

# The Meteor.

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Lucus a non lucendo.

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NO. 8.

## Integrity.

Notwithstanding its frequent draft into the service of the most outrageous political, religious and medical charlatanism, there are few stanzas more informed with promptings to noble purpose than the one beginning

"Truth crushed to earth will rise again."

It is one of those lordly utterances the martial eulogues of whose sentiment carry with them the conviction of being as severely true as grandly noble; and if we were required to offer decisive evidence of the nobility of our human nature we should select for proof the universal conviction that truth will ultimately triumph over all the arts and artifices of error. On the other hand the most overwhelming proof of deep depravity would be found in the violence done to the conviction—the habitual resort to one or another of the many species of lying.

That truth will ultimately be victorious all believe. Unfortunately there is conjoined with this conviction a persuasion that many soul-straining ordeals, many melancholy reverses must first be encountered by her levies. Nor is the latter belief groundless. Universal observation attests its truth, and that very many eviable rewards are reaped by the instrumentality of the hugest lies spoken or acted; and it is these quick successes, these slight drafts of delight, which lure multitudes from service in the protracted campaigns of truth.

It might be shown, if such purpose were not foreign to our present design, that the postponement of her rewards is, beyond all other circumstances, calculated to build up in the soul a genuine love of virtue; for if success, instant and invariable, always rewarded integrity, an inevitable result would be, not a love of truth, but of the rewards attached to her service. And when, before the light of the spirit world, motives shall stand revealed as plainly as the bends of a landscape before that of the sun, multitudes would awake to the conviction that while they were, as they thought, progressing in the love of virtue, they were only advancing in the development of greed.

But it may be and has been asked: Is there not, in all mundane affairs, such an infusion of falsehood as to render necessary, in a great many cases, a resort to prevarication or deceit in some form, if not to downright lying? This is an important, practical question which behooves every one to weigh well, for upon the nature of the decision will depend, in a great degree, their own character.

Whatever men may say, it is evident that multitudes have concluded

that lying is essential to success. Like Mohammedans, with their proscribed pork, Christians abjure indulgence in some particular portion of the hellish tactics as more heinous than the rest, but between them the whole body of lies—head, tail, hoofs and all—is deliberately appropriated. As a man believes so will he act: men lie because they believe that lies are trumps; and the greatest benefactor of the age would be he who could convince the rising generation that, success in life depended on a rigid adherence to the highways of truth. This of course leaves out view that inestimable nobility of soul which results necessarily from adhesion to virtue for its own sake.

In some avocations the temptations to fraud are generally and rightly supposed to be greater than in others: and law has, by the universal judgment of mankind, been set down as the profession in which a regard for truth is reduced to the minimum. This avocation being then, beyond all others, that which opposes the greatest obstacles to integrity, may be regarded as the best subject of the *experimentum crucis*, that would determine if "honesty is always the best policy."

If space allowed it would not be difficult to show by numerous examples that those jurists have been most successful who adhered with greatest tenacity to the limits prescribed by a severe integrity; who, at every stage of their professional career, refused to prostitute to lawlessness and vice those talents which the Creator had given them for the foster of all that is noble in man or society. What reverence indeed could any true man entertain for genius even, which renouncing the principality of virtue, is ready to enlist as a bravo in the ranks of any villain able to pay well.

The same is true of politicians. Those and those only have gained undying renown whose maxim of state-manship was that of the great Kentuckian: "It is better to be right than to be President."

## The Hospital Conservatory.

In the early part of the Winter we paid a special visit to the conservatory. The East-wing front flower-garden, in which it is located, we found snorn of much the larger part of the glories which had for months rivetted the attention of inmates and visitors. But as in and around the scene of a good man's life, the rarest virtues find a congenial soil, so by the side of the dead flower-stalks throngs of thriving violets were stationed as if to garner and put in new form, for soul delight through Winter, the departed treasures of Summer.

Inhaling the delicious perfume of these divine emblems of modest worth, we paced the intricate walks, and ente-

ring the conservatory, found its air dense with another and scarcely less pleasant perfume. On inquiry as to its source we were directed to raise our eyes to the upper portion of the pyramid of shelves which occupies the centre of the building. There we espied the *Opopanax*, from the banks of the Jordan, and of which mention was made in a previous number, towering with wide spread branches above us, and its every twig laden with odorous blossoms.

A *Cobaea Scandens*, rooted in one corner of the structure, mounted to the roof, had extended itself, by the aid of supporting wires, half way down the entire length of the glazed structure, and was descending, at various points, its large and lovely bell blossoms whose tints vary, with the days of their age, from green to purple; the generous, persistent calices of those from which the petals had fallen still conveying the idea of large, fine blooms.

The *Lantana* was crowned with its usual cluster of snow-white, waxen gems, and the *Tecoma capensis* with bouquets of crimson. The Chinese Primroses had loosed from their leashes only one or two of their flower pack, securely ensconced below the broad, aspiring leaves. The Australian Ferns resembled very closely in their witchments the denizens of our own wild-woods.

The Pollage plants, of course, came in for a large share of attention. As a pious heathen seems to cast indirect reproach on Christianity, so these lovely sphynxes of the vegetable world seem to say:

"All leaves are flowers, and flowers are leaves; Culture the lean distinction weaves."

Who does not know that flowers are only metamorphosed leaves? But who would not exclaim? "Take not away the flowers! leave us not alone leaves however brilliant or varied be their hues!"

The mocking-bird still clings to the little Tempe, and, sad to say, makes a frolic of eating up the beautiful butterflies which wish to divide with her the balmy little realm. And a cat, as if to avenge the butterflies made herself a bed in one of the flower-pots, and kept a sharp eye on Madame bird till the Matron intervened by giving the cat to the overseer's care. How puss was cared for we know not. Possibly, with a rope round her neck to insure against straying from the route, she was sent "where the wood-bine twineth." So the mocking-bird, as is right, still holds, next to the flowers, a full title to her preemption in the new Acadia.

## Hospital Sewing Society.

On a Saturday night, a week or two before Christmas, we had sat down to contest with a skilled opponent supremacy at draughts. Only one or two games had been played when Dr. Huger entered and invited us to visit with him a Sewing circle on the East wing. We consented with alacrity, for familiar as we were with the West, the East wing was to us a *regio inexplorata*, if that single hall be excepted in which we had so often been present at select reunions of the

patients and friends from the city. With this exception, all that of the Orient-pointing part of the establishment was, that in that of it farthest from the Centre were some folks who could, and raise an almighty rumpus, and other portions were the domain of those charming females whom so often seen in the chapel, encountered in the Amusement and who were reputed to be bereft of reason as ourselves.

Have you ever seen our Knitting societies? asked the Matron as us. Our reply was that we had would be delighted to do so, with me." was her reply "and show them all to you; we have each hall." Accompanied by the intendant and some others, we ded to visit in succession the halls.

First we entered No. 3. A table on which sat a hand lamp, ranged the nurse and several patients, all diligently plying their knitting-needles. On no 6, which adjoined company similarly employed were encountered; as also on Nos. 1, 4, 7, 8, and 9. The number of workers, some of them, mounting to eight or nine, all gathered familiarly about two lamps, and plying industriously the slender steels. In No. 2, beside the circle of knitters, one patient, wheel, and we heard for the first time in many years the sweet music buzz. In the Sewing-room of hall we noticed three other wheels, which, though idle on the occasion visit, attested that there were patients addicted to the useful domestic melody. The yarns of these wheels is of large calibre special manufacture of stout, socks for the patients.

We found the society in the colored females quite as busy as others. Eight or nine patients were busily knitting, and to the Superintendent's demand for a song, responded, beginning, as might have expected, with "When I can rest my title clear."

After completing the round smaller divisions of the Society were conducted to hall No. 2, parlor of which, two of the brethren of No. 2 and 5, habitually convened. Now our pen should be dropped and a camera substituted, for there only could do justice to the group. The large, handsomely furnished room, its walls bedecked with elegant pictures, was brilliantly lighted by several handsome lamps, but into full view a throng of ladies bled over its area. Five or six, Bryce being one of them, were mally gathered about the centre. Three or four sat on a settee near the door; as many on the sofa at the other end of the room, and a group in each corner; while two at the piano—a nurse and a patient—were eliciting from that instrument an eloquent course on the charms of melody. With the exception of the two last, one of these ladies was plying, with industrious fingers, yet without perturbation, a pair of knitting-needles. If it be added that all the

re tastefully and some of them dressed, an idea may be formed of the delightful surprise that assailed the door was thrown open for admission. We entered, and after recovery from the shock of the agreeable surprise, sat and conversed with one and another of the industrious members. In the course of an hour refreshments were served round—refreshments more plentiful than the richest wine that ever mortals to forgetfulness—a cup of excellent coffee. Mrs Bryce meanwhile joined the ladies at the piano, and toward the close of the evening several of the knitters took possession, to sing with her some interesting songs.

At nine o'clock the circle was dissolved, and we returned to our room in the West Wing. We add some explanatory of these knitting circles of which owe their existence to the indefatigable Matron of the establishment. No compulsion is used to induce the ladies to join them, if we have the privilege of sitting up till 9 o'clock.

We have headed this article "Hospital Sewing Societies" because both knitting and sewing clubs are regarded as branches of one great society which is convened one night and each week. On the other days the members on a hall alone together. To this must be excepted the members of Nos. 2 and 5, who habitually meet in the same room. Sewing making of shirts, pants dresses etc.—is the employment of this society. At night all are engaged in knitting. The nurses, though obliged to be present, are not compelled to do their own sewing or knitting, or two items we ought not to mention.

Several very old ladies were no members of some of the small branches. One of these, about seventy years of age, was pointed out as a devotee of cards—not your ordinary jack pasteboards, but with sharp teeth for biting cotton thread, and forming it into rolls for the evening of our visit Dr. Huger sat with one of the groups, as occupied with knitting—needles are the ladies; but the task of stitching his stitches would have been one had the patience to watch it for them.

It should be borne in mind that all we have described was encountered in a day-dress. Some of the circles are smaller than usual: The patients having spent a couple of the afternoon hours on the lawn in front of the hospital, playing at games, jumping rope and romping, some of the members, from fatigue with exercise, one to bed at an earlier hour than

membership of the society—those who habitually discharge the tasks it imposes—may be set down at fifty (50), an average of one hundred and (150) sick females, who as fast as they are dispatched to their friends, the number seems quite remarkable.

**Lunatic Literature.**

Lunatic literature is not an idle term, but is the denomination of a commodity to which a regular place is assigned among the products of christian civilization. As a consequence it becomes important to distinguish the genuine from the spurious article. The conductors of our paper are law and order folks, who not only, we feel sure, will not put the METEOR stamp to anything but the genuine article. How may the mass of men distinguish between the real and the facti-

tious? By recollecting that there are in the world three classes of persons; men or women of sense, insane persons and imbeciles. The mental products of men of sense are easily recognized. There is a simplicity, an earnest, well-sustained vigor, a predominance of muscle over plume, a steady advance from the starting place to the objective point, that establish unmistakably their character. The real difficulty of diagnosis, as the doctors say, is in discriminating betwixt the literature of lunatics proper—those declared such by law—and the thousand and one advocates of something or other, whom, in consideration of their harmlessness, governments do not confine. But as there should be little difficulty in determining if a person has

Brains that are added or no brains at all; so in regard to the literary productions of the two classes. Bear in mind that "it is hard to write like a crazy man, but easy to write like a fool," and the difficulty vanishes.

The above was suggested by a late article in *Excelsior*, the Murray Royal Institution Literary Gazette, in which are given the names and character of all the journals emanating from establishments for the insane in the United Kingdom. The conductor of *Excelsior* thinks that all such journals err in publishing only the choice articles. From this opinion our editor, wisely we think, dissents. He thinks, as he did when the *Meteor* was established, that with nonsense, come whence it might, no class of readers would be long entertained. Hence, while he has, as was promised, excluded everything but contributions by the inmates, he has not, to use his own expression, "hesitated to apply the garrote to any communication that had not other claims to attention than the circumstance of origin in the brain of an insane person."

**THE METEOR.**

**Alabama Insane Hospital.**

**Edited by a Patient.**

**Tuskaloosa, Mar., 30, 1874.**

*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.*

N. B. By an oversight our paper is dated, on the first page, March 30, 1873. It should be 1874. It was our first shot at the new year, and as we missed it only twelve months we shall probably bring it down next time; unless we determine to antedate our next number twelve months to make the account for the year balance.

**Excelsior and the Meteor.**

Since the article entitled "Lunatic Literature" was set up we have received *Excelsior* for January, 1874, in which the Editor apologises for his failure, in his detail of lunatic literature, to notice the only two serials emanating from Hospitals for the insane in America. He pleads ignorance of the existence of either the *Friend* or the *Meteor*, and then proceeds, as an atonement possibly, to review both at considerable length. He pays to both the compliment of

heartily approval of their enterprise, and recommends them as models, in many respects, to the publishers of like journals in the United Kingdom.

One of his compliments to our own paper we ought not to omit; for it is one of those indirect revelations which are of so great value in the investigation of all moral questions. He says: "Though the *Meteor* purports to be edited by a patient, it is evident that the Physician Superintendent is the responsible and real editor." The reason assigned for such a belief is a statement in our opening number that "the Superintendent, while exercising a general supervision, has thought proper to give contributors a large discretion in the drift of their articles." This, we submit, is, as a ground for Dr. Lindsay's averment, almost too trifling for notice. Does not the conductor of *Excelsior* know that any Superintendent who should suffer a paper to be published from his establishment without his supervision, would deserve a place in one of his own wards?

Dr. Lindsay's ground for believing that the Superintendent of this Hospital is the editor of our paper having been shown to be of no weight, we are forced to seek for some other explanation of the conclusion he has reached. He evidently is not to be fooled into believing that our zebra is anything but a painted horse. He manifestly thinks the *Meteor* wires are worked by some one who is not insane. With this we find no fault. It is our own conviction. But unfortunately we can't get the Superintendent to see it. We have therefore, perhaps for want of a better, come to the following conclusion: That, as in the United States we have a troop of the craziest sane folks the world ever knew, so also we can boast some of the sanest crazy ones.

In a pamphlet of eight pages sent us, Dr. Lindsay discusses the subject of Asylum Reports. He thinks that they are not as instructive to the general reader or to the medical fraternity as they might be. He accompanies this pamphlet with an elaborate index of the contents of all his Reports from 1854 to 1874.

We heartily concur with the Doctor in his recommendation that these Reports should be made, as far as possible, a vehicle for the conveyance of information in regard to insanity, provided always that this be done without resort to those technical terms which, from being a strange idiom to all but medical men, would render a perusal of the Reports disagreeable to those for whom they are specially intended. But Heaven save us from having, even under the guidance of a long-drawn index, to unstack, hunt over and restack a huge pile of small pamphlets in search of information on a particular topic. This plan of Dr. Lindsay's we shall characterize as an easy way to make hard things harder and useful things useless. In our day, pamphlets, as permanent repositories

of facts or doctrines, are nuisances. Whatever is worth preservation ought to be put in book form. Whatever is undeserving of shape convenient for handling and reference will and ought to die.

Of the probable value of a more extensive discussion of the medical aspects of insanity in the Reports of Superintendents, we could, perhaps, better judge after reading Dr. Lindsay's recent contributions—twenty-five in number. As he has already given the *Friend* and the *Meteor* credit for "graceful begging," and expresses a desire that the English people would imitate Americans in "graceful giving," we risk no loss of caste by promising that if copies of his multitudinous small works be sent us free of expense, the gift "will be gratefully received and duly acknowledged."

But the editor of *Excelsior* still thinks that a hospital journal should contain the "insane" contributions of the inmates. If Dr. Lindsay thinks thus, why not act accordingly?—"Try it on," as a distinguished American was accustomed to say. Our own opinion is, that an occasional contribution of that kind might be allowable, for it would doubtless be read with as much interest as those articles are which now and then appear in weekly papers for the amusement of very small children, and in which every word is made to begin with the same letter. But to devote any considerable space to such matter would be as absurd as to have occasional dinners at the hospital, to which the public were invited, served up by very insane cooks, to show the guests what repulsive messes a diseased brain can concoct. From partaking at such entertainment we should beg to be excused.

\* A friend suggests that possibly the article on "Music" in the last *Excelsior* may be the beginning of a series of "insane" contributions. Some of the statements in that article were certainly very wild, unless the musicians of Perth and Edinburgh are immeasurably inferior to those of America.

**John S. Pierson.**

Among distinguished philanthropists a prominent position must be accorded to John S. Pierson of New York. Our Superintendent declares that there is scarcely an Asylum Report published in the United States that does not testify to his assiduity in ministering to the happiness of their unfortunates. We have learned that Mr. Pierson is not wealthy. How large then must be that heart which without abundant means finds so many occasions for the exercise of beneficence!

We have again to thank him for a lot of good books and beautiful pictures. If the test of true religion be, as we think, an habitual endeavor to promote the happiness of our fellow beings, Mr Pierson may be proposed as an exemplification of genuine piety.

## Strolls around the Hospital.

Strolls around the Hospital are an essential feature of our daily life. The establishment of capacious Airing Courts, while not detracting from the pleasure of these, has rendered them, however, less necessary to health. They are not therefore as frequent as formerly, though they are still regarded as a possible event of every twenty four hours, to a certain class of patients.

### The River.

The Warrior at this point assumes the characteristics of rapids which now and then grow to the proportions of cataracts. A stroll, therefore, upon its banks, enabling one to watch from a point near at hand the mad contest of the waves with the rocks that would oppose their farther rambles from their native mountain fastnesses, is deeply interesting. Nor is an interest in the contest confined to the immediate vicinity of the river. The roar of the never ending struggle can be distinctly heard at considerable distances. Under these circumstances it assumes the qualities of faint music, sweetly enticing all the faculties of the mind to a serene contemplation of the more quiet aspects of Nature, or to the Elysium of sleep and dreams.

### Sylvan Dells.

Extensive parks are now considered an essential endowment of all large cities, a few only excepted, not yet fully roused from the Rip-Van-Winkle-ism of words as opposed to things. These have so enlarged for all citizens the domain of nature, that our modern cities bid fair to combine with the manifold conveniences of life in town, all the delights of a home in the country.

There are, however, in nature unkempt and unadorned, attractions which no park may ever hope to rival. Around the Hospital are many such examples of wild, wood-land beauty. In the vicinity of Tuscaloosa is a very congress of gushing springs. Leaping from the base of every hill, they band together in rivulets which, over beds of glistening pebbles, rush to swell, with their little impetuosities, the might of the kingly Warrior. Their routes have, in the lapse of ages, been converted into deep, steep dells, in whose umbrageous recesses the sweet children of night, silence, coolness and gloom, maintain a perpetual state, undisturbed even through the long lapse of a sultry August day.

We know few more placidly entrancing delights than penetrating to the depths of one of these grottoes—if we may so term them—to recline upon the bank of its frolic stream and watch its gambols over the rounded pebbles or miniature ledges, while at the same moment we drink in with the ear the reverberation of the fierce encounter of the Warrior's tides with the rocky host that would bar their advance to the Ocean.

### Plums.

Enchanting as Nature ever is, she does not forget that there is in man a sensual nature to which she must respond if she would not lose control of his spiritual. Accordingly, beneath the gorgeous canopies of cloud and sky, through the sublime expanse of hill and dale, the stately mount of stems, the graceful sweep of limbs, the bewitching verdure of branch and bough, she mingles, sometimes sparingly, at others profusely, dainties for the tongue and the palate.

Plums are almost her first gifts of this kind. As long before Winter's destructive hosts have retired to their fortresses in the North, plum trees unfold the lovely banner of spring, so, long before more prudent trees have advanced their product to maturity, do these display a carnation and yellow store as grateful to the taste as harmless to the stomach.

In the vicinity of Tuscaloosa plum orchards abound, and we remember how, many years ago, the slaves would flock to the University of nights and Sundays with baskets heaped with the delicious fruit, and how, purchasing a peck or a peck and a half or two pecks, we would eat and eat and eat—rather drink, for plum, like melon feasting, is more a bibulous than a masticatory process—until forced to desist, not from satiety, but from despair of discovering the full capacity of our gastric reservoir.

Then the plums were gathered for us. As an inmate of the Hospital we go to the orchard and pick for ourselves. Nor do we deem ourselves losers by the change. The trees, laden with their lovely burden, are visions of beauty which scarcely yield precedence to peach-orchards, fat cattle, Poland chickens or sweet-hearts. And then the fun of scrambling through the orchard to look out the best trees. Not scrambling either, but picking one's way carefully; for if the plum be not a thorn bush, it has numerous

prongs as closely related to these as sharp trading is to stealing, and which render some wariness necessary, unless one would qualify the joy of repletion with a watery eye or a rent in a new pair of inexpressibles.

### Black berries.

Black-berry bushes and copses abound in the vicinity of the Hospital. In the woods, in the old fields, along sequestered lanes, by the sunny roadside, and especially on the banks of brooks and the river they grow and thrive, adding a not insignificant contribution to the blossomed glories of Spring, and to the fruitage of early Summer.

As a stuffing for pies few fruits go before that of the unpretending black-berry bush. As a cordial, were it not for the indispensable alcoholic accompaniment, we should be ready to sing paeans in its praise.

But the chief delight connected with the blackberry is psychical, the romance of its harvesting. Fingers gloriously picked furnish, indeed, some hints of this, but the veriest pittance compared with that which invades the soul when, with a new article of dress inextricably involved, you spy, within a few inches of your feet or head, a huge snake. Crash! tear! go the briers and the dress, as the snake, mistaking the vigor of retreat for a dangerous advance, hurries off, awfully scared, in the opposite direction.

### Peaches.

The peach tree, if never a fruit bedecked its frame, would be well worthy of cultivation. For this, however, it is chiefly prized; for what the rose is to flowers, the peach is to fruits—their queen, or if these be masculine, their king.

The details of visits to the orchards in our vicinity, we had better, we think, leave to the reader's imagination. Our maxim was,

Let those stuff now who never stuffed before,

And when to bursting stuffed, stuff yet a little more. Nor were we content with filling nature's pouches. The aid of handkerchiefs, towels, pill-boxes and what not were invoked, lest something should occur to prevent a repetition of the visit on the succeeding day. One gentleman, an ex-Californian, who had evidently not crossed the Isthmus for a night, taking a pair of drawers tied up at the ankles, brought home, on more than one occasion, a peach-stuffed effigy of the lower half of his person.

### Hickory nuts.

Some one has said—for aught we know, some hundreds have done likewise—that generosity is inherent in every human soul; in other words, that there is in every individual a principle of conduct provoking to noble actions, irrespective of reward of any kind. There is, no doubt, truth in the observation. The love of pleasure, as Mr. Carlyle in his most peculiar manner over frequently insists, is not the sole end or aim of human conduct. Religion gives us the true clue to a definition of the principle, in the cry of the Seraphim, as, with feet covered with two wings, faces veiled with two, with two they fly: "Holy! holy! holy! is the Lord God of hosts!"

The love of, or aspiration for holiness is this principle of our nature which mere pleasure cannot satisfy; a principle to whose rebound or reflexion is due, in our opinion, the love of the beautiful, the picturesque, the sublime, irrespective of their connection with the useful.

However this may be, for we confess to temerity in presuming to discuss it, it is certain that the degree of pleasure we find in any pursuit is not proportioned to its utility. Proof of this will readily be found in the delights of nut-gathering. How often have we traversed miles and miles of forest, with weary legs climbing and descending hills and scouring dales, in the hope of discovering the locale of a fruited hickory-tree. The hickory nut rewards very poorly, we think, the toils of cracking and picking out. We did not say of gathering, for there is a witchery in the white beauties gleaming brightly over the hill-side or coyly hidden beneath the fallen luxurious leaves, which tempts the industrious fingers to ply and still ply their deft art, long after the back and legs, worn out with continued efforts of stooping, have cried, enough! enough!

We had been out often in search of the live jewels and felt amply compensated for the trouble, in our share of the wealth of a single tree, when, one day, by the merest accident, we came upon a whole bevy or troop of noble stems, the ground beneath which was densely strewn with nuts. First we filled our pockets, then our handkerchiefs, then our hats. Laden with all we could by possibility carry, we glanced up at the tree-tops, and there fifty, sixty, eighty feet above us still soared the true harvest, of which the abundance strewn on the ground might

be regarded as the tithes or sacred first-fruits.

Day after day we returned to the grove to gather up; for the winds, with unrelenting fury, continued to hurl to the ground that which the jealous boughs lifted so high above our reach. We did not know before how strong our back is, nor how industrious we are. We think he who could toll as we did and enjoy it, without the expectation of eating the kernel of a single nut—we only eat them on railroads where we buy them picked—must be industrious at heart, unless, indeed, there be in his composition something akin to that of a man we once knew, who would work laboriously, for weeks, on canoes in which to go fishing, but to whom the chopping of a single stick of wood for the stove was absolute martyrdom.

## Airing Courts of the Hospital.

The Alabama Insane Hospital, besides the ordinary houses for various purposes, consists of:—

1. A Centre-building, 60 by 100 feet, and four stories high, surmounted by a Cupola whose apex is 90 feet from the ground.

2. Two immense wings, each nearly 400 feet long—the one on the East devoted to women, on the West to men. Each wing is three stories high and composed of three divisions, or nine distinct wards; in all, eighteen wards, each 125 feet long by 40 feet in width.

Immediately in the rear of the two divisions of each wing farthest removed from the centre-building is an airing Court. This is an area of two to three acres, enclosed with a brick wall 15 feet high. The size of the enclosure goes far to rob it of the idea of restraint, and we have often thought how fortunate the dwellers in cities would deem themselves, if to each block of buildings was attached such miniature park for exercise and recreation.

Science having demonstrated the intimate connexion between an abundant supply of pure air and physical health, we should naturally expect that these courts would be a prominent factor in the remedial treatment of the insane. Such is the case. Immediately after prayers which follow close on the heels of breakfast, all who do not go out to work on the farm or in the shops, are invited to the airing courts.

Arrived there, each one amuses himself in his own way. Some find a chief pleasure in walking, alone or with a companion. Some will seat themselves on the benches encircling the base of the noble oaks which bedeck one-fourth of the enclosed area. Some will engage in a game of cards or draughts, and perhaps a half-dozen, or more, in a game of marbles. An excellent swing is available for pleasure by those to whom the Superintendent has not forbidden it.

How the ladies spend the time in their airing court, we know not. We have never been admitted to that *sanctum sanctorum*, and can therefore only surmise. We have, indeed, heard that their time is divided between criticism of the dress and bearing of those they dislike, practicing the Grecian bend, reciting poetry, and holding a looking-glass for each other. We think these slanders worthy of refutation, because, of them the ladies may say, as did a celebrated Englishman of some defamatory anecdotes of himself: "They are false, but the scamp who originated them, evidently, knows me well."

## Mesmerism and Clairvoyance.

In the first number of the Meteor brief reference was made to clairvoyance and mesmerism. We allude to them here to explain the sense in which they were used by the writer of that article. This explanation he deems necessary because of having lately encountered, in a scientific journal, the term, clairvoyance, used to imply prophetic power.

By clairvoyance was meant, the power which some persons possess, of "reading the thoughts of others." This language is found in Mrs. Mowatt's "Autobiography of an Actress."

By mesmerism was meant, the psychic force, whose actuality has been, seemingly, demonstrated by the renowned Mr. Forbes of England, brought to bear on the nervous system of another person.

## Coal Mine.

In the Hospital grounds, about a half mile in the rear of the main building, has been found a coal mine which, experts say, promises, when well opened up, to be valuable. The coal is of the semi-bituminous variety, burns freely and deposits a light red ash. Coal delivered at the Hospital costs now \$3.75 per ton.