobile, if it is not due to the fact that while twelve months are devoted to cotton, about twelve hours of mental and physical labor is accorded to fruit-trees annually. The North is popularly supposed to be unfit for cotton culture. I will give one fact, from which your readers can draw their own inference. A gentleman of intelligence and veracity informed me that he saw cotton in Illinois that would produce twice as much, per

acre, as thousands of acres in Georgia. Recollecting that the former is one of the most northern, and the latter one of the most southern, we must conclude that a barrier between the two sections can not be built of the *Gossypium*.

The Northerner is thought to be more industrious, but the METEOR, some numbers back, showed—which is true—that all the energy does not lie north, nor all the laziness south, of Mason and Dixon's line. To clench this argument or rather, to put the boot on the other leg, consider the domestic arrangements of the two sections. The Yank has his kitchen in his dwelling and his well and his wood-pile in his kitchen. If this is not a proof of laziness I am not a philosopher. See how differently these things are arranged south. The kitchen is twenty to fifty paces from the dwelling; the well as far from the kitchen, and the wood-pile fifty yards from the well. In rainy weather, particularly if the wind is high, the amount of enterprise which this arrangement provokes is enormous.

The Yankee's principle of life is said to be the love of money; the Southerner's a love of honor. Now there is at this point room for big blundering. Examine it closely, and like the supposed redness of the blood it is found to be a mere semblance. I grant that the Northerner loves money, but who ever saw a Southerner that hated it? Such an individual would be a greater curiosity than the bearded woman. But the Southerner is devoted to honor. Very well; but are the Yanks indifferent about this? Decidedly not; for why do they value money if not as stepping stones to honor. The Southerner baits for honor with bows, smiles, compliments, bowie-knives and pistols.—The Yankee puts dollars in his trap and catches twice the number of those birds of paradise which men term "honor." Even if his birds are not the pure breed, the difference is not only scarcely distinguishable, but long experience in the old world proves that frequent crossing with them is necessary to the excellence of the pure stock.

The Northerner, in farming, evinces less astuteness than the Southerner. He plants a variety of crops, so that if one hits, another is sure to miss. The Southerner, averse to base compromises with Fortune, plants all cotton, and fails only in consequence of those accidental or providential dispensations, boll-worm, army-worm etc. His persistence in the same course proves him a hero who is not to be deterred from a grand purpose by such trifling things as worms or such big ones as Providence; who falling, rises and tries again and again and yet again.

One other point—the mental characteristics of the two sections. These I can but glance at now. I am investigating, with a view of elucidating fully this branch of the subject, the exact number of larrupplings that it takes to make a chap love his books, making due allowance for the effect of frost in intensifying the bite of a hickory. Dr. Draper, in his work on climate, says that the South has never produced a great man. He will want us to believe next that there are no big rivers South, nor big liars North. But all Draper's philosophisings prove what an ass even a great man can make of himself when abandoning the field of his legitimate business. Had he stuck to his retorts and his renal and hepatic secretions, and let philosophy alone, his reputation, for veracity at least, would be less impeachable. But the truth is, Draper is one of those imaginative men who, having conceived a theory that is irreconcilable with acknowledged facts, exclaim: "The worse for the facts!"