QUICKLY WOULD THE SHADOWS FLEE.

[Mary Torrence in Demorest's Monthly.]

If you should come all suddenly
And let the soft, sweet glory of your eyes
Light up the darkness of this sombre room,
And chase away the dreariness of this day of gloom,
And grace it with the dawning of a glad surprise,
How quickly would the shadows flee,
And looking out, amazed, I'd say:
"O beautiful, bright, happy day,
How could I think you dark and cold,
When in your heart such joy you hold,
O fair, sweet day?"

If o'er this heavy, dingy tome
Your gentle hand should wan'ler swift,
How quickly would each leaf be edged with gold,
And every shining page would hold
A message sweeter than a fairy gift,
And down through long dead years would come
The far faint echo of the sage's vow,
In music sweeter than the world hath known,
And looking up surprised I'd say:
"I wonder why this gloomy day
So fair hath grown."

If while the wind is making moan
Through leafless branches of the trees,
And I am trying, all in vain,
To shut away the sob of pain,
Your voice came floating on the breeze,
How would its long-remembered tone,
In music sweet fall on my ear,
And I no more the moan would hear,
But your voice my heart would fill
With its music and its thrill
And its echoes clear.

ELI PERKINS' BOOK AGENT.

A Short Narrative Embracing a Remarkable Chain of Circumstances.

[New York Star.]

A Philadelphia book agent importuned James Watson, a rich and close New York man, living out at Elizabeth, until he bought a book—the "Early Christian Martyrs." Mr. Watson didn't want the book, but he bought it to get rid of the agent; then taking it under his arm, he started for the train which takes him to his New York office.

Mr. Watson hadn't been gone long before Mrs. Watson came home from a neighbor's. The book agent saw her, and went in and persuaded the wife to buy another copy of the same book. She was ignorant of the fact that her husband had bought the same book in the morning. When Mr. Watson came back from New York at night Mrs. Watson showed him the book.

"I don't want to see it," said Watson, frowning terribly.

"Why, husband?" asked his wife.

"Because that rascally book agent sold me the same book this morning. Now we've got two copies of the same book—two copies of the 'Early Christian Martyrs,' and——"

"But, husband, we can——"

"No, we can't, either!" interrupted Mr. Watson. "That man is off on the train before this. Confound it! I could kill the fellow, I ——"

"Why, there he goes to the depot now," said Mrs. Watson, pointing out of the window at the retreating form of the book agent making for the train.

"But it's too late to catch him, and I'm not dressed. I've taken off my boots and, ——"

Just then Mr. Stevens, a neighbor of Mr. Watson, drove by, when Watson pounded on the window-pane in a frantic manner, almost frightening the horse.

"Here, Stevens!" he shouted, "you're hitched up; won't you run your horse down to the train and hold that book agent till I come? Run! Catch 'im now!"

"All right," said Mr. Stevens, whipping up his horse and tearing down the road.

Mr. Stevens reached the train just as the conductor shouted "all aboard!"

"Book agent!" he yelled, as the book agent stepped on to the train. "Book agent! hold on! Mr. Watson wants to see you."

"Watson? Watson wants to see me?" repeated the seemingly puzzled book agent. "Oh, I know what he wants! he wants to buy one of my books; but I can't miss the train to sell it to him."

"If that is all he wants," said Mr. Stevens, driving up to the car window, "I can pay for it and take it back to him. How much is it?"

"Two dollars for the 'Early Christian Martyrs,'" said the book agent, as he reached for the money and passed the book out through the car window.

Just then Mr. Watson arrived, puffing and blowing, in his shirt sleeves. As he saw the train pull out he was too full for utterance.

"Well, I got it for you," said Stevens; "just got it, and that's all."

"Got what?" yelled Watson.

"Why, I got the book—'Early Christian Martyrs,' and——"

"By—the—great—guns!" moaned Watson, as he placed his hand to his brow and swooned right in the middle of the street.

A Man With a Silver Skull.

[Chicago Times.]

One of the queerest curiosities on the globe is a man with a silver skull who is now visiting in Louisville, Ky. During a fiercely contested battle in the late war this interesting individual was struck in the head with a piece of shell, which tore away the entire top of his skull, leaving the brain most horribly exposed. Strange to say, he survived the terrible wound and a noted surgeon who was one of the physicians in attendance upon the late lamented Garfield, succeeded in fitting a silver plate over the opening which shielded the brain, equally as well as the skull. This plate is about the size of a man's hand and works on hinges, and may be raised up and down at will. The re-skulled man does not experience the least pain, and as he wears a wig all evidence of a shattered skull is concealed.

A Hint on Chimneys.

[Industrial Chronicle.]

It is well known that the round form is the best for chimneys in workshops. It facilitates the escape of the smoke; and gives less hold for the wind, besides requiring less material for construction. Round chineys are, however, difficult to build, and in some places the want of workmen to make the round kind has compelled the adoption of square or octagonal forms. To obviate this a European firm makes bricks in the shape of wedges and corresponding with the radius which the chimney is to have.

A Joke on Ingersoll.

[Chicago Times.]

An aged colored woman of Washington, while at the colored indignation meeting in that city recently, was so overcome by the Methodist sound of Ingersoll's voice that she began the general routine of gymnastics commonly used in camp-meeting—viz: jumping up and down, droning out a hymn, and keeping time to the tune by the gentle pit-a-pat of her pedal extremities. She had mistaken the genial star-route attorney for a minister of the gospel.

Experiments are in progress in Ohio for turning palmetto leaves into paper for news print. It was the material used for Bank of England notes with such secrecy for years.

New York Commercial Advertiser: "Why speak of these stocks as 'securities?' asked a Broad street operator; why not call them 'insecurities?'"

The Unfinished Manuscript.

Arkansaw Traveler.

Some time ago the writer visited Prof. Gailnet, of Little Rock, Ark., and while sitting in the library, engaged in conversation with the entertaining gentleman, observed a roll of manuscript tied with a strip of black cloth. We asked him if it was something designed for publication.

"It will never be published," he said, and began to unroll it. "See how it ends," and glancing at the bottom of the last page we read the following: "While he sat alone, deeply musing, a hearse passed the house, and—" here the sentence broke off. Requesting, almost imploring, the professor to tell us the history of the curious manuscript, he finally consented.

"I came to Arkansas when I was a young man. One night I sat in my library writing a story for a magazine. I was in good health and had cause to feel elated over the success I had just attained by the publication of a small volume of sketches, but still I felt the heavy weight of melancholy depression. I arose and walked out, but soon returned, not experiencing any change. I bent myself to the work of writing a dreary story and worked with surprising rapidity until I wrote, 'A hearse passed the house and—' Here I stopped. A strange presentiment told me that I would never finish the sentence. Next day I took up my pen to finish it, but I had not touched the paper with the pen when a piercing shriek caused me to spring to my feet and rush from the room just in time to see a horse, attached to a buggy, dashing wildly toward my gate. A frightened woman was in the buggy and I rescued her. I put my manuscript away and devoted myself to my new acquaintance; our friendship grew into love and finally we married. Then followed ten years of happiness. I did not tell my wife of the unfinished manuscript, but one day she found it and begged me to finish it. I did not like to confess my foolish fears, and finally I told her that I would. The next night, after my wife had gone to bed, I took down the story and read it over. I would finish it for her sake. I took up the pen and was just in the act of touching the paper when my wife called me. I ran to her and found her in a dying condition, having been attacked by rheumatism of the heart."

"Have you ever attempted since to finish it?"

"Yes. After my wife had been dead for several years I determined one night to finish the story. I went to the desk, but had no sooner dipped my pen in the ink when a noise in an adjoining room attracted my attention. Hurrying into the room I found my son lying on the floor dead. He had always been in wretched health and had committed suicide."

"Do you ever expect to finish the story?"

"I expect to try again. It is impossible for me to remain superstitious, even though I may have a powerful cause for doing so. Of course, all this would have happened even if I had not begun the story. I think that next Tuesday night, if I feel like it, I shall devote myself to the completion of the work, for I desire to see it in print. Come up and see me start off."

We were busy when Tuesday night came, and—cowardly confession—were not sorry that something kept us away. Early Wednesday morning we hurried to the house where for years the professor had lived. The horrible thought seized us that he had taken up his pen to finish the story and had fallen dead. Some time elapsed before we had the courage to knock at the door. At last we rapped.

No answer.

Another rap.

No answer.

With blood almost at freezing point, and with hair standing erect, we shoved open the door. The old man sat leaning back in his chair, eating pie.

"Come in," he said cheerfully. "You see I have just finished that story, and it gave me an appetite for pie. Pie's a good thing to eat after you finish up a story, but you want to wait until you are through writing."

"Did you hear any strange noises?" we asked, "when you began to write."

"Well, yes. A calf over in the adjoining yard bawled for a while. Oh, yes, you are thinking about that story I told you some time ago. Why, my dear fellow, you should not have been so foolish as to have believed me. I never was married you know. Have some pie."

TACKS IN BEEF.

New York World.

Housekeepers and others should carefully inspect the beef they purchase for home consumption. A new danger has arisen, from which very serious consequences may be apprehended. The shippers of dressed beef in the west have begun to use a small double-pointed tack, somewhat larger than those used for fastening down mattings, in the place of wooden skewers for more firmly binding together different parts of the beef. The retailers, through negiect or ignorance, fail to remove the barbed wires, and being small they remain invisible until some unfortunate diner is well-nigh choked by their lodgment in his throat. Two Philadelphia ladies met with just such an accident, and the services of a physician were necessary to remove the wires, which had become firmly embedded in the epiglottis, causing, as may be imagined, the most intense pain. Thorough mastication will, of course, disclose their presence in the meat; but the average American rarely indulges in that preliminary operation.

A VALUABLE DISINFECTANT.

New York Sun.

A disinfectant introduced to the medical profession by the late Dr. Goolden has been used in London eight years. Half a drachm of nitrate of lead should be dissolved in one pint or more of boiling water, and two drachms of common salt in a bucket of water. Pour the two solutions together, and let the sediment subside. A cloth dipped in this and hung up in a room will sweeten a fetid atmosphere instantly, or the solution thrown down a drain or over a heap of rubbish will produce a like result. Clothing worn by a patient with infectious disease, or bed linen, can be put at once into this solution without injury to the material, thus destroying the risk of infection for those persons who wash the clothing. Although it is a strong poison taken internally, it does not injure the skin. A room could be scrubbed with the solution, and would be sweetened at once by the process.

A DEFINITION OF ART

WHICH A LITTLE CHILD GIVES TO THE EDITOR OF THE CONTINENT.

The Continent.

The Concord school of philosophy is reported to have listened to a definition of art, evolved from the inner consciousness of one of its leaders, which runs as follows:

"Art is the endeavor to make actual and apprehensible to sense and understanding in existing material furnished by the physical universe, for sight and sound, an ideal of beauty or sublimity or some essential charactistics of the ultimate and perfected beauty."

We can beat that. The little child who leads the conductor of The Continent by the nose, is most unfortunately a girl, whose life has been passed so close to the untrained barbarism of nature as to render her almost insensible to the esthetic refinements which masquerade under the name of art, but whose young soul has been stirred with undefined yearning for the beautiful. Not long since she was called upon to officiate as hostess pro tempore to a couple of artists who were engaged in sketching in the vicinity of her home. After a day or two of close observation and innumerable questionings, she sought the presence of her sire and gravely announced:

"Well, papa, I believe I have finally found out what 'artistic' means."

"Indeed, my dear," said the parent, stopping his pen to smile at her earnestness; "then you have discovered what few ever learn. What is it, pray?"

"To be 'artistic,'" was the serious reply, "anything must be dead or ugly. It is so," she continued, in remonstrance against a chuckle; "all the pretty trees and green slopes and sunny nooks, they say, are either 'tame,' or 'conventional,' or 'uninteresting distance.' But every old, gnarled, rotten, dying tree, or bare rock or shingly beach, with only weeds and bits of drift upon it—these are 'artistic.'"

THE ARTISTRY OF SILENCE.

"J. S. M." in Boston Courier.

Was it sincere admiration or flexile iron that dictated Sydney Smith's exquisite remark about Macauley's talk? "He has occasional flashes of silence," says the wit, "that make his conversation perfectly delightful."

Let us assume, then, that much of the point and pleasantness of a person's talk depends on its intermittance, giving opportunity to others either to suggest or question, to corroborate or deny; and, furthermore, give them the chance to catch more firmly the "good things" said, if any. This last regards the talker's benefit, rather than that of the listeners, and leads to considering the gain to a converser who practices the artistry of silence.

Let us notice some of the conveniences of silent hesitation. When appeal is made to our better judgment, as may frequently happen, assuming that we are not universally looked upon as dullards, there is certainly a gain resulting from the externals of careful deliberation. The man who anxiously requests your opinion on some undertaking or investment that, to him, at least, is serious, will far more willingly take to heart your slow, measured advice than an off-hand, seemingly thoughtless suggestion. To allow several moments of stillness to elapse before making a reply is to convey the impression of earnest reflection, gratifying to the questioner and conclusive to a reputation for shrewdness. This kind of reputation, by the way, is often quite as efficient as the real possession of that quality.

THE FLATHEAD INDIANS NOT FLATHEADED.

New York Sun.

About seventy miles from the northern boundary of the United States, in the territory of Montana, between the western slope of the Rockies and the more westerly chain of the mountains known as the Cœur d'Alene, and, as you travel further south, as the Bitter Root, lies the reservation which has been assigned to the tribe of Indians called the Flatheads; and probably no tribe have adapted themselves more to the manners of civilization at the expense of their former customs and habits than these. Why they are called Flatheads no one in their part of the country seems to know. They do not flatten their children's heads, nor is there any trace or tradition among them of such a custom having been practiced formerly; and as their Indian name is Selish, it is probable that the name of Flathead was given to them, as often happens in this country, through the unaccountable freak of some traveler.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD.

French Paper.

An interminable train, packed like a carpet bag, enters the depot. An Englishman to an employe:

"Where are all these travelers going."

"To Paris, to see the fetes."

Another train, not less long nor less crowded, arrives at the same moment from the opposite side.

"And those, where do they come from?"

"From Paris to escape the fetes!"

The Englishman looks up at the roof with a dreamy expression.

A VASTER PILE.

New Orleans Times-Democrat.

St. Paul, Minn., is proud and happy in the prospective possession of a new million-dollar hotel, more imposing than the Grand Pacific of Chicago and a vaster pile than the far-famed Potter Palmer of Chicago, which cost $2,000,000. The Grand Pacific covers an area of 37,800 square feet, the Potter Palmer 50,800 square feet, and the new hotel will cover 75,000 square feet.