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VOL. I.

ALABAMA INSANE HOSPITAL, TUSKALOOSA, 1872.

NO. 1.

Darwinism.

This seems to be the scientific question of the day. Volumes have been written upon it, and numerous libraries might, we think, be filled with its literature before any approximation to a conclusion is reached. The subject indeed forms one of those arenas upon which every intellectual knight may expend his full prowess without danger of hurting or being hurt; for whether he gains a victory or suffers a defeat, perhaps neither he nor his antagonist nor the world at large will ever know.

One thing we admire in Modern Science—the fearlessness with which it pushes its explorations, never halting to say to Peter, Paul or Moses, “may we?” but castin’ all authority aside, interrogates fearlessly the mind of God as engraven upon the works of His hand.

One thing in Modern Science we dislike—a disposition to imagine that every new fact evoked is a death knell of Christianity. If Christianity survived the discovery of the rotundity of the Earth, its revolution around the Sun, and the proof that Creation was a gradual process occupying myriads of years, it will certainly survive all Darwinian and other theories of natural phenomena however ingenious, and however decided.

This is supposing that a decision will some day be reached on this abstruse subject. Of this, however, we must beg leave to entertain the most profound doubt.

Hot House.

Our readers must not suppose that we propose to write of Old Nick’s habitation. That is indeed, if the current notions on the subject be not greatly at fault, the hottest house of which there is any knowledge. But it is not a hot house in the sense of our article notwithstanding the profusion of flowers (of sulphur) which distinguish it. Our hot house—just yet in its incipency—will be devoted to the culture of rare plants the delicacy of whose tropical instincts unfit them for the rude encounters of Boreas’ icy host. So common of late years are these, that a yard or grounds undistinguished by them is reckoned to lack a chief attraction. The hot house is, in truth, to landscape gardening what the central brilliant is to the horde of beauties clustered around it, what bright eyes are to a sweet face—its principal glory, the point of culmination of its varied attractions.

Of the influence of natural beauty upon the human soul, volumes, nay libraries, have been written; for what is a great portion of all poetry but a transmuting into words, with more or less success, the lessons a sensitive soul has gained from this celestial source. In truth, much of the furniture of all minds are ideas conferred upon it by natural objects, either primarily or secondarily. Thence come our notions of grace, of beauty, of sublimity.

Without entering upon the discussion of the profound question of innate ideas—water altogether too deep for the writer—we have the authority of the great Apostle of the Gentiles for attributing to natural objects a most exalted function in connection with all religion: “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are made manifest by the visible, even His

eternal power and God-head.” These ideas of the Creator are, we believe, usually termed natural religion. As revealed religion is based upon natural—for a belief in God as Creator must precede a belief in God as Redeemer—the Christian religion itself may be regarded as depending primarily upon the instructions thus conveyed to the soul.

From the high position which natural objects assume in the formation of the mind, so to speak, it would be natural to suppose that their influence upon diseased minds would be remarkable. That this is so, all observation attests. An incipient attack of insanity is not unfrequently dissipated by a tour among the smiling valleys and beetling cliffs of some mountainous region. A stroll through the forest or on the bank of a river, is admitted to exercise very often a notable influence in soothing a brain unduly excited by some abnormal molecular arrangement of its substance.

Nor is this kindly influence limited to great masses of objects or to single ones that assume gigantic proportions. If the Divine author of our Religion could declare that the deckings of Solomon in the height of his glory were not comparable to those of a lily of the field, we need not go farther to show that there cluster around each modest flower a profusion of influences appealing powerfully to the holiest instincts of the soul; inviting it to gain a new courage from the contemplation of the care which the great Author of being exercises toward the humblest of the works of his hand, and a new store of delight from the vision of proportion and beauty there unfolded to the rudest gaze.

But to the insane a Hot-house presents another advantage. The strangeness of the forms there arrayed is eminently calculated to arouse a dormant attention, to fix a wildering thought. The influence of novelty upon our souls is close akin to magic. Objects however grand or beautiful at length pall upon the mind, while others far inferior in intrinsic attractions will by the mere force of novelty pulse the soul with new tides of bliss. It is not unreasonable then to suppose that the tender occupant of such house might discharge to a diseased mind an office which the sublime array of night’s starry host or the majestic march of a storm cloud across the heavens might fail to effect.

Success then to our Hot-house, and may its tender denizens never know, by the bursting of a steam pipe, a sudden translation from their tiny tropic realm to the inclement surroundings of an Alabama wintry night.

Spiritualism.

Our Superintendent scouts at every thing in connection with Spiritualism, Mesmerism, and Clairvoyance as commonly interpreted. Of Spiritualism the writer knows nothing except what he has gleaned from conversation with some of its disciples and from the literary periodicals of the day. Dr. Hammond, Editor of the “Journal of Psychological Medicine,” New York, reviews the subject in the April No. of his periodical, referring particularly to a late report of some scientific gentlemen of England thereon.

After animadverting upon the credulity and ignorance of its devotees, and declaring that, in

most instances, the feats for which so much are claimed are hysterical phenomena or downright impostures, he says: “Nevertheless it could not be denied by the most careful and skeptical that there is frequently manifested a certain intelligent force not fully understood, and though there are strong reasons to lead us to suspect that this proceeds from the nervous system of the individuals operating, there is at present not sufficient evidence to show that this is the case. The nature of this force, however, is yet to be determined.”

The force here alluded to he elsewhere styles psychic. The existence of a psychic force has been demonstrated by one of the leading scientists of England.

We are satisfied that the phenomena of clairvoyance and mesmerism—for a belief of which we are reckoned insane—are amply sufficient to explain most of the wonders of so-called spiritualism.

Our Chapel.

With reverence would we approach the discussion of this arena of super-natural lore and holy aspiration; for whether we regard it as actually or figuratively a house of God, a certain sacred awe is ever diffused by it over a mind not utterly indifferent to the teachings of divine philosophy.

Our Chapel is not unworthy of, or rather is not inappropriate to the celebration of those glorious mysteries which distinguish Christian worship. The large quadrangle so termed occupies about one-third of the whole extent of two full stories of the Centre Building of the Establishment. Permanent and comfortable seats, amply sufficient for the accommodation of the inmates and visitors, are arranged in such way as to give every one a good view of the occupant of the pulpit. This is a light and graceful structure well elevated above the general level of the floor and fixed midway on one of the long sides of the room.

The ceiling painted blue is eminently suggestive of the vault of that most noble of all temples, the sky; while the poly-chrome tints of the borders, cornices and walls, pleasing to the eye and grateful to the taste, might be supposed to be intended to recall the sweet glow of the heavens when the sun, declining from the zenith of its daily course, is rapidly approaching its term in the horizon of the west.

To this Chapel the inmates repair for worship each morning immediately after breakfast. The exercises are opened with the reading of a chapter from the Old or New Testament by the Superintendent. To this succeeds a hymn in the singing of which all are invited to participate, encouragement for this purpose being still farther given by a free distribution of hymn books. If the tune be familiar, no sooner do those tones of the organ, succeeding the voluntary, give the signal for a start than the Chapel resounds with waves of melody stirred by dozens of voices. If, however, the air selected be somewhat novel or difficult, upon Mrs. Bryce, the organist, and two or three others devolves the whole burden of song.

On Sunday afternoons the ministers of the various denominations conduct religious exercises in no way different from those of our City churches—prayer, praise, sermon, etc. The order of these exercises for the next month will be given in another column of our journal.

THE METEOR.

Alabama Insane Hospital.

Edited By a Patient.

Tuskaloosa, Ala., July 4th, 1872.

Our Paper.

Our little paper, gotten up for the benefit of the patients of the Alabama Insane Hospital and to give the parons of the institution an insight into some details of its practical operations, is printed on a quarto Novelty Press, without expense to the State—the whole labor of type-setting and putting to press being performed by the patients, or by employees of the Hospital in intervals of leisure from their regular duties.

The Superintendent must not be held responsible for all opinions expressed through it, for while exercising a general supervision, he has thought proper to give its contributors a large discretion in the drift of their articles.

Nothing but original matter by the patients of the Hospital will be admitted to the honor of a place in its columns. A single exception is made in favor of Col. I. L. Jones of Mobile—see his short "Pome" on the lads and lasses on our fourth page—and we offer it as proof of the rule.

The Meteor.

We call our paper The Meteor. Meteors are always a surprise. So doubtless will be our little sheet. They appear at irregular intervals. So will it. Their career though short is brilliant, and we intend that our paper, if it do not coruscate with wit, shall glow with a kindly and generous sentiment for all mankind, whatever be their nationality, political principles or religious creed.

How like a meteor are all sublunary things! They appear, run a brief career, vanish and are forgotten. Spring twines a blossomed baldrick on the year, but just as we begin to exult in the profusion of beauty and fragrance it is gone. Summer loads many a stem with most delicious fruit, but in the very height of its voluptuous ripeness snatches the whole away. Autumn of her nuts and tints, or Winter of her snows is not less jealous. They dawn sweetly upon us, abound, and on a sudden leave us to exclaim as does the poet of a "barty" which a Dutchman "guy",

"Vere ish dat now!"

Life itself is evanescent. In the Holy Scriptures it is termed a vapor, a cloud. And if the life of man is fleeting, so also are its products. Laws change, customs cease, and nations even, after a brief career of glory, exist only in the annals of the historian or the legends of the poet. Nor these alone: The Earth, the Sun and its whole court of noble planets are doomed to destruction, possibly before they shall have traversed a tithe of their grand course, a tiniest fragment only of whose are have they described since the earliest period of authentic history. Nay, not our sun and system alone, but all suns, all systems are doomed to dissolution.

The time shall come when worlds will cease to roll;
Each to a greater central orb will fall;
In one vast heap, worlds pile on crushing worlds,
And flames voracious rise consuming all.

Thoughts for the Times.

Eleemosynary enterprise is the real exponent of patriotic impulse and true national greatness. It would be difficult to estimate its direct influence for good. The amount of human suffering that is robbed of its most repulsive characters in general Hospitals; the numerous individuals converted in Institutions for the deaf, dumb and blind, from burdens upon their families or society into useful and enterprising citizens; the relief, by means of Hospitals for the insane, to hundreds of neighborhoods, of characters that without any fault of theirs have become more dangerous than recognized assassins, and their speedy restoration, in many instances, to a condition not only of mental tranquillity but of absolute sanity; the training, in institutions of learning, the most promising intellects, and fitting their possessors to discharge, with honor to themselves and the State the exalted functions of future Legislators, Chief Magistrates and other Officers of the commonwealth or general government, or of directors of campaigns, against their country's dictators by the most approved principles of of war;—all these and others too numerous

to mention, flowing directly from such enterprise it would be difficult indeed to estimate.

The indirect benefits are of equal if not greater importance. Who shall compute the happiness in a whole community flowing from the conviction in the minds of thousands of families that if, in the providence of God, any member of the same be stricken with disease, the mighty arm of the State is ready to be extended for their aid? Who can weigh the satisfaction flowing from the knowledge in thousands of homes that even if misfortunes befall and bankruptcy overtake them, that their children will not therefore be deprived of means for developing the full powers of their minds or of competing for the highest honors which their country can confer?

Viewed in this light, such institutions fulfill, to the whole community, purposes which are gained by a few individuals, at great expense and no little risk, through life insurance. Nor are these all. The supplanting, through an enlarged public spirit, the abnormal individuality of multitudes by the erection of centers of attraction about which all hearts may harmoniously revolve, is perhaps a still more important result. It is this spirit which has made the Northern States what they are. All know with what pride they point to their Hospitals, their Institutes for the deaf, dumb and blind, their Primary and Normal schools, their Colleges and Universities. Why should Alabama linger in the race of progress? Her area, even when compared with that of States of the largest size, is large. Her fields are inferior in fertility to none. Her mineral and cognate resources are absolutely boundless. Her record in the past is brilliant, but a more glorious future is, we confidently believe, before her, if her people are true to themselves.

As exponents of the degree of civilization already attained, and as important incitements and aids to higher and nobler results, we bespeak for the eleemosynary institutions of our State a larger liberality, if necessary, and a more appreciative consideration on the part of the people and their Legislators.

Visitors to the Hospital.

Visitors to the Hospital are always welcome. A very natural and laudable curiosity prompts the wish to know something of the appearance and manners of those who, in the providence of God, have been so unfortunate as to lose the lights of reason or the power of controlling their emotions. But we would remind visitors that the inmates being sorely afflicted, feelings of sympathy and commiseration should preponderate over a vain curiosity. Insanity is now admitted by all respectable Medical authority to be a disease of the brain, just as pneumonia is a disease of the lungs. If its phenomena could be regarded as phases of a mental eccentricity for which the individual was responsible we might amuse ourselves by practising upon its peculiarities. But the time for the prevalence of such absurd ideas has gone by, and insanity remanded to the domain of physical disease, its subjects are regarded as persons afflicted with a most painful and dangerous malady.

Visitors should also bear in mind that there are in the Wards of the Hospital men and women whose appreciation of the proprieties of life is as keen as theirs.

We have written the above from a desire to encourage that interest in our Institution which manifests itself by an actual inspection of its workings, and also from a regard for the feelings of our afflicted ones, and to save them the necessity of repeating the rebuke administered not long since by a patient to a squad of visitors; "Do you think I am part of a Menagerie?"

Communicated.

A New Flower.

The writer has studied botany no little; has racked and packed her brain with the details of both the Linnean and Natural systems of Classification; knows all about premorse, napiform and fasciculated roots; about verticillate, ruceinate and pinnatifid leaves; about Pentandria, Monogynia, and the other andrias and gynias; about Bignoniaceae, Convolvulaceae, Mesembryanthemaceae, etc., etc., and yet ten chances to one if she steps out in the woods, if she should not mistake a Jaw-breaker-aceae for a wild flower and go to smelling it.

When therefore she learned that the energetic Matron of the Hospital had originated a new flowering plant, a cross between a Polemoniaceae and Caryophyllaceae she confesses that her ideas of the new article were somewhat vague and indefinite, not knowing whether the invention was a bulbous plant, a vine, a

shrub or a tree. On a more particular inquiry we learn that the plant is a cross between the phlox and pink family and that its characteristics, when referred to those of its progenitors, may be summed up somewhat after the countryman's description of an ass as compared with a mule, "Just exactly like it, only more so."

Whether it will continue to produce Phloxsilenes is perhaps doubtful. To guard her original types of beauty and proportion, and also, doubtless, to save the brains of school-children from absolute demotion, Nature is averse to the mixture of diverse families. If the degree of affinity in this particular case is so close as to be fatal to propagation, we can not positively say. However this may be, we can not fail to congratulate Mrs. Woodall on the intuition which suggested the experiment, and we invite the world to come and see something that is, so far as we know, absolutely "new under the sun."

Gloxena.

Old Friends.

Col. Robert Tyler, of the Advertiser, Col. Jos. Hodgson, Supt. of Public Instruction, Dr. Thos. O. Summers, of the Nashville Christian Advocate, and other distinguished visitors, in attendance on the late Commencement exercises of the University, made brief visits to the Hospital.

Magnetism.

Its University and Hospital for the insane may be regarded as representing the two Poles of the great intellectual Magnet of the State. The grounds of the two institutions join, and their buildings loom over the landscape as if rising to take a side view of each other. Let us glance at some differences that distinguish them.

The inmates of the University come to acquire ideas. We to get rid of them. They receive encumbrances for proficiency in military tactics. The slightest proclivities in that direction, at our house, insure rebuke. If a student is insubordinate or irregular in his deportment, he is sent home. The more obstreperous our behavior, the closer we are held.

Some weeks ago we thought we transcended them far in quietness—that they made more noise in one day than we in a week,—but several of the extern employees of the Hospital having become members of a brass band, we have a very promising rival of the University drum.

Comets.

Prof. Whitfield has lately contributed several articles to the Times newspaper of Tuskaloosa. The Professor's views are not only interesting but can be proved to be thoroughly original. They coincide with those of a distinguished Italian who very lately received the prize of the Royal Astronomical Society of England for an essay in which they were detailed. So that Tuskaloosa may dispute with Milan, and the United States with Italy the palm of the great discovery—if discovery it be.

Both gentlemen, we believe, sail right in the teeth of the views of one of the most renowned physicists of the age, unless Tyndall's handkerchiefs be of immense size, or the nebulous matter within the orbit of Jupiter be capable of a marvellous condensation.

The question being therefore still *sub judice*, we could not without temerity assent to the conclusions of Prof. Whitfield and his Italian compeer.

But we have another and greater difficulty. They fail to account for the appearance of our Meteor. As this is to us of vastly more importance than those rampant fellows, even granting them to be meteors, that rush toward the sun as though to go through him but turn tail and skeedaddle, we are forced to say to the Professor, "You can't come it, (comet)."

To Correspondents.

The editor learns with deep sorrow that the handsome widow of the east wing, had prepared an article for this number of the Meteor but that it was condemned before reaching him. He regrets this very much, and does not doubt, anxious as he is for the Meteor's reputation that if an opportunity had been given him space would have been found for at least a portion of the contribution.

We are making all our shoes, mattresses, and furniture in the Hospital.

THE METEOR.

Alabama Insane Hospital.

Early in March was received the sad tidings of the death of Dr. A. G. Mabry, a Trustee of this Hospital. Of the eminent virtues of the deceased it would be easy to write, but on the citizens of Selma and his brethren of the Medical Profession devolve of right the task of their suitable commemoration.

The Superintendent has handed us a number of the Middletown, Ct. *Daily Constitution*, which contains the obituary of Elizabeth Palmer, wife of Dr. A. Marvin Shew, Sup't of the General Hospital for the Insane. From this we learn that Mrs. Shew was one of those ladies whose artistic skill, literary tastes, and sincere piety give lustre and dignity and force to the sweet charms of their womanly tenderness and modesty. The loss of such a person to any household or society is a most serious evil and we sympathise with the afflicted family and friends.

Compliments.

Dr. Isaac Ray, a most celebrated American writer on medicine, author of *Medical Jurisprudence* etc. etc., in a late letter to the Superintendent of this Hospital writes in most complimentary terms of our paper, and enforces them with substantial evidence of sincerity. Among other things he says that but for his work entitled *IDEAL CHARACTERS* having been already stereotyped, he would incorporate with it *THE GOOD PATIENT*, an article which appeared in our number for Oct., 1873.

That most estimable lady, Mrs. D. L. Dix, whose well directed zeal in behalf of suffering humanity has made her name a household word in all civilized countries, writes to the Superintendent most flatteringly of our *METEOR* enterprise, and encloses an acceptable contribution to our office.

Henry Tutwiler, L.L.D., the most distinguished educator in the State, pronounces a high eulogium in our behalf, while giving practical expression to a desire to listen longer to our *METEOR* prattle.

On the 10th November last was celebrated at the Eastern Lunatic Asylum, Williamsburg, Va., the centennial of the institution. Gov. Walker presided and several distinguished alienists were present. Among these were Dr. Stribling, Dr. Kirkbride of Phila., and Dr. Nichols of the Government Hospital at Washington, D. C.

We purpose to celebrate our centennial on April 5th 1931, if the Grand display of fire-works, which divines have so long promised, does not interfere.

Presidents of the various republics of the Earth will be invited, especially the President of Great Britain and Ireland, Russia, Prussia, France and Australia. Music will be supplied by telegraph operated by the most distinguished Professors of the chief Cities of the United States, including Norfolk, Port Royal, Brunswick, Pensacola, Galveston and Vera-Cruz. The President of the United States will arrive by a genuine air line from the District of Washington opposite St. Louis, and return same night to the seat of Government. The Patients who can be trusted not to vomit, will give exhibitions of proficiency in flying with the machine operated by R's engine weighing only 500

lbs. A lecture on insanity will be delivered by the Superintendent and the connexion between disease of the brain and disorder of the mind illustrated by means of the oxy-courod—electric light before which flesh and bone are as transparent as glass.

Dr. Earle's Report.

Among the printed matter which finds its way to the *METEOR* office, we encounter now and then some Reports of Hospitals for the insane. These contain information that would interest the most casual reader, for there is in them beside professional matters much that is of general interest. One of the last of those, lately brought us, is entitled *The Eighteenth Annual Report of the Massachusetts State Lunatic Hospital at Northampton*. We are attracted by the handsome binding, the heavy, excellent paper and the large, clear, typography. As we run our professional eye hastily over the leaves, the thought occurs how much some State Printers might learn by a trip to the office of Wright & Porter, Boston.

Dr. Earle, the Superintendent of the Hospital, has long occupied a distinguished place in his profession. He is an earnest and forcible writer, yet does not think it unbecoming to indulge now and then in the facetious. We like this. A Superintendent destitute of humor would, we think, be a very poor one, whatever his other qualifications. Dr. Earle thus takes off the mania for blooded stock which ran to such extravagant heights last year in the State of New York.

"Several men who have been here [patients of the hospital] were ready, at any time, to present a check for a hundred thousand or a million of dollars to any one of their friends or acquaintances; and one man invited the whole household to accompany him, free of charge, on a journey around the world, upon a rail-road to be built by himself, and to cross both oceans upon substantial stone bridges; but no one of the hitherto twenty-four hundred inmates has ever offered forty thousand dollars for a cow."

Dr. Earle in the above pokes a very successful joke. In the following he is as serious as a Judge.

"The farm stock of the Hospital, at the present time consists of eight horses, two bulls, eight oxen, twenty nine cows, two years steers, and eighty-seven swine, of which twenty-seven are infants."

We can swallow the horses, the bulls, the oxen, the cows, the steers and even the swine after recollecting these last are what we call, in Alabama, hogs; but the infants! May the Good Lord save us! Was that a misprint, or has Massachusetts become so overcrowded as to induce an attempt to convert young humans into hogs? That surely can't be. Then we can't understand it, for if Dr. Earle had meant pigs he would have written pigs. Infants! infants! what can be the meaning?

A friend suggests that the Doctor is trying to smuggle into the Massachusetts mind an extension of Darwinism; for, he says, there is no surer way of indoctrinating a people with any philosophy than to familiarize them with its vocabulary. This explanation is not at all satisfactory and we fear that after our first excess at supper we shall be haunted by visions of Massachusetts Herods. Heaven send that such thoughts may be confined to the hours of sleep, and that on our next visit to the Bay State we may not find, on our Hotel bill of fare "Baked Infants."

Perhaps the Doctor has taken a lesson in grandiloquence from his Trustees, who, in their Report, rejoice in the ability to rec'd a year of unusual

equability of operation &c &c."

Dr. Earle must not be angry with us. He must remember that a lunatic has a right to attempt to forestall unwarranted innovations in his diet and to be saucy to Superintendents.

Brevities.

Miss D. L. Dix, is contemplating a visit to the Superintendent of this Hospital. Her numerous friends will be pleased to learn that her health is excellent and that she is still actively engaged in doing good.—The *Inland Monthly*, in a review of Abbot's Alexander shows up the true character of the great Macedonian cut-throat. Hit him again! If there is a demand of the age more pressing than all others it is the meting exact justice to the big rascals.—In the *Grass valley Union*, Cal., we find a presage of the failure of the Granger Association. "Granger & Co" is the title of one of its advertisements.—The article on the evil effects of an indiscriminate use of the Bible by insane persons will appear in our next.—We have in the Hospital a telegraphic class, more than one patient having undertaken the systematic study of the art. They are much pleased with the writing, but find the reading by sound, a horse of another color.—A lady missionary must have formed an exalted idea of a negro-boy's fortitude. Upon receiving an exhortation on the dread certainty of Hell unless he repented and joined the Church, he asked: "Can I stand it?" Her reply was; "Stand it! of course you can; You'll have to." "Then" he replied, "I'll risk it; I ain't afraid of nothin but what I can't stand."—One of our lady patients, at the last sociable attended before leaving for her home, proved herself an adept on the violin. All conversation was hushed and every eye was turned to her, as with deft stroke and skilful tread she caused the instrument to discourse in sweet entrancing tones.—The promised programme for Christmas was crowded out of our last issue.—Gov. Lewis, on his visit to the Hospital last Fall, was doubtless as much surprised to find that the Georgia chief-Magistrate was one of our patients, as amused at the bows, smiles, ahems &c. &c. which the self-styled Georgian Governor paraded as props to his dignity, his traitor legs meanwhile capering nervously beneath the novel duties imposed.—An inmate of the Hospital has published three pamphlets, the titles of which are as follow; *THE ORIGIN OF MAN*; *twenty-four instead of two*. *A WARNING VOICE*. *BIBLE HISTORY*; the second death &c. Kind feelings for the author, who is a harmless, well-disposed man, prevents us from criticising these extraordinary productions. The pamphlets are sold at a moderate price, and we hope many persons, for curiosity's sake, will devote a small sum to their purchase.—In the month of January two humorous lectures, each about three-quarters of an hour long, were deliv-

ered in the Hospital Chapel by a patient. The intention is to have at least one lecture monthly, by the Superintendent, Assistant Physician or some other person.—The *METEOR* acknowledges the receipt of a *Daily Graphic* and *Vanity Fair*. Very good as far as it goes, but, as the negro said, Can't you go a little derer.—The Rector of Christ Church, in the city, has arranged special service to be used in the Hospital Chapel when our pulpit is occupied by ministers of that church. Some hundred copies of it will be printed and bound in the *METEOR* Office.—An exciting sack-race off on our croquet ground on the Jan., 2. One of the racers, a nurse, tripping up, fell on his face and flattened his nose.—In the Report of the State Hospital for the insane at Independence, Iowa, we notice that one of the Trustees is Mrs. Prudence A. Appleman. At the State Hospital for the insane at Mt. Pleasant, same State, Miss M. A. Cleaves, a graduate of the Medical Department of the Iowa University is 2nd Assistant Physician. If the appointment of Mrs. Appleman as Trustee was a matter of Prudence, that of Miss Cleaves must have been a dictate of profound wisdom, for not only was her appointment recommended by Dr. Ranney, the former Superintendent, but the Trustees, after six months experience speak of the vast amount of good which she will accomplish.—One of the lady patients has knit, in the last 15 months ninety pair of stockings and seventy-six pair of socks. This is exclusive of her other employments.—The *PIERSON LIBRARY*, since the recent contribution of books by the distinguished Christian gentleman, after whom it has been called, contains five hundred volumes. The new books are a great treat to the patients of the Hospital.—The Superintendent has requested his to acknowledge the receipt of thirty-seven copies of his last Annual Report, from the State Printer at Montgomery. He further desires us to state to the patrons of the Hospital, to the conductors of the public Press in the State, to the Superintendents of Hospitals, and to others who are applying for the Report, that in consequence of the small number received he will not be able to supply them as heretofore.—A detailed account of our Christmas festival was crowded out; and also, to our deep regret, Miss S's valedictory.—All the Job-work of the Hospital is done in the *METEOR* office, thus saving the institution in a single year the cost of the office.—For other brevities see our next number.

Rev. S. Hamilton, L.L.D., Of the Episcopal Church, has within the last year come to Tuscaloosa to take charge of the Church school, for boys, inaugurated by the Rector of the Parish. Although he has been for some months one of the regular

celebrants of divine service in the Hospital chapel, our reporter heard him for the first time on Sunday the 9th Nov. We subjoin his pen-picture, if such it may be termed, of the man and his preaching.

Dr. Hamilton is below the average height, has a good cerebral development and an attractive physiognomy. The long line of his bald vertex, face and clean shaven chin is hedged by a pair of broadly bulged whiskers which depend in two long, narrow points above his breast. Arrayed in well-starched bald which stood out firmly from his arms and body, Dr. Hamilton's appearance might be justly styled peculiar and imposing.

There was nothing particularly remarkable in the matter or manner of his discourse. His somewhat feeble intonations were not as effectually compensated by a distinct articulation as we could have wished. At first we thought we detected in his accents some decided trans-Atlanticisms, but they were not persistent or too slight to attract additional notice.

In the matter of the discourse, which was an expansion of the Apostle's comparison of the Church to the Lord's field, there were many excellent thoughts chastely and even beautifully expressed. We note particularly the parallel between baptism and the bounding fence of a field, the two serving to distinguish a particular heritage from the great uninclosed world.

In conclusion we venture the regret that Dr. Hamilton should mar the effect of his ministerial efforts by a somewhat dependence on manuscript. If a minister must write out his sermons in full—many excellent and successful preachers do so—some adroitness, in our opinion, should be practiced to disguise the connection between the words uttered and the written ones which lie before him.

Children.

In a scientific classification it is difficult to locate children. They evidently have some claims to be put under the genus, *bimana*; but the class term, *sapiens*, shuts the door upon them. Children may deserve to be styled "sweet;" as, for instance, after a bait of bread and syrup or preserves, but there is not the slightest pretence for applying to them the term, *sapiens*. Wise! a wise animal, arrived at the head of the stairs, stride boldly forward as if it were a continuation of the floor plane, and after pounding, in quick succession, every step of the stairs with his head, bawled with surprise that something has happened to scare him and make his head hurt! No, no! children may belong to the genus, *bimana* but to the class, *sapiens*, never!

In many respects they resemble pets—a pet parrot, a pet deer, a pet pig or a pet monkey. A pet parrot is very smart, amuses you and coaxes you into the belief that he dearly loves you; till some day attacked with digit-algia, you discover that your precious pet has willfully mistaken your finger for a nut and is trying to crack it. A child will make the same mistake if furnished with a hammer, and will leave your finny in worse plight than did the parrot.

A pet pig, the first thing you know, has gotten among your flowers and ploughed the ground nicely, without

regard to straight furrows. So children become, at times, very industrious, and getting a hoe or a rake, give you manifold but woful assistance in your horticultural pursuits; and, not content with the injury, add to it the insult of telling you of it and bragging about it.

If a little fellow, male or female—for the rascals are of either gender or both or neither, as suits their deviltry—takes a decided fancy to you, set it down as a forecast of the fates that you will, ere long, draw the best ticket in a lottery whose highest prize is an unbroken and unsalable elephant. A monkey you can chain, and a pet deer, pig or parrot shut up, but the rules of civilized warfare forbid such severities in campaigns against child pets, and the only way to avert the calamities which wait on them is to always go armed with a big stick (of candy) to induce them to retreat.

New Year's Eve.

One of the most enjoyable parties which we have ever attended came off at the Hospital on new-year's eve. It would be useless, even did our space permit, to endeavor to reproduce the pungency of the uncorked fun. A novel feature of the entertainment, toward its close, having received much and hearty applause, we have thought proper to recall.

The Superintendent, some weeks before, had declared his intention to present a handsome gift to the most industrious member of the Sewing societies. The universal voice accorded to Mrs M, of Monroe County, the honorable distinction, and she was on the *qui vive* of happy expectation of the present, which, it was understood, would be bestowed with some ceremony at one of the general soicales. The gentleman selected to deliver the gift determined to play on the lady a practical joke, of course, with the Matron's consent, by substituting for the Superintendent's gift a child's dumb watch. The editor of the METEOR got wind of the trick and the substance of the grandiloquent speech which was to precede the presentation, and determined to add to the fun by replication in the same spirit and to return, if possible, in the lady's behalf, a Roland for the Oliver. Accordingly when, after the close of the presenter's address, the worthless bauble had been, with much parade, unearthed from the bottom of a large, closely stuffed box and formally delivered, the recipient called on the editor to reply for her. We append both addresses.

Presentation Address.

Madame: In behalf of the Matron, assistant Matron, house-keeper, cooks, washerwomen, porter and everybody else, from the cow-boy to the Superintendent, I have the honor to present you this remarkable piece of jewelry as a prize for superior industry. This *chef-d'œuvre* of art was patented by Prof. Nincompoop of the Ashantee observatory in Central Africa. It has nei-

ther weights, springs, wheels nor machinery of any kind, yet must keep excellent time for it never goes wrong. Ordinary watches make sad drains upon the purse for repairs. This one need never cost a cent in that direction, for it will always be in as good condition as it is to night. Even if buried in the mud for twelve months, its time-keeping powers would not be, in any degree, impaired.

There are some very important moral lessons conveyed by it. In the first place it is of brass, to teach the value of a hard face. It makes no noise, as if to suggest that a still tongue makes a wise head. It always points to the same hour and is therefore right twice every day. This is to indicate that if we be firm the world will at length come round to our mode of thinking and acting.

Lady, you have, through your industry by day and by night, with your hands and doubtless, too, with your tongue, demonstrated your right to a high place among industrious lunatics. In token of such honorable distinction I have the honor to present you this testimonial. It may perhaps enhance the pleasure flowing from its possession to know that the Hospital finances, which like the State's are not plethoric, were strained to the utmost to raise for its purchase the enormous sum of five cents!

The Reply.

Sir:

I accept for Mrs M the testimonial awarded to her by yourself and other cow-boys. The gift is worthy of the source from which it comes, and she will cherish it as an evidence of the veneration with which the most indolent and worthless persons are inspired by the accomplishments of energy.

The lesson of the brass she will not soon forget, for she knows some faces which will serve as excellent substitutes for the watch in impressing it. The still tongue lesson you might have reserved for yourself and associates, for, to my certain knowledge, she never talks more than is agreeable to herself.

The small value of the present matters not. She cares so little for the vile trash, money, that I doubt not she would esteem the gift fully as much had it cost a thousand dollars. A rare gift or one of real value coming from such representative, as yourself, of the wisdom and generosity of the human family, would have been to her a shocking surprise; for she has long since learned not to seek for pearls in craw-fish or to go to a calf for blowing horns.

For your individual trouble in this weighty matter, permit me, kind sir, by her especial request, to recall to your recollection a remark of a great philosopher. It will be of service to you, and, possibly, to some other members, male and female, of this assembly: "Does your mother know that you are out?"

Woman's Rights.

In the account of our Christmas festivities it will be noticed that Mynheer Claus was pushed aside by Madame, his wife. Now contemplate one of the first results of this petticoat administration. We direct attention to the fact to show how much in their own light those editors stand who deride Livermore and Co's doings. On last Christmas, Santa Claus, a fig for such a saint! was master of ceremonies, and brought our editor an apple, an orange, some sticks of candy, a dozen raisins, some nuts and a bottle of poor cologne;

whereas, this Christmas, the Madame endowed him with a dressing gown of the richest materials elaborately wrought, and having buttons two inches in diameter!

If our editor should hereafter manifest a partiality for woman's rights his motives must not be deemed dishonorable, for the crucial test of merit in every worldly concern is the question, Does it pay? This was well understood by the wag who, when a preacher announced as his text "The wages of sin is death," exclaimed: Poor wages, that a man can't live by!

Fancy Dances.

If by fancy dance was meant one in which the most capers are cut, an urchin who, with breeches rolled up, is catching the birch on his thin calves, might be styled a fancy dancer *par excellence*. But the term by common consent has come to mean, as was right, a dance in which common sense and the judgment laid aside, the dancers's movements are swayed by the impulses of the imagination—the fancy.

A couple engaging in one of these would be pronounced most intimate and dear friends, for the liberties taken with their persons would ordinarily be tolerated only by such. The male grasps the female, not by the tips of the fingers as in the old-fashioned quadrille, but around the waist with the combined clasp of hand and arm, as though having of late married her he was asserting that right to her person which the solemn rite had pronounced his. She, as if to enforce still farther the same idea, resigns her right hand to his left, and reposes her soft head on his manly shoulders. Hand to hand, arm to waist, head to shoulder, breast to breast, momentarily they stand, then away they go with a hop-skip-and-stumble-bobbing-up-and-down-gait, as though playing a Siamese twins' game of hop-scott in bare feet upon a hot piece of iron.

The attraction of these dances is not any witchments of movement, for, as executed by most persons, they convey ideas of the prances of a string-halted horse, rather than the graces of elastic human movements. Nor is the constitutional effect agreeable, for nine out of ten soon become so dizzy with the whirling motion as to require support to stand alone.

There are men with minds so peculiarly constituted that while assiduous in attendance at balls, in expectation of embracing the pretty women of their acquaintance, they object to their sisters or wives engaging in such dances. How inconsistent! how absurd to wish, if other men's sisters suffer the embraces of mere acquaintances, that his should be deprived of them.

Even if we acquit these dances of a direct tendency to immorality, there might be differences of opinion as to their effect on the nicer shades of character. Is it, or is it not, desirable that men should come to the marriage altar with those nice sensibilities in reference to the opposite sex which have been, time out of mind, distinctive of the refined gentleman? Is it, or is it not, desirable that woman should bring to her husband that delicacy of untarnished modesty which is suggestive of the aroma of a freshly blown flower? Shall she, or shall she not, refuse to merge every idea of the beautiful in the grossly useful and to subject to abrasion all the nice tonings of her angelic traits?