

**CROOKED VIRTUES.**

WRITING in the *Queen*, Mrs Lynn Linton says:—“One need not be a cynic to be able to appraise certain actions as of lower moral merit than they are of social value. As actions, pure and simple, they are comfortable and comforting, and the proximate cause rules as a virtue. But dig to the roots and you will come upon motives that are anything but meritorious—upon virtues as crooked as vices, and upon qualities which are neither praiseworthy nor lovable. This seems as paradoxical as just, and to be the worst possible breaking of the old command not to look a gift-horse in the mouth, but to take the good things which come to us as we take the sunshine and the summer rain—that is without inquiring into the how or the why. Yet it is true, and neither paradoxical nor no just, save when unwisely applied—as is the case with those suspicious souls which must find a moral wire worm at the root of all kindly actions, and who cannot believe in the simplicity of anyone. For these we have no sympathy, and can hold with them no discussion; our dealings are only with the reasonable, who can dissect fairly and argue logically.

To go behind a man's motives is a thing always deprecated by men with men. Yet commonsense demands that sometimes we should do so; and knowledge of human nature is as the solution of a riddle when a good thing is done by an evil character, and from a bad motive. Take the case of economy in management by an administrator of your affairs. He may be a manager of large works, or a domestic servant in your kitchen. The size of the canvas determines the size of the picture, but the relative merits of design and workmanship remain the same in each alike. Well, your administrator charms you by his careful recision of all unnecessary margins—by his plugging up all unnecessary sources of outflow—by his curtailing on the one hand and nibbling on the other—and by the dragon-like ferocity with which he pounces upon a reckless delinquent or a hitherto unnoticed extravagance. The subordinates hate him, naturally enough; but the owners and masters, whose interests he guards, swear by him as the good and faithful servant they can never sufficiently reward. So things go on, and there is never a breath of suspicion that your manager or your cook is dishonest. But when you come to closer quarters—when you find in the character of the one you have had reason to trust, and whose administration has been advantageous to you, avarice, stinginess, inhumanity, as the elemental soil from which sprang the active results, what can you say but that the virtue of his or her economy is as crooked as vice, and is indeed rooted in vice? For want of genial human feeling, no extras, no privileges are allowed. For want of generosity no perquisites go to fatten the meagre salary—perquisites hitherto taken into consideration when the wages were fixed. For want of all pity for suffering, the delicate in health have no indulgences granted them, just to tide over the bad moment. Everything is pared to the quick, till it comes to his or her lawful takings. Then you see the roots. There you lay bare the causes—there you can measure the intrinsic moral worth of all this activity of economy, and you come to the conclusion embodied in our text—the virtues which have wrought so well for you are crooked, distorted, diseased—in their essence vices, however pleasant the practical results.

**FRANCE'S PUBLIC EXECUTIONER.**

Tired of living in retirement, M. de Paris, alias Deibler, has resumed his post, or rather, his poste, to speak more correctly. Such, at least, is the latest report (says the *New York Sun*).

It has often been remarked that the profession of an executioner has an irresistible attraction for its members. A retired executioner is almost a phenomenon. They all hold on to their occupation as long as possible, and hate hard times and little work. Formerly France had a head-cutter for every department, but when it was found that too many of them held sinecure it was determined to appoint one executioner for the whole country. Deibler got the job, and a mighty busy official he was, always on the go from north to south and from east to west.

It will be said, perhaps, that the reason why he resumes his office is that he likes to travel; but that is only half the reason, because, generally speaking, people like pleasure trips only, and it can hardly be said that Deibler's excursions can be placed in that class. As a rule, executioners are always merry fellows; but one of them, Heinrich, a Paris headman, was somewhat of a sentimentalist. He was in the habit of dining in a little restaurant in the Rue de la Roquette. One day a journalist dined with him in company with the brother Lionet, whom he had invited for the occasion. After the dinner the executioner asked Anatole Lionet to sing for

him the ‘Musette,’ by Murger, which the painter, Horace Vernet, set to music. Anatole sang, and when he came to the words—

*‘Et musette, qui n'est plus elle,  
Disait que je n'étais plus moi.’*

two big tears rolled down the cheeks of Heinrich. But suddenly he jumped up, looked at his watch and ran out of the place. His official duties required his presence elsewhere.

Deibler has never exhibited any such weakness, but for all that it is well known that he is passionately fond of flowers. Naturally enough, he lives in retired quarters, is a very modest man, and avoids publicity. He used to dress like a dandy, and was always fond of a joke, although he has nearly 400 heads to his credit. His assistants always speak of him as one of the best of men. He hates to execute women, not from any reluctance about putting a woman to death, but because, as he says, “They always cry and make a great fuss.” He has sometimes been accused of slowness in his executions, but against this charge he always defended himself by saying that he wants to see everything in perfect order so that there never can be any blunder in his work. In other words, he wants to be sure he's right before he goes ahead. A man becomes accustomed to everything, and Deibler is no exception to the rule. When he first began to practice his profession he was nervous, but in a short time he became quite accustomed to the thing, and now an execution has no effect upon him whatever.

**RELIEF AT LAST.**

**THE EXPERIENCE OF A LONDESBORO YOUNG LADY.**

A VICTIM OF SEVERE PAINS, DIZZINESS AND WATERY BLOOD—AT TIMES COULD NOT GO BY A STEP—HOW SHE REGAINED HEALTH AND STRENGTH.

From the *Clinton “New Era.”*

Miss Kate Longman is a young lady of about 22 years of age, who lives with her mother in the pretty little village of Londesboro, six miles from the town of Clinton. Both are well known and highly esteemed by their many friends. The “*New Era*” having learned that Miss Longman had been a great sufferer and had recently been restored to health by the timely use of a well-known popular remedy, despatched a representative to get the particulars of the case. In reply to the reporter's inquiries Miss Longman said that if her experience might be the means of helping some other sufferer, she was quite willing that it should be made public. “For a long time,” she said, “I was very poorly. I was weak, and run down, and at times suffered pains in my back that were simply awful. My blood was in a watery condition, and I was subject to spells of weakness to such an extent that I could not step up a door-step to save my life. I doctored a great deal for my sickness, but without avail. At last, after having frequently read in the *New Era* of cures effected by the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, I determined to give them a trial. The result was that my health soon began to return and the pains and weakness left, and I was again restored to a strength.” At this moment Mrs Longman entered, and being informed who the visitor was and what was his mission, said: “Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are the greatest medicine known. My daughter was so sick that I feared she would die, and she continually grew weaker until she began the use of Pink Pills, and they have cured her, as she has not had a recurrence of the trouble since.” Miss Longman is now the picture of health, and declares that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are entitled to the credit. The *New Era* knows of many others who have benefited by this remarkable remedy.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are a specific for all diseases arising from an impoverished condition of the blood or a shattered condition of the nervous forces, such as St. Vitus dance, locomotor ataxia, rheumatism, paralysis, sciatica, the nervous effects of influenza, loss of appetite, indigestion, dizziness, chronic erysipelas, scrofula, etc. They are also a specific for the troubles peculiar to the female system, correcting irregularities, suppressing and all forms of female weakness, building anew the blood and restoring the glow of health to the pale and sallow cheeks. In the case of men they effect a radical cure in all cases arising from mental worry, overwork or excesses of any nature.

Every box of the genuine Dr. Williams' Pink Pills has the trade mark on the wrapper around the box, and the purchaser can protect himself from imposition by refusing all others. Obtainable from all dealers, or the Dr. Williams' Medicine Company, Wellington, New Zealand, will forward, post paid, on receipt of stamps or post order, one box for 5s, or half dozen for 15s 6d.

**IS THE AIR VANISHING?**

A SERIES of experiments is being conducted in Paris which demonstrates to the satisfaction of scientists that the atmosphere which surrounds the earth is gradually disappearing. These experiments are with balloons, and they are known as aerostatic ascents. The French savans Besançon and Hermite have been conducting them. The balloon which makes the ascent is called the aérophile. It is conical in shape. It is almost sharp pointed at one end, while the other is formed of a steel cap which fits over an aperture through which the gas passes from the retort into the receiver when the balloon is in process of being filled.

Below the reservoir hangs a double platform, which looks not unlike the old-fashioned hanging book case. In the front of the top section of the platform is an instrument which registers the speed which the aérophile is making, while just back of it is a device called the meteorograph, which registers the changes in the atmosphere. A dial registers the highest point attained, while another mechanism records the intermediate altitudes.

In the rear of the platform, and attached to both sections, is an automatic camera that takes accurate photographs of atmospheric scenes and conditions at different heights from the earth. There is also an apparatus that imprisons specimens of air at different altitudes. Its reservoir, when the aérophile leaves the earth, are airtight and exhausted. Therefore, when a reservoir is opened at a desired height there is nothing to mix with the specimen of air that rushes into it.

The latest in this series of experiments with the aérophile was made a few days ago and resulted most successfully. The aérophile rose with extraordinary rapidity to an immense height, fully 10,000 metres. The highest temperature recorded was sixty degrees.

The balloon remained in the air two hours and travelled a distance of 102 kilometres. All the recording apparatus worked successfully, and while the results have not been definitely announced in all particulars, they, in the minds of many scientists, establish the fact that the inventors have contended for—that the balloon will throw startling light on the question of atmospheric disappearance.

The aérophile, as the balloon has been named, is sometimes sent aloft merely arranged so that at a certain period of time the gas vent will be partially opened, the gas escape and the monster settle to the earth. At other times it is like the captive balloon sent aloft at the end of a great pile of rope and pulled down whenever the experimenters desire. It is, however, only when the invention is permitted to soar to great height that there is a possibility of securing the results which the scientists hope for.

The importance of the facts learned from experiment with the balloon, scientists say, can hardly be overestimated. They indicate, it is thought, the conditions which will prevail at the end of the world. The atmosphere mingles continually with the water and the rocks, and by this action continually diminishes its density. Thus its gassy envelope which surrounds us is brought closer and reduced, and one day, say the scientists, it will without doubt disappear completely, as it has already done from our neighbour the moon.

It should be stated that the apparatus which the balloon contains for securing specimens of the rarified air at great heights is the idea of M. Caillaet. This has proved the most successful feature, for it has worked to a charm, and the result of the analyses of the air it contains will from time to time indicate precisely the exact changes that have taken place in the atmosphere.

**VICTORIA'S SHILLING SUNSHADE.**

DURING one of her visits to the south of France the Queen noticed in a shop in Nice, I believe, a very pretty little black and white sunshade exhibited for sale at the low sum of one shilling. A sunshade for a shilling, and such a pretty one, too! Her Majesty was charmed, and for once in her life experienced the thrill of securing a real bargain. I have no authority that rarely had anything so cheap been seen even at a clearance sale. Also, for the feelings of her mortified daughters! The Queen carried that ‘odious’ little shilling sunshade in season and out of season, the whole summer through. She even desired to return to her first love with renewed ardour the following year, but by dint of much coaxing and persuasion from the Princess of Wales, to whose gentle influence the Queen is very amenable, she was induced to relinquish it.

Statistically inclined tourist (to native): What is the death rate here? Native: Same as it is everywhere else—one death for every inhabitant.

**SPEAKING OF LONG ACC.**

TO-DAY, as I pen these lines, one picture from the long-vanished past rises in my memory as clearly as though it hung on a wall before my very eyes. It is of a boy about fourteen years old, propped up in a great arm chair with pillows and bed-clothes, and gazing through a window. He is just convalescing after a long and dangerous illness, and is still thin, pale, and weak. The strong arms of his loving father have taken him from the bed and placed him snugly by the window in order that he may see his playmates at their games in the snow; for the time is mid-winter. They wave their hands to him and he waves his hand feebly to them. The scene is from my own boyhood, forty years ago. What magic has conjured it up now? Only a sentence from a letter.

This: ‘I was so weak that for years I had to be carried upstairs to bed.’ A lady talks thus of her girlhood. What a pitiable thing. It is not what nature meant; but alas! too often what really happens in this perverted world. Children should never suffer pain, for pain is punishment. For whose offences, then—surely not their own—do the little ones sicken and die by uncounted millions?

‘From childhood,’ so runs the letter, ‘I was always delicate. When fourteen years old I got a chill on the lungs which left me in a weak state. Indeed, I was always tired and weary, and never knew what it was to feel strong.’

Now tell me, if you can, what sadder reading one is apt to come upon than this? Fancy a young girl being always tired, weary, and weak!—too weak to climb the stairs to her own bed! so feeble and lifeless as to require to be carried over the house through which she should have skipped and danced like a fawn. What had so crushed her? Disease? What disease and how caused?

‘I was very pale,’ continues the letter. ‘My feet were cold and clammy, and hot sweats now and again burst over me. My appetite was poor; and, after eating, I suffered such pain at the chest and sides that it often amounted to agony; and the palpitation of the heart was so bad that many times I got no sleep at night on account of it.’

And this at an age when the heart should beat quickly only with feelings of joy and hope; and girlish forms in their beds should be as quiet as recumbent statues.

‘After a time,’ says the writer, ‘I could take liquid nourishment only, my stomach being too weak to retain anything solid. Thus, I gradually wasted away until I was nothing but skin and bone. I had not even strength to walk across the floor, and all who saw me said it was impossible that I should ever get well.’

‘From time to time I saw doctor after doctor, and twice went to the Sherborne Hospital, but received no benefit from the treatment there. At last the doctors said that both my chest and bowels were ulcerated and that there was no hope of my recovery. I was now so bad that I could take nothing but weak bread and water—and that only occasionally.’

‘In this hopeless condition I lingered on until March, 1890, when I heard of Mother Selgel's Curative Syrup. Although I had given up all hope of deriving any benefit from any medicine, I nevertheless sent for a bottle of the Syrup, and after having taken it for a few days I found myself a little better. This led me to continue using it, and shortly I was able to take solid food, and the sickness gradually left me. Holding to this medicine—the only one that had ever helped me—I grew stronger and stronger until I was in good health. Without Mother Selgel's Curative Syrup I should never have recovered; and you must try to imagine how grateful I feel. I never can put my thankfulness to words. Yours truly (Signed) (Mrs.) MARY JANE HILLIAR, Kimpton, near Sherborne, Dorset, March 9th, 1893.’

We rest at this. Here is a life history. How can we comment on it adequately? What a pity that this woman should have so suffered! What a satisfaction to know that she suffers no more! And yet—the last time, the lost happiness! Ah, yes! Mother Selgel had reason enough to induce her to labour as she did to relieve her sister women. Thank Heaven for her success.

Mrs Hilliar's real disease was of the stomach—indigestion and dyspepsia; inherited, probably, and made chronic by circumstances. The remedy she finally used cured this, and so freed her from all the symptoms and results. How kindly are the arms that carry us in our weakness. How glorious not to need them!

No Cause—Mrs Lightfoot: That water appeared to be very much offended when you gave him that tip. Mr Lightfoot (in surprise): ‘Why, he couldn't be very much offended. I only gave him three half-pence!’