

# THE NORMAL SCHOOL.

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## A RAINY DAY.

The dull gray clouds form an impenetrable curtain through which no ray of sunlight can pierce. "The day is cold, dark, and dreary." But half the dreariness is taken away by knowing that these clouds have silvery linings, and that the sunbeams are playing hide-and-seek in the great billowy masses above the blackness, making fantastic shadows, like those formed by the mists which sometimes hang over our lakes. All this beauty we see only in imagination. But very easily can we see the black, threatening sky, the uninviting streets, now crossed by numberless miniature river systems, that at last unite and form a little sea on the croquet ground, which only last night was the resort of a merry company who rejoiced in the cloudless sky and glorious moonlight. But 'tis changed as all things change here." Nothing in this world can last. *Now* we hear the wild wind shout in exultation as in its fury it rushes on, driving before it great sheets of rain which it in madness dashes against our windows, then on again, leaving the crystal drops to course slowly down the pane, like tears down the cheek of a sorrowing child.

This terrific outburst is succeeded by a partial calm; we can hear the mournful rustling of the leaves, the patter, patter of the rain; the ceaseless drip, drip from the eaves, the murmuring of our miniature river system, and from the distance comes the rushing and roaring of the swollen streams beyond.

Rainy days impress me so strangely, the wild outbursts filling me with half-terrified, half-reckless thoughts. But the calms that come now and then impress me strongly with an impulse to cry, since Dame Nature is indulging. Ah, see! the storm king has retired, and my room is

flooded with sunlight; the wind and rain have ceased; the clouds are all broken up in the west, and are now a heaped and tumbled mass of glory, gorgeous in gold and purple. The colors creep slowly up toward the zenith, until the whole heavens are one grand, beautiful scene. Earth too is beautified; the drops of rain clinging to the leaves are radiant gems in the sunlight. The plants and grasses are relieved of the dust of weeks, and are now holding up their heads in silent thankfulness. All nature is happy. How wise are thy works, O wonderful Father. Thou makest sadness and joy to blend in all things, like the darkness of the morning and the glorious light of *Now*.  
DELILAH.

## AMBITION AND CONTENTMENT.

It is said that all virtues carried to extremes, become vices; firmness may be made obstinacy; gentleness weakness.

The wish to store away gold for future comforts, may become the miserly desire to hoard it for its glitter. Therefore it is necessary, in the cultivation of these virtues, that care should be taken that they do not become vices. Contentment is a virtue, often urged upon us, and too often urged upon us, and too often neglected. It is *essential to our happiness*.—We can experience no pleasure, while murmuring at our situation. But when contentment degenerates into that slothful feeling which will not exert itself for greater good, which would sit in perfect ease, and smile upon the gifts which providence has given, turning from the object which calls for the active spring and tenacious grasp—then contentment has ceased to be a virtue: it is but an excuse for indolence.

Ambition is often denounced as a vice, and it is a vice, when carried to such an