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THE POEMS AND STORIES
OF
FITZ-JAMES O'BRIEN.

Collected and Edited, with a Sketch of the Author,

BY
WILLIAM WINTER.



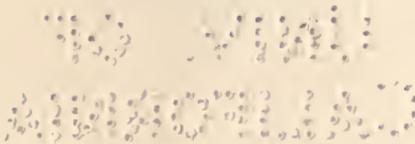
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This Volume,

THE FIRST THAT EVER HAS BEEN MADE
OF THE WRITINGS OF

FITZ-JAMES O'BRIEN,

SOLDIER AND PATRIOT

AS WELL AS POET AND SCHOLAR,

IS DEDICATED

TO THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,

UNDER WHOSE FLAG HE FOUGHT, AND FOR
WHOSE CAUSE HE DIED.



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P R E F A C E.

THE work that is here performed — imperfectly, but as thoroughly as is now possible — should have been done a long time ago, and would have been done, but for several serious obstacles interposed by what, seemingly, was an almost malign fate. O'Brien on his death-bed appointed two friends to be his literary executors. One of them, Mr. Frank Wood, speedily followed him "into the silent land." The other, Mr. Thomas E. Davis, found neither opportunity, encouragement, nor an auspicious time for the fulfilment of the work. O'Brien's writings were scattered far and wide. In some instances the use of them was thought to be impeded by the claim of copyright. The facts of his brief career were but obscurely known. His character and his way of life had made him a difficult subject to treat. It was natural that a gentleman, not by profession a man of letters, and embarrassed by such untoward circumstances, should hesitate at such a task. About six years ago, the intimation was given that O'Brien's writings would be collected and published by one of his relatives in Ireland. Nothing, however, came of that; and it seemed more than likely that justice to the memory of this brilliant writer would never be attempted. I am almost the last survivor of the literary comrades with whom he was associated more than twenty years ago; and perhaps it is not altogether inappropriate that the work so long left untouched by others should at last be accomplished by me.

The writings here collected have been drawn from many sources, and they have been thoughtfully chosen, carefully arranged, and, in some instances, revised. It has been found essential to search many old files and to confer with many persons. Messrs. Harper & Brothers, with ready kindness, have permitted me to use all of O'Brien's works that were originally published in their periodicals, and also the cuts which illustrate the satire of "The Finishing School." The Harpers were among his staunchest, most practical, and most faithful friends. Articles of his have been taken also from the Atlantic Monthly, the Knickerbocker, Putnam's Magazine, the United States Review, Vanity Fair, the Lantern, the Home Journal, and other sources. He contributed to many periodicals, — to the New York Times, the Evening Post, Leslie's Story Paper, Leslie's Stars and Stripes, the Democratic Review, and the American Whig Review; and it is said that, in 1851, he edited, in London, a publication devoted to the World's Fair, and that he also wrote for the Leisure Hour. Like all authors who are obliged, habitually and constantly, to work under the stress and strain of writing for bread, he produced things that had no value beyond the moment, and some that were below the level of his own standard of taste. In preparing this volume, the endeavor has been made to present a selection of his chief and characteristic works, rather than to mass together all that he wrote. The material thus far collected would fill more than a thousand pages, and much of what is now necessarily omitted is equally worthy with the works here given of republication in a permanent form.

Among O'Brien's writings which it has not been found possible to include in this collection, but which may hereafter be presented to the public, are essays entitled "Your

Health," "Bird Gossip," and "A Paper of All Sorts," and seven miscellaneous poems, — all published in Harper; his "Fragments from an Unpublished Magazine," which appeared in the Democratic Review, in September, October, and December, 1852; his series of sketches, called "The Man about Town," begun in Harper's Weekly, and continued in Frank H. Bellew's Picayune; his dramatic reviews, contributed to the Saturday Press in 1858-59; a number of papers in the old series of Putnam; many miscellaneous articles in the Home Journal, the Lantern, Vanity Fair, and other papers; more than twenty stories; and six plays. It is said that he began, and partly composed, a tragedy on the subject of Samson; but I have not been able to find it. He undertook to write, for Leslie's Stars and Stripes, — a paper published, during about six months, in 1859, — a romance entitled "The Scarlet Petticoat"; but this has not been found. He began, in Bellew's Picayune, March 27th, 1858, a story called "From Hand to Mouth"; but he left it incomplete, and it was finished either by Bellew ("Triangle"), or by Pool, his sub-editor. He wrote discursive articles on many subjects. He was surprisingly apt at jest, and squib, and song. With a rare aptitude for literature, he possessed also an extraordinary faculty for journalism. I have traced his busy pen in many places. He was the most industrious idle man that ever I have known.

It is more than eighteen years since O'Brien died. Many men who knew him and could have given information concerning him have, within that time, passed away. In making a memoir of him I have endeavored to augment my own imperfect tribute by adding to it the testimony of other writers. Mr. Thomas E. Davis, O'Brien's surviving executor, Mr. Louis H. Stephens, the principal artist of*

Vanity Fair, and Mr. Stephen Fiske, whose name in journalism is a synonyme of sprightliness and dash, have generously enriched with their recollections the memorial pages which follow. I reprint, beside, a sketch of him by the beloved and lamented George Arnold, and an account of his military career that was written by Frank Wood, in the New York Leader, April 12th, 1862; and in this, as Wood was appointed one of his executors, there is a sort of fulfilment of the wishes of the dead. I have received encouragement in my task from Bellew, one of O'Brien's best friends and earliest associates in America; from Aldrich, the poet, once his close companion; from the learned, gracious, and kindly veteran of letters, Dr. R. Shelton Mackenzie; from Mr. Thomas Powell, whose green old age delights in genial remembrance of the literary past; from Dr. A. L. Carroll, who knew him well; and from Mr. J. W. Harper, Jr., whose friendship for the poet when he was living is now a fresh and tender memory, surviving all the years that have passed since he died. Mr. Stephens, furthermore, has been persuaded to paint, from memory, a portrait of O'Brien to embellish this volume; and I preserve here a Dirge for O'Brien by the late Charles Dawson Shanly,—his friend and mine. Tenderly loved and deeply deplored, he too sleeps the long sleep of death. How deep had been his joy, if only he could have lived to take a personal part in this commemoration of his brilliant countryman and cherished comrade! His dirge—as full of tears as of music—is a fitting ritual for the soldier poet. “In death they are not divided.”

W. W.

Fort Hill, New Brighton, Staten Island,
October 12th, 1880.

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SKETCH OF O'BRIEN.

BY THE EDITOR.



*"I count myself in nothing else so happy
As in a soul rememb'ring my good friends."*

SHAKESPEARE.



A DIRGE:

IN MEMORY OF FITZ-JAMES O'BRIEN.

DIED, APRIL 6, 1862.

I.

*Toll, bell,
With solemn knell,
For him who fell
 In the galloping fight!
Trumpets, ring
To the dirge we sing
In our hearts that cling
 Round the spirit so bright!
Roll, drum,
As the vaulted tomb
For his early doom
 Is gaping drearily!
Cold and dead,
In his stony bed
 Lay him, who lately sang so cheerily!*

II.

*Hush, hush!
The memories rush
With impetuous gush
 On heart and head:
Speak low, —
None of us know
Half we forego
 In the gallant dead.
Plant flowers,
Not where April showers,
But tears, like ours,
 Shall make them bloom, —
And their breath impart
To each kindred heart
In the crypt of which
 Is the poet's tomb!*

CHARLES DAWSON SHANLY.

Vanity Fair, April 19th, 1862.

SKETCH OF O'BRIEN.

THAT the facts of a man's life which can be stated are but poorly adequate to convey a full sense of what that life really was is a truth that receives additional illustration in this imperfect biography. Yet this record is as nearly complete as careful research and conscientious labor can now make it. The more important part of the life of its subject was his intellectual and spiritual experience. The history of his mind, however, is written in his works. It is only attempted, in this place, to set down the incidents of his career.

FITZ-JAMES O'BRIEN was born in the county of Limerick, Ireland, about the year 1828. His father was an attorney-at-law. His mother was a lady of remarkable beauty. He received a good education at Dublin University. He was not trained, however, to either of the learned professions; but it is remembered that he claimed to have been at one time a soldier in the British service. He very early evinced a taste and aptitude for writing verses; and among his first works are two poems, entitled "Loch Ine" and "Irish Castles," which appear, without an author's name, in "The Ballads of Ireland," collected and edited by Edward Hayes (1856). On leaving college he went up to London, where, in the

course of about two years, he spent his inheritance, stated at eight thousand pounds. In 1851, according to a somewhat dubious report, he edited, in London, a periodical devoted to the World's Fair. Late in that year, or early in 1852, he found it essential to seek his fortune in the New World. One of his friends was Dr. Collins, brother to the Roman Catholic Bishop of Cloyne, and through his influence O'Brien obtained letters of introduction, from Dr. R. Shelton Mackenzie, — then editor of a newspaper in Liverpool, and correspondent for the *New York Evening Star*, — addressed to Major Noah, General George P. Morris, and other prominent citizens of the American capital. With these, on his arrival here, the adventurous young poet made an auspicious entrance into society and literature; and it was not long before his singularly brilliant abilities were recognized, and he became a general favorite. In that way his American career began, which was destined, within the brief period of ten years, to be signalized by the production of some of the most original and beautiful poems and stories in the literature of his time, to flow through many painful vicissitudes and much trouble, and to end abruptly in a soldier's grave.

The chronicle of his literary life must, necessarily, be discursive. It was in no sense more eventful than such lives usually are, — except that it was more painfully irregular and more startlingly productive. His earliest writings here were published by John Brougham, in the *Lantern*. "When I first knew him," says his old comrade, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, "he was trimming the wick of the *Lantern*, which went out shortly afterwards." In that paper appeared, among other of his productions, the touching poem of "An Old Story," "The Ballad of

Sir Brown," "The Gory Gnome," and "The Wonderful Adventures of Mr. Papplewick." At one of Brougham's weekly dinners, in Windust's old place, near the original Park Theatre, — at which the writers and artists of his *Lantern* were regularly convened, and at which everything but the paper was discussed, — O'Brien made the acquaintance of the artist and author, Mr. Frank H. Bellew, who became one of his intimate friends. The New York residences were, in those days, much further "down town" than they are now, and O'Brien and Bellew at one time lodged together in Leonard Street, and subsequently in Broadway, immediately opposite to what is now the Metropolitan Hotel, and on the site of the building afterwards locally famous as Stanwix Hall. That, of course, was the season of the light heart and the foaming flagon, when the chimes are heard at midnight and the bloom is on the rye. O'Brien's associations then were largely with the circles that eddied around Willis and Morris; and at that time he wrote a few sketches and verses for the *Home Journal*. His poem which I have named "The Demon of the Gibbet" originally appeared in that paper, under the inexpressive title of "What Befell." He contributed, also, in a fitful and miscellaneous way, to the *Evening Post* and to the *New York Times*; and he wrote for the *American Whig Review* his "Fragments from an Unpublished Magazine." He was, in brief, a literary soldier of fortune; and, with his expensive tastes and already settled habits of extravagance, it is needless to say that in time he found the Grub Street pathway an exceedingly weary road.

The most important literary association that he ever formed was that which made him a regular contributor to *Harper's Magazine*. His first paper in that publication

appeared in the number for February, 1853, and is entitled "The Two Skulls." It is scientific and philosophical. He contributed to fifty-two numbers, and there are sixty-six of his productions in that periodical. His pen appears to have been in its most prolific period during the years 1855, '56, and '57. His last paper in *Harper*, a story entitled "How I Overcame my Gravity," was not published till May, 1864, — more than two years after he was dead. He never saw in print, either, — for they also were posthumous publications, — his excellent story of "Tommatoo," or his sad poem of "Down in the Glen at Idlewild." He wrote copiously for *Harper's Weekly*, as well as for the *Magazine*. His noble ode on KANE was first printed in that journal, and there likewise first appeared his richly fanciful, inventive, picturesque poem of "The Zouaves," — a work which conspicuously illustrates his remarkable faculty for giving an imaginative application to an idea or topic of the passing hour. He wrote stories, too, for *Harper's Weekly*, and he wrote a series of familiar letters, called "The Man about Town," which, even at this distance of time, can be read with pleasure, for the liveliness of their spirit and the grace of their style. All this while he was writing, as capricious fancy prompted or as the spur of necessity compelled, in other quarters. The veteran James W. Wallack was one of his dearest friends, and for Wallack's theatre he wrote several bright little pieces, — spirited in idea, impetuous in spirit, and clean and polished in mechanism, — which were acted well, and which found a ready acceptance. One of these, "A Gentleman from Ireland," still keeps the stage, and will long be found serviceable to the dashing light comedian. For Laura Keene's theatre, at the instance of Jefferson, — then its stage manager and

principal actor, — he adapted one of Brough's burlesques; and this piece, under the title of "The Tycoon," was produced during the visit of the first Japanese Embassy to this country. He was possessed of a strong dramatic sense and had a good knowledge of the stage, — the latter having been acquired in his London days, — and, although he was inclined to push the theory of "natural" acting much too far, as may be seen in his tale of "Mother of Pearl," he could write with incisive judgment and informing taste on the acted drama. He did so in the autumn of 1858, in the *New York Saturday Press*; and one of his dramatic articles, in particular, — a disquisition upon the tragedy of "Hamlet," with Mr. Barry Sullivan as the melancholy Dane, — is remarkable equally for poetic intelligence, acute analysis, and fine description. To *Putnam's Magazine* — that noble monument to the exquisite taste of George William Curtis — he was a contributor in the first number and for several years; and several of the gems of this collection have been taken from that source. He was a diligent writer for *Vanity Fair*, and from those sparkling columns are gathered his grisly fancy of "The Wharf Rat," his athletic and sonorous "Song of the Locomotive," and his idyl of "Strawberries." Two of his most remarkable stories belong to this period of nomadic labor, — "The Diamond Lens" and "The Wondersmith," published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, in January, 1858, and October, 1859. They electrified magazine literature, and they set up a model of excellence which, in this department, has made it better than it ever had been, in this country, before those tales were printed.

O'Brien had a great admiration for the strange, wild, passionate genius of Matilda Heron; and it once suited his fancy to travel, as a literary assistant, with H. L.

Bateman, — that iron-willed yet genial Boanerges of managers, — who was then directing a professional tour for that actress. Miss Heron was acting in "Camille," which had but recently been introduced upon the American stage, and in a drama by Mrs. Bateman, entitled "Geraldine." On this trip O'Brien visited Boston, and he remained for some time in that city and its neighborhood; and I remember that he considerably astonished some of the quiet literary circles of that staid and decorous region by his utter and unaffected irreverence for various camphorated figure-heads which were then an incubus upon American letters. It was there and then that I first met him, and first observed that stalwart mind and that formidable frankness of temperament for which he was remarkable. He was now considerably changed from what he had been when he came to America. Mental toil and bodily privation, the hardships of a gypsy life, the reactionary sense of being in false positions and of being misunderstood, — which often will embitter natural sweetness and turn amiability to proud and glittering defiance, — had done their work upon his nature, and made him, in some of his moods, as lawless, arrogant, and truculent, as in others he was gentle, resigned, affectionate, and almost forlorn. In his face and carriage there was the strong and splendid freedom of the wild woods; yet at times there came into his eyes a weary look of unrest, and a quite indescribable light of dangerous, half-slumbering wrath, — as of a soul that was a hunted vagabond standing sentinel over its own desolation. I was attracted toward him by a profound sympathy, and we became comrades and friends, and so remained to the end. I have heard that, when he first established himself in New York, he dwelt in comfortable quarters and surrounded

himself with appliances of luxury. His raiment was superb ; his library was excellent ; his furniture was tasteful ; and, like De Mauprat, he was "splendid in banquets." His personal appearance in those days — before, as happened in June, 1858, his nose had been broken by the blow of a pugilist — was singularly attractive. He had a fair and glowing complexion, and waving brown hair ; his eyes were gray-blue, large, brilliant, and expressive ; his smile was honest and sweet, and his countenance frank and winning ; he was of the middle stature, an athlete in person, and he moved with negligent grace. His voice was rich in quality, loud and clear, and he had a bluff and breezy manner of speech, tending at times to a joyous turbulence. In a general way he retained these characteristics ; but at the time of our companionship he had emerged from his condition of elegance, and his fortunes were low. He had no property ; he was at variance with many old acquaintances ; his face had suffered disfigurement ; he lived nowhere in particular ; and he was thoroughly well acquainted with hard times. I found him, in those gypsy days, a delightful associate. His animal spirits were prodigious. His literary invention was alert, vigorous, and almost incessant. His enjoyment of the passing hour was so keen, that it gave a zest to the enjoyment of all around him. No matter how close poverty might pinch, or how dark the clouds might lower over the portal of the future, the laugh of O'Brien blew care away from the cup of life, as the foam is blown from the white caps of the sea.

His habits of literary composition, as will be surmised, were erratic. A man less buoyant than he would have been paralyzed by the hardships through which he drifted and labored. But, amid chaos or tempest, he was

always seeing, always thinking, always at work. Perhaps he liked best to drift in the sunshine and to make merry with genial companions; but he could nerve himself to effort when the occasion demanded it, and he could execute prodigious tasks with amazing celerity. Times of indolence and times of tremendous exertion checkered his life along the whole of its course. He was not a fluent writer, because he thought deeply, and wrote logically, and was fastidious in taste; but his creative literary impulse was exceedingly strong, and his feeling was earnest. He possessed an ample and ready command of the resources of literary art, his mind was replete with what it had absorbed in hours of apparent idleness, and he worked with relentless purpose and absorbing zeal. In this way it chanced that he could accomplish a formidable task in a surprisingly short time, yet always deliver his work rounded and finished as if with the scrupulous labor of weeks. His poem of "A Fallen Star," for example, was written in my lodging, between midnight and morning, at one sitting, and he left the original draft upon the table, having made a clean copy of it for the press. A fac-simile of a page of that manuscript is given in this volume, and it strikingly reveals the care with which he wrote. His poem of "The Sewing Bird" was also written in my lodging, within the course of two nights, and I have kept the pen with which it was written, as a relic of a remarkable effort. I never saw him so deeply depressed as he was then, — and with good reason, for he was destitute, cheerless, and hungry; and whenever that was his case he would not share with a comrade, and even when food was left in his way he would not take it. He sold "The Sewing Bird" for one hundred dollars, and a few hours later he was as merry as a

brook in spring-time. One of his favorite haunts was the old Hone house, in Broadway, at the southeast corner of Great Jones Street; and there, under very similar circumstances, in the course of an evening, he produced the ringing poem of "The Lost Steamship." His story of "What Was It?" was written at odd moments, in the lodging of his friend Aldrich, in Clinton Place. These details have a trivial sound, but somehow they help to give a lifelike picture of the man, — displaying, back of the strange circumstances under which his literature was produced, the still stranger nature that produced it.

The burden laid upon the poet is, that he must feel and express the great and varied elemental passions of humanity, yet never himself depart from the perfect poise of a sane and decorous life. All literary history is the narrative of his endeavor, with a greater or less degree of failure, to achieve this perfect result. All literary criticism abounds in censure of him because — being a man and not a god — he falls short of his object. Yet through the everlasting march of the ages he still strives onward; still obeys his inexorable fate; still tries to utter for all mankind the voice of the universal heart; and still, amid the flying echoes of his own celestial music, he may stray into sin and sorrow, he may faint and falter by the way, and so drop into a lamentable grave. O'Brien was in no wise more successful than some others of his kind. He fulfilled his destiny as well as he could. The attrition of his character with his circumstances developed faults and impelled to errors. He was, personally, very far from being a perfect creature. He was not deficient in moral sense; on the contrary, his perception of right and wrong was uncommonly keen; but he was deficient in moral courage and in stability of principle,

and what was originally noble in his moral nature had been to some extent marred, though not spoiled, by conviviality and chronic improvidence. His conduct was never intentionally wrong, but it was sometimes marked by a heedless irregularity in the ordinary affairs of life, such as, to many persons, is almost as culpable as bad intention. He knew this, and his realization of it only enraged him against his own defects. He was at times haughty and combative; partly because of his Hibernian blood, and partly, no doubt, because of his resentful conviction that he deserved — by his powers, his achievements, and the possibilities of his mind and future — a higher position in literature than had ever been accorded to him. But, so far as I ever could learn, his faults and errors did serious injury to no one but himself; while for the creation of literature he was, in the hands of Fate, a magnificent instrument. There was such a breezy audacity in his genius, that, thinking of him after all these years, I feel a thrill of barbaric joy, as if youth itself were come back. He was like a giant oak, responsive to the midnight gale, and exultant in its rage. He was like the ocean swept by the tempest, that answers with clarion tumult and savage delight. He never paltered with life, nor fawned on the tedious little self-constituted potentates with whom the avenues of society are infested. He did not approach literature with timid deprecation, but he fronted his work royally, and he performed it. He spoke his mind, and he neither valued life nor feared death. Thus constituted, — sensitive to the grandest influences of nature and the tenderest touch of art, — the mystic spirit that is in creation could play upon him at its will, and sound what stops it pleased. Time, no doubt, would have improved this organ of the Muse, —

would have broadened and mellowed its tones, and made it vocal with yet more heavenly emotion. The noble instrument was too soon broken; the life that promised so much was too soon quenched in the darkness of the grave. Nevertheless, in what was uttered — and is now preserved — there lives a rich and buoyant power, and a wonderful soul of beauty. Here, garnered in his pages, are rich creations of the imagination, splendid or sombre pictures, original conceptions of character, rare bits of description, fine strokes of analysis of life, strong pæans of joy, and sad wails of grief. Here is the eloquent and beautiful manifestation of a genius, broad in its scope, affluent in its tide, adequate in its strength, brilliant in its splendor, gentle and humane in its teaching and influence. Such works are the best interpreters of their own beneficence. There is no end and no measure to the good that literature accomplishes when, through the ministration of beauty, it helps to free our souls from the hard conditions under which life is imposed upon the human race.

The venerable Shelton Mackenzie, in a gracious and tender letter, responsive to inquiries of mine, refers to O'Brien's death, in these words: "To die on the field of honor, under the flag of his adopted country, was just the doom his gallant spirit would have craved." It was the doom reserved for him, and he met it bravely and well. He was a lover of liberty and the rights of man, and a stanch, unflinching advocate of the principle of Union in the American Republic. When the war broke out, in 1861, accordingly, he joined the Seventh Regiment of the National Guard of New York, in the hope of being sent to the front, and he was in camp with that regiment at Washington for six weeks. "A brilliant, dashing fel-

low," writes Colonel Emmons Clark, "very brave, and a universal favorite. He never in any way did anything to hurt the good name of the regiment. He held the rank of Captain, and is so entered on our regimental roll of honor." When the Seventh came home he left it and for a time was occupied in gathering recruits for a volunteer regiment, to be called the McClellan Rifles. He subsequently received an appointment on the staff of General Lander,* and at once repaired to the scene of conflict in Virginia. His period of active military service was brief, but he distinguished himself by energy and valor. On the 26th of February, 1862, in a skirmish with Colonel Ashley's cavalry, he was shot, and severely wounded. He lingered till the 6th of April, when he died. His death occurred at Cumberland, Virginia. His body was brought home, and buried with military honors.

* There is but a meagre and imperfect record, at the War Department, in Washington, (though a strictly official one, and no doubt correct as far as it goes,) of O'Brien's military career. T. B. Aldrich and O'Brien applied at nearly the same time for a place on General Lander's staff. The application of Aldrich — an old friend of General Lander's — was a few days in advance of that of O'Brien. General Lander sent a telegram to Aldrich, at Portsmouth, N. H., offering to him a staff appointment, with the rank of Lieutenant. In the meanwhile, Aldrich had left Portsmouth, and the telegram remained there, unopened and unregarded. Thereupon General Lander, receiving no answer, gave the post to O'Brien, who shortly afterwards was killed. Old Henry Clapp used dryly to say that "Aldrich was shot in O'Brien's shoulder."

That O'Brien received this appointment is certain; but, being already in the field, he was not formally mustered in, and he was killed before his commission had been signed: hence the meagreness of the official record at the War Department. Writing from "Camp Kelly," Virginia, January 21st, 1862, to his friend Mr. Thomas E. Davis, O'Brien says: "I am in harness, and am staff officer of parade, and am already intrusted with the rather arduous but important

The last time I saw him in life he took from my hand a copy of Shirley Brooks's novel of "The Silver Cord." He was going to the front. The next time I saw him he was in his coffin. The silver cord had been loosed, and the stormy heart of the poet-soldier was at rest. Even in death his countenance wore its old expression of defiant endurance. His funeral was held in the armory of the Seventh Regiment. The silver-haired veteran Wallack, leaning on Lester's arm, his pale, handsome face wet with tears, stood beside the bier; and round them were clustered many of O'Brien's comrades, now likewise dead and gone. With muffled drums and martial dirges we bore him to Greenwood Cemetery, and there a guard of honor fired its volley over his tomb, and, with a few flowers from the loving hand of poor Matilda Heron, we left him forever. There his ashes still rest;* and there,

duty of posting the pickets all through this devil of a wilderness. Address to me always as A. D. C., General Lander's Brigade."

"My impression is," writes General McClellan, "that Mr. O'Brien served with Lander as a volunteer aid." This in the absence of a regular commission would be his rank. He gave his life without price.

In the *New American Cyclopædia*, annual volume, for 1862, on page 543, occurs the following reference to the exploit at Bloomery Gap, in which O'Brien participated: "In this brilliant dash the Confederate commander and his staff surrendered to General Lander, who, *with a single aid*, had outridden the rest of the force, and, coming upon them at full gallop, demanded their swords." The "single aid" was O'Brien. — ED.

* The remains of O'Brien were placed, at first, in the receiving tomb at Greenwood, but on November 27, 1874, were removed and buried in the earth. His grave is number 1183, in lot number 17,263, in that cemetery. At the funeral of O'Brien, Frank Wood, T. B. Aldrich, Edward F. Mullen (the quaint, original artist of *Vanity Fair*), and I rode in a coach together, and Wood (now dead) carried O'Brien's sword. — ED.

in time to come, will many a pilgrim to the shrine of genius and of noble valor lay the chaplet of remembrance on the grave of Fitz-James O'Brien.

WILLIAM WINTER.

FORT HILL, NEW BRIGHTON, STATEN ISLAND,
October 19th, 1880.



RECOLLECTIONS OF O'BRIEN.

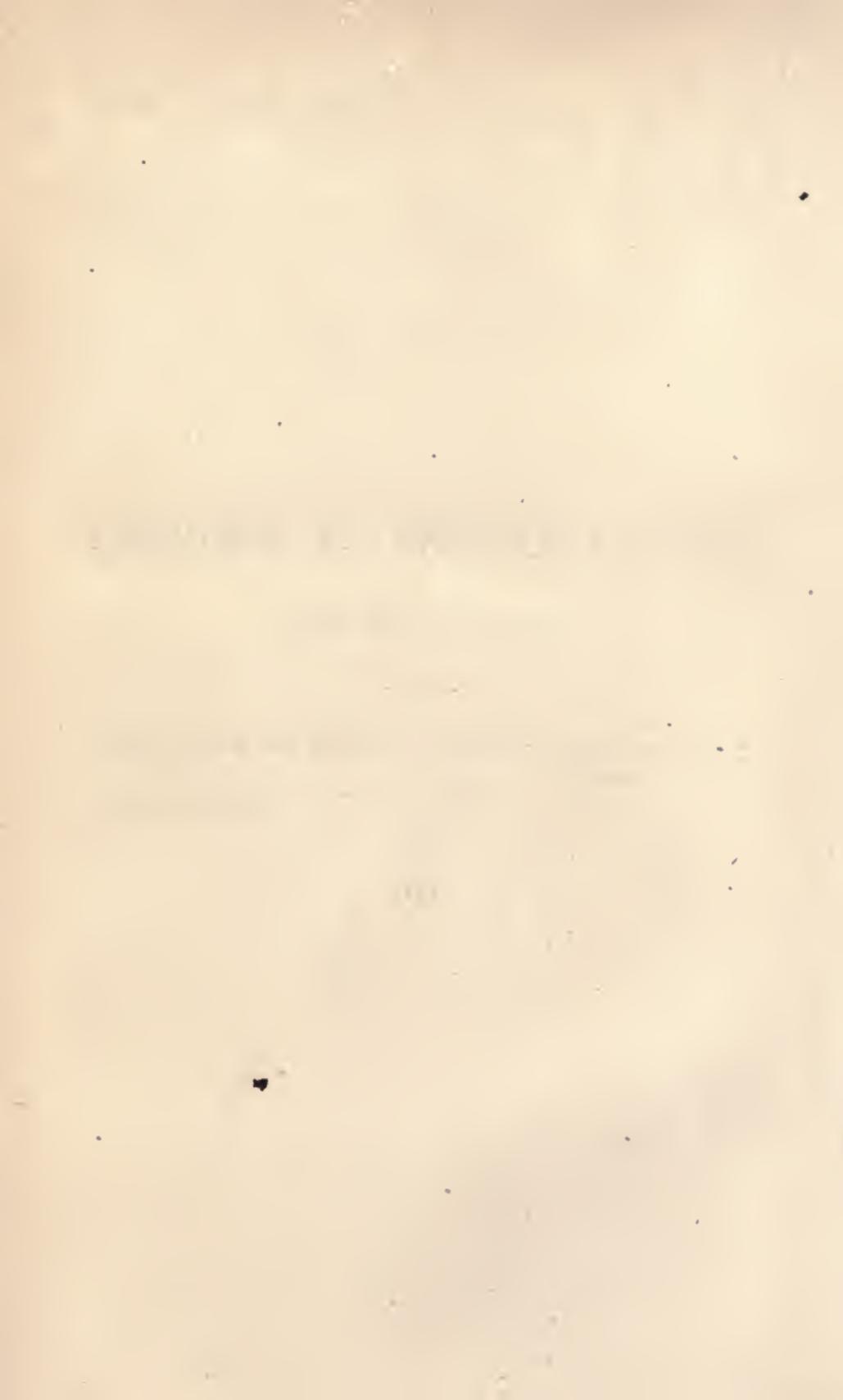
BY SEVERAL WRITERS.



*“I remember him well; and I remember him worthy of thy
praise.”*

SHAKESPEARE.





O'BRIEN IN HIS LAST DAYS.

MY DEAR WINTER:—

An effort to rescue O'Brien's name, with honor, from oblivion, interests me immensely, and I am confident that such a work, undertaken by you, will successfully realize its promise. It would give me great pleasure to bring to you all the papers that I possess referring to O'Brien, and to talk over our friend with you. Your letter, advising me of your project, was forwarded to my address at Paris, and has just been returned to me here. You have my heartiest sympathy in the work that you have undertaken, and I rejoice that it will at last be accomplished.

Shortly after O'Brien's death I consulted with my associate executor, Frank Wood, as to the course of action proper for us to pursue; and it was agreed that, as he was more devoted than I to literary pursuits, all of O'Brien's papers that were possessed by me should be given to him, and he should write a memoir, and make a selection of the writings for publication, subject to my approval. I gave to him thereupon everything of O'Brien's that I then had,—even private letters. My reliance on his ability to do this work was complete, and no doubt he would have done it had he lived. Ill-health came upon me shortly after this, and drove me to Europe, and I never

heard of him again — except the news of his death. I have been for many years a resident abroad, and occupied by engrossing duties. I have made many and earnest inquiries as to the fate of the papers delivered to Wood, but could never ascertain what befell them. Among them was O'Brien's last letter, written to me on his death-bed.

While I was in Europe I met O'Brien's mother (Mrs. De Courcy O'Grady, she having married again, some time after the death of O'Brien's father, and when O'Brien was still a lad), and she expressed great affection for her lost boy, and deep interest in the idea of publishing his works. I intimated to her — as you have intimated to me — that, in case the book should succeed, a suitable monument would be erected over O'Brien's grave. I am glad you have this design in view. My path has been strewn with difficulties, and you are doing me a real service in taking up this work.

My knowledge of O'Brien was confined to the latter part of his life. He and I were engaged in raising a regiment, to be known as the McClellan Rifles, and we made a good start in this business; but I found myself unable to bear the exposure of the camp, and so left the affair to him. He was about this time involved in what might have proved a serious trouble, — though he was entirely in the right. He was attacked by an inferior officer, absent without leave from camp, and he was compelled, in self-defence, to fire upon him; and the man — a mutinous, abusive, dangerous person — was hurt, but ultimately he recovered. O'Brien lived in my house, at Staten Island, for some time after this event, and it was there that he wrote his poem of "A Soldier's Letter," which he read to me just after completing it.

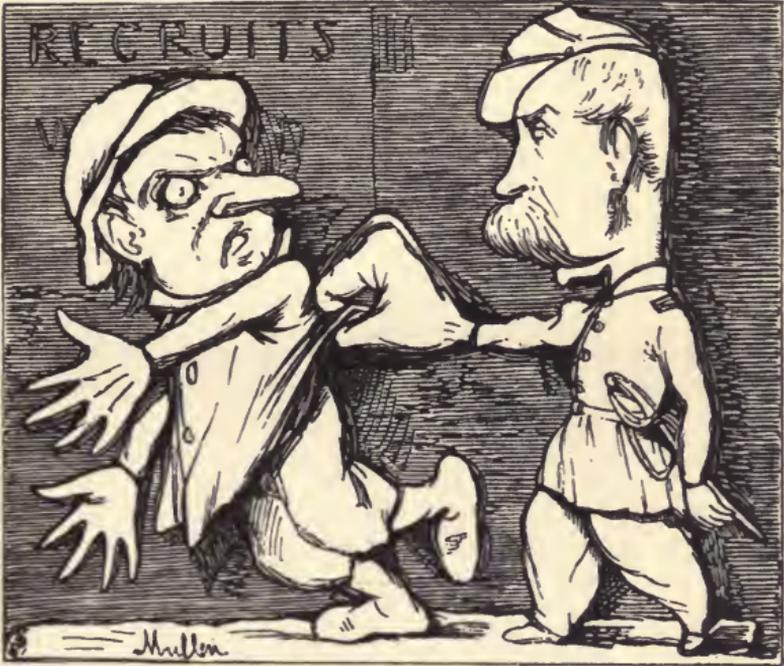
I never enjoyed anything more than hearing him read his own writings. He was truly a manly fellow, an intensely *live* man, in look, bearing, and manner: yet on these occasions he would become subdued to such exquisite softness by the deep pathos of his words, — arousing the delicate, womanly sensibility which formed a large part of his hidden character, — that you neither saw nor heard the every-day man. In person he was just above the middle height, strong, and well made. His eyes were blue; the lids hung mournfully over them, giving them that peculiarly melancholy appearance which has often been ascribed to those who are destined to a violent death. When he was excited and in good spirits this expression would disappear, and his eyes would dance with glee. He had led a wandering life in New York before I knew him, and his carelessness in worldly matters had alienated the good opinion of persons who would gladly have been his friends. Before he went on what proved his death-trip to General Lander, he promised that on his return he would settle down with me, and devote himself to the production of something in literature that might live. He had “a great work,” he said, prepared in his mind, which he had “thought out through years of thinking,” and this he would write when his soldiering was over.

There was an exceedingly humorous side to O'Brien's character, — his Celtic alacrity for combat being not the least comic of his peculiarities. Donald McLeod, author of “Pynnshurst,” was once O'Brien's comrade, and they slept in the same bed. One night, just after they had retired, a fierce discussion arose between them with reference to Scotch and Irish nationality, and O'Brien uttered opinions which his Scotch companion could not brook. “I'll not allow this,” cried McLeod. “Do as

you please about that," said O'Brien. "I'll demand satisfaction, sir!" roared McLeod. "Very well," answered Fitz-James, — equally enraged and belligerent; and pulling the blanket well over himself, — "very well, sir; you know where to find me in the morning." This last explosion, though intended in deadly sincerity, had the effect of turning the quarrel to laughter, and so made an end of it.

O'Brien, at one time, began to collect his scattered writings, with a view to their publication in a volume; and he made a title-page and a list of pieces. He liked his story of "The Golden Ingot" and his unfinished ballad of "Amy Scudder." I have seen two plays of his in manuscript, entitled "The Two Ophelias," and "Blood will Tell." He was proficient in the French language, and, in particular, he habitually read every French play that appeared. His learning, with reference to many subjects, seemed ample and minute, and when he chose to speak of literary affairs he enthralled the listener with his eloquence. There was great sweetness in his nature, and under happier circumstances his life, I think, would have been free from those asperities and blemishes which caused him to be much censured. He was a devoted patriot, and he went into the war with ardent zeal. When he was leaving New York to join General Lander, we dined together, and parted for the last time. "I can say nothing to you," he said, "but you know where my heart is." I did, — and it was in the right place.

He died at the home of Mr. George A. Thurston, at Cumberland, Maryland, April 6th, 1862, — seven weeks after he received his death-wound in battle. He bore his illness well and met his death with fortitude. Mr. Thurston, from whom he received every kindness, wrote to me,



O'BRIEN RECRUITING.

From a Caricature by Mullen in "Vanity Fair."

April 1st, as follows : "Mr. O'Brien was this morning seized with tetanus, and, though so far the symptoms are mild, he yet is so reduced physically by his long illness and the painful character of his wound that we have cause to fear he cannot recover. He is aware of his danger, and meets it in the most manly way ; indeed he has never been hopeful from the first. I write to his mother to-day, advising her of his danger, and the causes which led to it, and I think this should have been done long since. But he was so averse to her knowing anything of the trouble that he would neither write himself nor permit any one to write for him." A little later Mr. Thurston wrote again, announcing the end : "We did all in our power for the poor fellow, and in fact I may say we were fortunate enough to give him everything that he desired or his surgeons suggested." I was on my way to him when he died, and I brought home his remains from Baltimore. This leaf is all I can add to the garland you are weaving for our departed friend.

Very sincerely yours,

THOMAS E. DAVIS.

NO. 82 NASSAU STREET, NEW YORK,
October 22d, 1880.

O'BRIEN AS POET AND SOLDIER.*



It is with a heart heavy laden that I sit down to write of the friend who is gone. The feeling that one whom we have loved will never look upon us in life again seldom comes save when the last mournful tributes to the departed have been paid, and the door of the charnel-house is closed forever upon him. And especially is

* This tribute to O'Brien was first published in the *New York Leader*, April 12th, 1862, having been written for that paper by its author, who had been appointed one of the poet's literary executors, and who, had he lived, would have fulfilled, with all his heart, the task that has been attempted by me in this volume. Frank Wood died, in 1864, at the age of twenty-three years. His career as a writer began in Bellew's *Picayune*, and in the publications of Frank Leslie. He subsequently became the first editor of *Vanity Fair*, and one of the contributors to the *Saturday Press*; and he wrote in the *Leader* a series of sketches of the pulpit orators of New York. At a later period, and just before South Carolina revolted against the Union, he resided at Charleston, as correspondent for the *World*. On his return he delivered a lecture, entitled "Down South in Secession Times," and he edited a daily paper in Brooklyn. Still later he wrote theatrical notices for the *Illustrated News*, and during about six months occupied the position of night editor of the *Journal of Commerce*. For a time also he was a dramatic critic for the *Spirit of the Times*. Nor did he confine his labors exclusively to journalism. He was the translator of Michelet's "L'Amour." His burlesque of "Leah the Forsook"

this so in the case of O'Brien. He was such a *live* man that it is hard to think of him as dead. We who were his friends could scarcely realize, at first, that the bright and genial nature had been blotted out of existence, and we would not see the dark shadow that had crept in where before the sunshine fell. The truth comes to us now with a double bitterness. The cheerful face, the good, kind heart, the brilliant wit that was a part of him, have all gone from us, never to return.

The biography of our friend cannot be fully written now, and I reserve the honorable task for a future day, purposing here to give the merest outline of his literary career and pass to the military experiences which marked the last year of his life.

Fitz-James O'Brien was born in Ireland, in the year 1830.* His family was one of the highest in the land.

is remembered as a clever piece of its kind. He wrote also a burlesque called "The Statue Bride," and he was one of the adapters of "Taming a Butterfly." As a writer, he was clear, vigorous, often humorous, always manly and truthful. As a man, he met frankness with frankness, and did his duty faithfully, and gained true friends who do not forget him. He was taken away in the spring-time of his life, and the promise of his young days is therefore a tender memory. His name is added to those of other vanished comrades, — Symonds, Wilkins, O'Brien, Neill, and the rest, — not to be spoken without a sigh of regret. His death took place at Haverstraw, Rockland County, New York, and his grave is at Auburn, where he was born.

"Like clouds that rake the mountain summits,
Or waves that own no curbing hand,
How fast has brother followed brother,
From sunshine to the sunless land!" — ED.

* This would make him but thirty-two when he died. The general impression in our circle was that he was older. I do not know whether Wood had positive authority for this date. He was

Fitz-James was a cousin of the present Lord Fermoy, and was also related to the distinguished Irish patriot, Smith O'Brien. The boy never had brothers or sisters, and was left a half-orphan, when about twelve years of age, by the death of his father. After a considerable

somewhat mistaken, according to my information, with reference to O'Brien's family and early life, and first attempts in literature. The statement that the poet was related to Smith O'Brien, the Irish agitator, was first published by the late Charles F. Briggs, in the *New York Times*, and it was coupled with the equally erroneous assertion that Fitz-James was heir to the title and estate of Lord Inchiquin, Smith O'Brien's brother. When Smith O'Brien was in New York, Fitz-James did not call on him; and, as I am informed by Mr. Bellevue, that visitor stated, in answer to a direct inquiry, that Fitz-James was not in any way related to him. The fact is, I believe, that this was a hoax; and it may have been invented by O'Brien's satirist, Mr. William North, author of "The Man of the World," etc., who lampooned him under the name of Fitz-Gammon O'Bouncer. Or it may have originated with Mr. Briggs himself, who disliked O'Brien with all that cordiality of sentiment of which he was so capable. O'Brien's title of "Baron Inchiquin," I remember, was a joke among his acquaintances. I never heard him speak of the subject. There is a story that, when on his death-bed, he received a costly jewel labelled, "From the Baroness of Inchiquin." It was no doubt part of the same folly. Mr. Briggs said, in the presence of Dr. Mackenzie, that O'Brien, in conversation with him, had claimed to have been an officer in the Guards. This, I surmise, was either a misunderstanding on the part of Mr. Briggs, or a bit of serious waggery on the part of O'Brien, who liked to amuse himself by ascertaining how much certain solemn persons would believe. Thus, on one occasion, at table in the Manhattan Club, when the overwhelming Count Gurowski was shouting forth his knowledge of court etiquette, O'Brien dissented from that nobleman's views, and was promptly challenged for his authority by the growling and spluttering diplomatist. To this he replied, with entire gravity, "I was for several months a resident at the Court of St. James, as maid of honor to the Queen." — Nor was O'Brien related to Lord Fermoy. — ED.

time his mother married again, and became Mrs. De Courcy O'Grady.

In the fulness of time Fitz-James was sent to Trinity College, Dublin, where he acquired that solid education that served him in such good stead afterwards. Shortly after his graduation he came to New York, where he made his first essay in literature, in the shape of an article for the *Lantern*, a comic journal edited by John Brougham. Brougham saw that O'Brien was a valuable man to have on the *Lantern* staff, and the young author, before he had time to recover from the surprise his success caused him, was engaged as a regular contributor to the paper. When the *Lantern* expired, O'Brien was tendered a position as editorial writer on the *Times*, by Mr. Raymond, who appreciated his genius from the first. While connected with the *Times* O'Brien wrote for the various periodicals of the day, — *Harper's Magazine*, *Putnam's Monthly*, etc., — contributing to them some of his finest tales and poems. In the *Atlantic Monthly*, during the first year of its existence, he published his marvellous story, "The Diamond Lens," which holds its place now in literature (and ever will), as one of the most extraordinary creations of imagination. He was more constant in his contributions to *Harper's Magazine* than to any other periodical, and wrote for it, during the year past, the finest poems (with one exception) that have been written relative to the present war. I need only refer to the titles of some of these, such as "The Counter-sign," "A Soldier's Letter," and "The Prisoner of War," to bring every one to my opinion in this matter. O'Brien's ready wit and large sense of humor also found a field in the columns of *Vanity Fair*, and the last article he ever wrote was printed in that paper.

It was with a presentiment as to the turn secession would take, that, in January, 1861, O'Brien joined the New York Seventh Regiment. Three months later he marched off in its ranks to the defence of Washington, and, on arriving there, wrote the most graphic narrative of that memorable expedition extant. When the month for which they volunteered had expired, it will be remembered, there was a division of sentiment in the regiment, as to the question of coming home. O'Brien was very decidedly among those who desired to stay, but other counsels prevailed, and the Seventh came back to New York. Rendered, as it were, more thirsty than ever by this sip from the cup of martial life, O'Brien, immediately on his return, interested himself, with some of his comrades, in the formation of a volunteer regiment, in which he himself was to hold the post of Captain. But at this time the people's first patriotic spasm had passed, the Union army seemed to have as many men as was necessary, and recruits to the new regiment came in but slowly. The enterprise languished, and O'Brien left the regiment to join another which promised better, but which was in its turn abandoned. In this manner the summer and part of the fall were passed. All this time O'Brien was chafing like a caged eagle. Sick, finally, of these vexatious delays, and impatient for active service in the field, he gave up all idea of going with a complete regiment to the war, and went to Washington to get, if possible, a position on some general's staff. In this he was at first unsuccessful. He now returned to New York as disconsolate as it was possible for one of his sunny nature to be. At last, in January of the present year (1862), a summons came from General Lander containing the much desired appoint-

ment. O'Brien was instantly lifted from the depths of melancholy to the acme of joy. The next day he set out for Lander's department, happy and joyful, and after many tribulations and difficulties succeeded in reaching his command. O'Brien's dashing energy and brilliant soldierly qualities soon endeared him to the General, whose death a nation has since mourned.

At the battle of Bloomery Gap he rendered Lander a valuable assistance. In the intention of surprising the enemy, Lander moved seven regiments and five hundred cavalry on the Gap, about fourteen miles from his own camp, during the night. They arrived on the ground at five o'clock the next morning, but for some hours there was no sign of the rebels. Every one was in despair, when an action began in the rear of the column. Lander jumped upon his horse, O'Brien did the same, and the two rode off like the wind toward the scene of battle. As they flew down the road, an ambuscade on the left opened on them, when the General immediately dashed up a hill, calling for some sixty cavalry to follow him. Through fear or from a misapprehension of the order only two obeyed. Lander, O'Brien, and these two men charged up the hill, in the face of a deadly rifle fire, and cut the ambuscade off. The General captured the rebel Colonel Baldwin, while Captain Baird, Assistant Adjutant-General of the Sixteenth Brigade, and attached to General Carson's staff, with eight others, surrendered to O'Brien, who kept the Captain's sword and accoutrements as trophies. The general engagement lasted about an hour, and resulted in the capture of sixty-one prisoners, seventeen of whom were officers. For the bravery displayed in this affair, General Lander made special and honorable mention.

of Lieutenant O'Brien in his despatch to General McClellan.

Two days after this, on the 16th of February, O'Brien was sent out at four o'clock in the morning, with a cavalry company, to capture a hundred head of cattle belonging to the secessionists. The expedition resulted in a skirmish with the enemy, in which O'Brien's little force of thirty-five cavalry was pitted against one hundred and fifty rebel infantry and sixty of Jackson's regular cavalry. The enemy fell upon our advance from behind a bluff, and the advance came galloping back to the main body, after having fired a few random shots. Nothing daunted by the enemy's superiority in numbers, our young lieutenant immediately charged upon them with his men, who were a little irresolute, as there was a cross-fire from the hillside, in addition to the cavalry fire from the road. As they rode forward, the rebel officer held up his hand and cried, "Halt! who are you?" O'Brien shouted back in reply, "Union soldiers!" and fired at him. This was the signal for a general engagement. The rebels could easily have captured so small a party; but O'Brien's onslaught was so audacious that they thought he must have reserves somewhere. As it was, our side came off unharmed (with one exception), having killed two of the enemy, and wounded four.

The exception was O'Brien. His encounter with the rebel colonel, Ashley, was a regular duel. They were about twenty paces asunder, and fired, with great deliberation, three shots; O'Brien was hit by the second shot, and his men aver that he killed Ashley with his last, as that officer fell when he fired. The ball passed completely through O'Brien's left shoulder, splintering his scapular bone. Although wounded he still continued to

rally his men, until a subordinate officer, seeing him reeling in his saddle from loss of blood, got him to the rear, after which he brought our men off. In a state of weakness and agony, O'Brien was now obliged to ride twenty-four miles, but he passed through the ordeal like a hero. His gratification may be conceived when, the next day, there came the following despatch from General McClellan : —

“GENERAL LANDER, — Please say to Lieutenant O'Brien that I am much pleased with his gallantry, and deeply pained to hear of his wound. I trust he will soon be well enough to give the cause the benefit of his services again.

GEORGE B. MCCLELLAN.”

The surgeon who took charge of O'Brien at first did not consider the wound a dangerous one, and the poor fellow wrote to his friends here about it in the most cheerful strain, saying he should be able to come to New York in twenty days at the outside. But the twenty days passed, and he did not come. Still the letters were as cheerful as ever, and no one apprehended evil from the delay. On Friday, the 4th of April, Mr. Thomas E. Davis received the first news of the alarming change that had taken place, in a pencil scribble from O'Brien himself. On the same day came a more despondent letter from Mr. George A. Thurston, of Cumberland, Maryland, the gentleman at whose house O'Brien lay through his long illness. It seems that the first surgeon (named Maccabe) had wholly mistaken the character of his patient's wound. On the 20th of March, a surgeon of ability took O'Brien's case in hand, and on examination found that the joint of the arm at the shoulder had been smashed into a hundred fragments. A resection

of the joint, one of the most difficult and dangerous operations in surgery, was the only resource. In his letter (to Mr. Davis) O'Brien says:—

“I gave up the ghost, and told him to go ahead. There were about twelve surgeons to witness the operation. All my shoulder bone and a portion of my upper arm have been taken away. I nearly died. My breath ceased, heart ceased to beat, pulse stopped. However, I got through. I am not yet out of danger from the operation, but a worse disease has set in. I have got tetanus, or lock-jaw. There is a chance of my getting out of it, — that's all. In case I don't, good-by, old fellow, with all my love. I don't want to make any legal document, but I desire that you and Frank Wood should be my literary executors, — because after I'm dead I may turn out a bigger man than when living.* I'd write more if I could, but I'm very weak. Write to me. I may be alive. Also, get Wood to write.”

On the day after the receipt of this intelligence, Mr. Davis and I started in an early morning train for Cumberland. Arrived at Baltimore, we learned to our dismay that no train would leave for Cumberland within the next twenty-four hours. We immediately telegraphed to Mr. Thurston, who answered: “O'Brien is very low. He is glad you are coming.”

The next morning, Sunday, (as we afterwards learned from Drs. Folsom and MacMahon, the surgeons who were with him at the last,) O'Brien felt a little better than

* This calls to mind the bitter words of Walter Savage Landor, in his “Examination of Shakespeare”:—“The worms must have eaten us before it is rightly shown what we are. It is only when we are skeletons that we are boxed, and ticketed, and prized, and shown.” — ED.

usual, and, being helped up, sat for a time on the side of his bed. Dr. MacMahon asked him if he would take a glass of sherry. O'Brien said, "Yes." While slowly sipping the sherry he turned pale and fell back. The doctors immediately dashed cologne-water in his face, and began to fan him. But it was too late. His features were set in death.

So died, at the threshold of his career, a true poet and a brave soldier, — a man of such a kindly and charming nature that he was beloved even by his enemies. God grant that the tidings be taken tenderly to the lone mother, looking anxiously, even at this moment mayhap, for the bright words that nevermore will come to her from her only boy, in the country beyond the sea!

FRANK WOOD.



O'BRIEN'S PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS.

[From the *New-York Citizen*, September 30, 1865.]

JOURNALIST AND POET.

AMONG the men of talent and *esprit* whom it was my good fortune to meet at the long table in Pfaff's dingy cellar — hardly less known now than that of Auerbach — were two who, to my judgment, represented their classes perfectly; the one being a typical Journalist, of the elegant and successful kind; the other being an equally typical Poet.

I speak of E. G. P. WILKINS and FITZ-JAMES O'BRIEN.

The former, in the winter of 1860–61, when he came to Pfaff's for his *café noir*, — before going his usual rounds of the theatres, or later in the evening, — was a tall, thin young man, with stooping shoulders, and a strikingly handsome face. His complexion was light; his eyes were intensely blue and expressive, sometimes earnestly thoughtful, sometimes gentle and abstracted, sometimes twinkling with plenitude of merriment. His features were sharply cut, and thorough-bred in mould; his skin, clear and delicate; his hair, which he parted nearly in the middle of a high forehead, was lustrous and wavy; and his mouth was partly concealed by a well-grown and becoming mustache, golden brown in color, and remarkably fine in texture. His hands were long, thin, and delicate as a girl's. His dress was always unexceptionable, no matter what the occasion or the season, though his

preference was generally for loose, rough, easy styles, which became him wonderfully.

All his appointments and surroundings were tasteful and plentiful. He was not a man to go without the things he wanted. If he asked you to his rooms, his decanters never turned up unexpectedly empty. If he was suddenly called upon to go out in the evening, he was never without suitable trappings for the occasion. In a word, he was never at fault for the minor elegances and hospitalities of life, and his forethought and supervision in these matters should preserve his memory from the imputation of "Bohemianism."

Fitz-James O'Brien was cast in a different mould. He was shorter than Wilkins, and far more muscular, being, indeed, a gymnast of some ability, and a firm disciple of the church of St. Biceps. His complexion was florid; his eyes dark blue, with a marvellously winning expression; his chin very small, and his mouth entirely covered by a heavy, brown, cavalry mustache. His hair, which was darker than that of Wilkins, was so fine as to appear thin.

There was more life, more vigor, more animal spirit and manliness, in this face, than in the one I have first described; but it was not so high-bred and gentle, nor, to my taste, so refinedly handsome. Still, Fitz-James O'Brien would have passed anywhere for a fine-looking man, as he certainly was.

In one personal peculiarity he had a great advantage, not only over Ned Wilkins, but over almost all other men I ever knew. His voice, in speaking, was the richest, the sweetest, the most persuasive and expressive, of all the male voices I can now recall. It was a power in itself. I shall never forget the impression he made upon a little party,

one evening, by the manner in which he read several of Emerson's poems. He threw so much warmth, so much human tenderness and sympathy into them, that we were all astonished. Then, artfully turning the leaves, as if still reading from the book, he recited his own "Bacchus":—

"Pink as the rose was his skin so fair,
Round as the rosebud his perfect shape,
And there lay a light in his tawny hair,
Like the sun in the heart of a bursting grape!"

You can fancy how we marvelled to hear such luscious tropes from Emerson, and how we laughed over the deception when O'Brien informed us of it.

Wilkins was an indefatigable worker. The sun never set without having shone upon something accomplished by him. The dramatic and musical articles, and a variety of short, sprightly, sometimes sharp, and often humorous editorials in the *Herald*, were from his pen.

Besides these, he wrote a dashing, humorous, highly original—and to the managers often exasperating—dramatic feuilleton for a weekly paper, and was the New York correspondent for several American and foreign journals.

It will be readily imagined that so much occupation left him but little leisure. Yet nobody ever saw him in a hurry, or with the air of being pressed by business. He always had plenty of time to chat, to take a glass of something social, to join in any merry-making, to romp with his sister's children,—to whom he was greatly attached,—and to amuse himself in a hundred ways; but the work was invariably done, and done well, without slight or slovenliness.

It was, indeed, one of his harmless and pleasant affec-

tations — and he had many — to let nobody know when he worked; to appear not to work at all, but to accomplish much, notwithstanding. Perhaps a habit of his, which was not very widely known, might explain something of his apparent leisure. He rose at six in the morning, and wrote till breakfast-time, — between nine and ten. With the product of this healthy, fresh, early-morning labor in his pocket, he could breakfast with elegant idleness, and saunter down town as if time-killing were his only object in life. In the *Herald* office he usually wrote something more, and returned home to dine at dusk, with nothing to think of until the theatres opened, when he went about from one to the other, wherever there was anything new going on, making mental notes for the amusement paragraphs which he usually wrote immediately on going home, and sent to the paper by a messenger.

O'Brien's methods of working were in no wise so systematic as this. Poets are erratic by nature, and none more so than he was. He often let days and weeks pass without putting a line on paper. Then, when the inspiration came, he wrote steadily and easily on to the end, often without interruption. He was not known, however, to rise at six o'clock in the morning. On the contrary, he was inordinately fond of his bed, sleeping ten, twelve, and fifteen hours on a stretch. One or two o'clock in the afternoon was a common hour for his appearance for breakfast, and nearly all his work was done between that time and dark.

Undoubtedly his habits of labor would have been much more regular if he had lived an orderly and methodical life, with surroundings accumulated by the instinct of comfort, — an instinct as much inborn as an ear for music

or an eye for color. But poor Fitz lacked this. He loved luxuries but could not acquire them. Left to himself, he became instantly reduced to a half-furnished bedroom in some dingy hotel, a solitary suit of clothing, and — nothing else. He was frequently without a pen, a bottle of ink, a sheet of paper, or money enough to purchase either, — a condition of things not highly favorable to the entertainment of the Muses.

When I first knew him, in '56, '57, he had elegant rooms, with a large and valuable library, piles of manuscripts, dressing-cases, decanters, pipes, pictures, a wardrobe of much splendor, and all sorts of knickknackery such as young bachelors love to collect. These properties were subsequently left, a melancholy trail, among the lodging-houses in which he lived, — or rather through which he passed, — for the partial indemnification of the disappointed keepers thereof.

I do not think that Fitz ever incurred a debt in his life without feeling perfectly sure of its immediate payment. But, somehow, when he had the money, he had also so many other uses for it that the debt was crowded over "till next time." Meanwhile he came to be afflicted with a certain curious fear of his creditor, that increased with every day of credit, until meeting him voluntarily was far beyond Fitz's strength of mind; so the debt went forever uncanceled. This was hardly criminal, save in the strictest dry-goods point of view; but it was exceedingly unfortunate for O'Brien — and for others.

All these petty considerations, however, sink into nothingness when we read a poem like the ode to Kane, or a romance like "The Diamond Lens." Let it be recorded, in passing, that all the stories about O'Brien's stealing the plot of this wonderful tale from one of the late William

North's manuscripts are utterly and ridiculously false. North had not brain enough, and has nowhere indicated the possession of half enough, to have conceived such a work. It is like saying that Tennyson borrows inspiration from Tupper.*

Ned Wilkins left no work which will live beyond the memory of his personal friends. His feuilletons, before mentioned, were very clever, and upon these rests the best part of his strictly literary reputation. The *Herald* files bear abundant testimony to his powers as a journalist.

His death seemed, when it came, like some great mistake. Everybody exclaimed, "No, not Wilkins!" when they heard of it. It did not seem possible. I passed a delightful evening with him, two weeks before. We went to Niblo's, to laugh at Forrest's *Metamora*, — and found plenty to laugh at, — after which I accompanied him to his rooms, where we talked about literature — French especially, and Montaigne, one of his prime favorites — until the small hours began to grow. A few days later, I heard he was ill, but of nothing serious. A week after, I was in the house, and went up to his chamber with a wild and untamable friend of his, to give him a rouse.

* O'Brien's story of "The Diamond Lens" was, in fact, prompted by a suggestion made to him by Bellew, the artist, or by Dr. A. L. Carroll, respecting the wonders concealed in a drop of water. There is a superb passage on this subject somewhere in the works of Edward Everett. "The Diamond Lens" first appeared in January, 1858, in the *Atlantic Monthly*. William North was not then living, — he having committed suicide, at No. 7 Bond Street, New York, on November 13th, 1854. North was the author of a story entitled "Microcosmos," which may have related to a topic kindred with that of "The Diamond Lens," and which was lost by a publisher in Philadelphia. The known writings of North, as Arnold suggests, indicate neither the force nor the quality of imagination

He was in bed, and sleepy; but laughed as he said, "There, good night, — shut the door *behind you*," — in token of his willingness to be left alone.

Two days later I saw him in the street with William Stuart, the manager, and was pained to see how like an old man he walked. This was Tuesday or Wednesday. On the Sunday following Will Winter came to my rooms, pale, haggard, hollow-eyed, and told me with a gasp that Ned Wilkins was dead!

He was just on the threshold. His position was just assured and ripening. He was just coming into a handsome income from his manifold labors. He had just established a happy home, with the family of a deceased brother. Everything smiled upon him, and fortune was turning her wheel in his behalf, when — poof! — the candle is out!

Not so with Fitz-James O'Brien. He was, I think, of exactly the same age, but he had lived more. He had gained experience in London, where he dissipated his patrimony and underwent a grand passion. He was a sort of poet before Ned dreamed of writing anything.

O'Brien has left enough poems to make a volume or two of rare excellence.

needful to produce such a work as "The Diamond Lens"; whereas O'Brien's writings abound with the same powers and attributes that are shown in this particular tale. North and O'Brien were once friends, but they parted in enmity; and this foolish imputation of plagiarism, to which Arnold refers, was subsequently cast upon O'Brien by some obscure adherent of North's. It never had the least foundation in truth. But O'Brien was too brilliant a mind, and wrote too well, to escape the hostility of envy and the pursuit of detraction. — North's principal work, "The Man of the World," in which O'Brien is satirized as O'Bouncer, was originally named "The Slave of the Lamp." — ED.

His death was tragic. He was on the staff of General Lander, and he went out with forty men to forage one day, near Bloomery Gap. Meeting a force of Confederates, Fitz ordered a charge, as a matter of course; he never knew what physical fear was. Unhappily the enemy outnumbered him largely, and his charge was of no use. A skirmish ensued, and in it Fitz met the Confederate officer in command, face to face, in the road. A regular duel with revolvers ensued. At the second shot O'Brien's shoulder was fractured, the ball entering near the elbow and glancing up the humerus bone. This, however, did not spoil his eye, and with another shot he knocked his opponent out of the saddle.

The best of treatment, in a private family, at Cumberland, only alleviated his lingering tortures, and he died, within seven weeks, in terrible agony, lockjaw having threatened him almost from the first. During his illness he managed to write two or three fine poems and some charming letters.

I think a larger number of persons mourned for O'Brien than for Wilkins; for all his many readers missed him, and sorrowed thereat. But there was a deeper grief in St. Thomas's Church, on that mournful rainy afternoon, among those who gathered about the beautiful presence of what was once Ned Wilkins, than often falls to the lot of any of us, be we journalists, poets, or simple "lookers-on in Vienna." *

GEORGE ARNOLD.

* St. Thomas's Church stood at the northwest corner of Broadway and Houston Street, New York. It was torn down long ago.—Ed.

O'BRIEN'S BOHEMIAN DAYS.



MY DEAR WINTER :—Your letter revives many pleasant recollections. As I read it, FITZ-JAMES O'BRIEN stands before me, and I see his stout, athletic figure, his broad, ruddy Irish face, his characteristic suit of that check-pattern supposed to be monopolized by British tourists in French farces. He used to call it his "banking" suit ; and, indeed, in those merry Bohemian days, the checks he wore were the only ones we knew.

O'Brien had not only the figure but the training of an athlete, and I remember that, before the war turned the attention of our young men to athletics, his skill was considered wonderful. He was an admirable swordsman, and had served in the English army, although he was always reticent as to his history. I have seen several instances of his skill with the pistol. Once we were to dine with a friend in chambers, and sat in a front room waiting for dinner. Over the table, in the back room, was suspended from the chandelier one of those little card-board ornaments, three-sided, with a tiny ball of worsted hanging from each of the corners. The conversation turned upon William Tell, and, to illustrate the feasibility of Tell's feat with the apple, Fitz-James, without rising from his chair, drew a revolver from his pocket and shot off the three tiny balls swinging from the

chandelier ornament, — one, two, three, as quickly as I could give the word.

Just then a waiter entered with a plate of birds for dinner. "Ha!" cried O'Brien, "now we can have some real shooting. Let fly a bird, waiter!" — "But, sir," stammered the waiter, "the birds are fried!" — "Fried!" shouted O'Brien, with a voice that rang through the house, "then let me shoot the cook! A cook who would fry birds deserves death! The cook! Tell him to come up and be killed instantly!"

The idea of suicide was often in O'Brien's mind. I recall a night at Pfaff's when the matter was seriously discussed. Just at that period death was very dear to all of us. You had written your dark poem of "Orgia." George Arnold was meditating gloomy verses. Poor Shepherd, hanging crape upon his usual genial mood, was confiding to Pfaff his fondness for the tomb. Harry Clapp,* always cynical, declared that his feeling in regard

* N. G. Shepherd and Henry Clapp, Jr. were casual and not intimate associates of O'Brien. The former was a most amiable man, and a charming writer, whether in verse or prose. The latter was one of the most sparkling cynical wits that have ever worked on the American press. Clapp was born, Nov. 11th, 1814, at Nantucket, Mass., and in early life he distinguished himself both as a writer and an orator for the temperance cause and for the abolition of slavery. On October 23d, 1858, he started the *New York Saturday Press*, with T. B. Aldrich as assistant editor, and O'Brien as dramatic reviewer. Aldrich and O'Brien retired from the paper in January, 1859, and in December, 1860, it was discontinued. Several years later Clapp revived it, — stating that it had been suspended for want of means, and was now started again for the same reason. The favorite signature of this caustic satirist was "Figaro." He led a restless, unhappy, and, toward the last, a very wretched and pitiable life, and he died in extreme penury — aged sixty-one — on the 2d of April, 1875. His name, at the time, was bandied about in

to death was one of "consuming, intolerable curiosity." "That," said O'Brien, "is my feeling exactly, and I intend to satisfy my curiosity without waiting for the slow decay of nature. Doubtless the 'consuming' may come afterwards; but of that we must take the chances. With such a fascinating problem as that of death before us, I cannot imagine how anybody can be satisfied to go on with the monotonous stupidity of living."

O'Brien's talk was often crisply epigrammatic. He was not a punster: the wit of his remarks was in the idea and the nice arrangement of words; the humor was subtle and as bright as sunshine; not the broad Irish wit and humor of smart sayings and sudden repartee, but quaint, peculiar, pervading the thought as well as the expression of the thought. After he had been shot, in the war, and when he was on his death-bed, he wrote a letter, which I have unfortunately lost, relative to the spring fashion openings, of which the papers were then

a thoroughly inhuman and disgraceful manner by many journalists in this country, who, while he lived, were never his equals either in ability or any virtue. His grave is beside that of his mother, at Nantucket. His epitaph was written, as follows, by the editor of this volume:—

H. C.

Wit stops to grieve and laughter stops to sigh
 That so much wit and laughter e'er could die;
 But pity, conscious of its anguish past,
 Is glad this tortured spirit rests at last.
 His purpose, thought, and goodness ran to waste;
 He made a happiness he could not taste;
 Mirth could not help him, talent could not save;
 Through cloud and storm he drifted to the grave.
 Ah, give his memory — who made the cheer,
 And gave so many smiles — a single tear! — ED.

full, and he described the trees, flowers, and hospital life in the terms employed by the fashion-writers, — using them so aptly and so daintily that they seemed absolutely poetical, and the reader wondered why nature should not have been always depicted in the *patois* of the *modiste* and the colors of the fashion-plate. Yet this letter, as carefully written as if it were intended for publication, was thrown off in a painful hour, to amuse and reassure an anxious friend. But O'Brien could write nothing carelessly. His diamonds were all polished and faceted. He never seemed to find them in the rough, although he drew them from an apparently inexhaustible mine.

He spoke guardedly to me of an attachment in the old country, that had marred his life. "Passion I can feel," he said; "but never again shall I know what it is to love. A man who once really loves can love but once. I have loved one woman; for all other women my heart is dead; but my passions, which have no heart in them, are as strong as lions, and they tear me like lions." It was the old story, — trite enough to be almost ludicrous.

O'Brien, like most of his comrades of that brilliant coterie we knew and loved, died too soon for his fame. His writings were exquisite, but they are forgotten except by the select few who collect and prize such literary gems. The war interposes between his fame and the present generation, like a new deluge. The clear, sweet, strong voice of his poetry was drowned by the clash of resounding arms. Even as a soldier of the Union he fell too soon; for his memory is obscured by the holocausts of later but not more noble sacrifices. To recall him and his works is like discovering a genius who lived before the flood, and was overwhelmed by the waves upon which

the dumb beasts that voyaged with Noah rode safely to Mount Ararat and celebrity. How many other great and glowing souls were quenched, like O'Brien's, by the war that drowned out the old era and gave us a new America! To you, — preserved like the dove in the ark of life, — I rejoice that the task has come of revivifying one of the genial and gracious names that were lost beneath the waters of the Lethe of 1861.

Yours faithfully,

STEPHEN FISKE.

NEW YORK, October 8th, 1880.



O'BRIEN AS JOURNALIST AND SOLDIER.



MY DEAR WINTER :— It is questionable whether I can contribute anything in relation to FITZ-JAMES O'BRIEN beyond that which is already known to you. After the lapse of eighteen years, my reminiscences of him are, I fear, too general to be of interest.

Coming to *Vanity Fair*, some five months after the date of its first publication, my early impressions of him, derived mainly from others, were—to speak frankly—not of a kind to attract me toward him; yet, as I look back upon my acquaintance with him, the retrospect recalls no act of his during the continuance of our friendly relations—which ended only with his death—that should lead me to speak unkindly of him now. Without reference to the loss that literature sustained in his death, I felt a keen sorrow at his sudden “taking-off,” for there was a strain of manliness underlying his erratic habits of life that always had a charm for me, and a claim upon my warmest sympathies. There is, perhaps, something that may well be left unsaid; but, as that is true, in a greater or less degree, of all of us, the reflection may go for what it is worth, with those who care to dwell upon it, and whose freedom from human frailty gives them a charter to censure other men.

The personality of O'Brien presents itself clearly before me now, and I can almost see him as he was then, when

his strong, well-knit frame and exuberant and rejoicing vigor bade fair to outlast the lives of all his associates.

It was a custom, in the early days of *Vanity Fair*, in the old editorial rooms at No. 113 Nassau Street, New York, for the writers and artists who were then associated with it to assemble every Friday afternoon, and, over a glass of wine and a cigar, submit and discuss suggestions for subjects for the next issue. On these occasions O'Brien's arrival was always the signal for an outburst of welcome, and our interest immediately centred in the newcomer. His personal magnetism and bright intelligence brought him at once to the front; for, in the friendly encounter of wit and humor, O'Brien — always self-reliant, brilliant, well-tempered, apt at repartee, and piquant with a jovial aggressiveness — imparted new vitality to the little circle, and made lively work for all about him. Amid the laughter, buzz and hum of voices, and the quick interchange of quip and jest, — to which he invariably contributed his full share, — he would take his place at the table, and turn off paragraphs, writing off-hand and rapidly, (how well it is needless for me to say,) upon almost any subject that presented itself.

Excellent traits in his character were his freedom from envy and his prompt recognition of ability in others, which no personal differences could induce him to dispute; and when his judgment was asked among his literary friends, which was not infrequently the case, his advice was kindly and conscientiously given. Careless, as he certainly was, of the opinions of others regarding his actions, he was keenly sensitive to the spirit of unfairness which prompted attacks upon him in certain journals, as to matters so entirely personal as to possess no interest for the public. Never shrinking from any

responsibility for his acts, and despising an ambushed attack, he was a fearless, open enemy, physically and intellectually equipped for defence, and always in his "boots and spurs." His sympathies were naturally with the weaker side, and frequent and bitter were the satirical shafts he let fly at the heads of men occupying positions which, in his opinion, belonged of right to women. Looking to more ambitious work, he had selected the story of Samson as a subject for a drama, and, I think, had partly written it.

At the breaking out of the war, O'Brien, an uncompromising Union man, never failed to support with his pen the cause which he afterward aided with his sword. A love of adventure would have impelled such a man to the army; but every man who knew him knew that in joining the Union forces in the field he was prompted by love for his adopted country. After his experience at Camp Cameron with the New York Seventh Regiment, in which he served as a private soldier, he felt that the opportunity had come for him to redeem the time he had so carelessly used. He went to the front, determined to make a good record in his new profession. Cool, clear-headed, and full of fight, he had the elements for brilliant soldiership.

At this time he was much in my society, and I remember with what a sad earnestness he occasionally referred to the past, and how well and hopefully he dwelt upon the possibilities of the future. I have an abiding faith that he spoke then from the deepest promptings of his heart. He died young, — when his vigorous constitution gave hope of years of life before him, in which his better nature and unquestionable genius could have given to the world the best that was in him.

A few days before his death he wrote a singularly interesting letter to his friend Frank Wood, under circumstances in which a man has but little courage for correspondence. Written when he was dying, after a severe surgical operation performed when he was exhausted by long suffering from his wound, this letter impresses the reader with the marvellous self-control of a man — “a philosopher serene and cold,” to quote his own words — who could look death in the face, and composedly contemplate and analyze his own feelings and condition.

Surely his memory and his works have a claim upon the American people. He gave to our country all he could, — his life : let him who can give more ! While it may be regretted that the early promise of a man so capable was not entirely realized, the works that he has left are an earnest of the beautiful spirit that stirred within him : —

“ And, for his passage,
The soldier's music and the rites of war
Speak loudly for him.”

LOUIS H. STEPHENS.

PHILADELPHIA, August 3d, 1880.



POEMS.



"Making the hard way sweet and délectable."

SHAKESPEARE.





POEMS.

SIR BRASIL'S FALCON.

THE hunt was o'er. The last thin bugle-note
Had stole away among the friendly trees,
Declining gently on its weary way,
And dying in their arms. The exhausted hounds
Besmeared with wild-boar's blood lay down, and licked
Their sanguine coats ; or, growling, strove to scare
With lazy paw the floating globes of flies
That buzzed around them lured with scent of gore.
The horses, bridle-tethered to the trees,
With flanks thin drawn, where lay the hardened sweat
In glistening furrows, champed the cruel bit,
Or nibbled at the leaves. Beneath the shade
Of a great chestnut that obscured the sun
The hunters, gathered in a little group,
Talked of the chase ; and pleasant stories ran
Of perils, magnified with sportsman's boasts,
And huge leaps taken in the heat of chase.
Then hearty laughs at some green youth's mishap
Went round the circle like a jocund ring
Of sparkling merriment. The men were gay
In joyance of rude strength. Their eyes were bold ;
Their white teeth glistened through their nut-brown beards
Like foam-beads in dark ale. Their skins were tanned

By honest wind and sun, and every limb
Was large and fit for use. These men were rough
As prickly-pear or pomegranate, but they
Were ripe, and honest-fruited at the core.
Then in each pause a silver bowl went round,
Filled with red wine, and every hunter drank,
'Health to St. Hubert, our good patron saint !'
And passed the wine bowl on, until it came
To where Sir Brasil sat. And he outspoke,
'You know, my friends, I live not to drink wine,
Since that sad day when in the Holy Land
The Emir made me quaff my brother's blood
Disguised as wine. I cannot join your revel.
Pardon me, comrades, I will seek some stream,
Hid in the twilight of this leafy glade,
And drink your healths in a more homely draught.'
Then rose he 'mid good-natured jeers and smiles
At such faint-heartedness in belted knight,
And, yielding in return mock courtesies,
He leashed his favorite falcon to his wrist,
And, girding on his sword, straight took his way,
Along the silent glades.

There was no water
In all the summer woods. The insatiate sun
Had drunk all up, and robbed each secret spring,
Save the round beads of dew that nestling dwelt
Deep in the bottom of the foxglove's bells.
There was no water: Beds of vanished streams
Mocked him with memories of lucid waves,
That rose and fell before his fancy's eye
In glassy splendor. As the soothing wind
Stole softly o'er the leaves, it gave low tones,
That sounded in Sir Brasil's sharpened ear

Like distant riplings of a pleasant stream ;
But there was none. The umbered soil was dry,
And the hare rustled through parched, crisping grass.
Sir Brasil sighed : his brow was hot, — his tongue
Beat dry against his teeth. His upmost thought
Was water, — water, clear, and bright, and cool !
A storm-cock flew across the glade ; his beak
Was red with berries of the mountain ash,
That had lain hidden from the by-gone frost
Deep in some cranny of the gaping earth.
Then quoth Sir Brasil, ' I will follow him,
For I have heard that birds do fly to springs,
As sands of steel to magnets.' So he struck
A bee's line through the woods, and followed him.
Thick grew the brambles, for there was no path
For dainty feet ; but gnarled roots of oak
Pushed earth aside and twined in curving cords
Like snakes at play. Pale wild-flowers grew in crowds,
Like captive fays, o'er whom the giant trees
Kept watch and ward. Through the green canopy
That stretched o'erhead, stray, vagrant sunbeams stole,
Turning with fairy power the withered leaves
To evanescent gold. Lizards, with skins
Like lapis-lazuli, peeped, with glittering eyes
Between the crevices of mouldering trees.
The hum of bees 'round many a trunk foretold
The heavy honeycomb that lay within,
Concealed with cunning passages and doors
Of deftly-woven moss. The bright jay chattered,
And the bold robin gazed with mute surprise
On the strange shape whose daring seemed to make
The woods his own, while on Sir Brasil went,
Stumbling o'er roots, embraced by brambly arms,

And leaving fragments of his rich attire
Fluttering on thorny boughs, that many a day
Held in great awe the timid woodland birds.
The sun grew low. It was three hours beyond
The middle day, when, lo! Sir Brasil stepped
With hooded falcon leashed upon his wrist,
Cloak torn in shreds, and plume that hung awry,
Beyond the limit of the lonely wood,
And found himself upon the rugged brink
Of a dried water-course. It was a dank
And dismal place. The broad, misshapen trees
Were bare anatomies, with scarce a leaf
To clothe their withered bones. Huge, fleshy weeds
Grew in black groups along the ragged edge
Of a tall, beetling cliff, whose steep face sloped
With slabs of rock, adown whose pallid sides
The thin, white moss spread like a leprosy.
Along the base of this pale cliff there ran
The channel of some fitful winter stream
Long fled. The smooth, round pebbles paved
The empty bed, and all the secret rocks
Lay bare and dry. Some there were quaintly holed,
And eaten through by the soft, toothless waves,
And some were strangely carved, and smoothly hewn,
With watery chisels, into phantasm forms.
There was no stream. No limpid water went
With trickling step along the stony course.
The ousel had forsook the place, and sought
Another stream to dipple with its wings.
The heron stood no longer by the brink.
The azure of the halcyon flashed no more
From bank to bank. The tall brown-tufted reeds,
That sung so softly to the evening wind,

Had withered all, and lay in matted heaps
Upon the arid earth. Sir Brasil sighed,
"There is no water here, I am athirst.
O, I would give a broad piece for one drop
To cool my parching throat!" As said he this,
The sunlight flashed upon some glittering point
That shone like diamond. Hastening forward, he
Beheld from out the crevice of a rock
A sluggish flow, that trickled drop by drop,
Of dark, green water. So reluctantly
It oozéd through the fissure, that it seemed
Like the last lifeblood of a river-god
Ebbing in lingering drops from out his heart!
"My faith!" Sir Brasil said, "though not as clear
As wave of Castaly or Hippocrene,
Thou art right welcome, — for my throat is dry,
And I am faint with thirst; and thou, poor bird,
Shalt share my luck, and quaff this scanty spring."
So saying to the falcon on his wrist,
He loosed its leashes and unlaced its hood,
And let its bold eye gaze abroad again
Upon the sunny world. The joyous bird
Gave one far skyward glance; another swept
The wide horizon round, then preening all
His plumes, and ruffling them toward the sun,
He pecked the knight with a love-softened beak,
And nestled to his arm.

Then Brasil straight
Unloosed a silken belt from which there swung
A golden bugle. Taking it, he stopped
The jewelled mouthpiece with a plug of moss;
Then, stooping, held the inverted bell beneath
The slowly falling stream. With toil and pain

He gathered each slow drop, and watched them rise
By hair's-breadth after hair's-breadth, till he saw
The dear draught level with the golden rim ;
Then joyously he raised it to his lips,
And cried, " Here 's to thee, goddess of the stream !
Locked in the heart of this cold rock. Alone,
Forsaken by the fickle waves that made
The current of thy life, thou art most desolate,
And weep'st all day those trickling drops, which are
Thy tears. In them I pledge me to thy grief !"
But as he raised the golden bugle up
Toward his lips, the falcon with swift stroke
Of his long pinion dashed it from his hand,
And all the precious draught ran waste on earth.
Sir Brasil frowned. " How now, bold bird ?" he cried,
" Thou dost not know how toilsomely I filled
That scanty measure, or thou never wouldst
Have wasted it. Next time take better heed,
Or thou wilt rue it." Once again Sir Brasil
With weary hand and long delay filled up
The golden measure, and as he did raise
It to his lips, the falcon with one stroke
Of his swift pinion dashed it to the earth.
Sir Brasil swore, " Now by the sacred cup
Which Christ did drink of, I will wring thy neck,
Thou foolish bird, an thou do that again !"
A third time did he stoop, and, horn in hand,
Bend his broad back to catch the sluggish stream ;
A third time did he raise the bugle up
Toward his lips ; a third time with swift wing
The falcon dashed the measure from his hand.
Then flashed Sir Brasil's eye with humid fire,
Quivered his thin-drawn lip, and paled his cheek,

And with an ungloved hand he smote the bird
Full in the throat. It fluttered on his wrist,
And drew its jesses taut ; with panting strength
Spread out its arrowy wings convulsively,
As if 't would flee right sunward from black death,
Then drew them close. The silver Milan bells,*
That quivered on its legs, rattled a chime
Of mortal melody that smote the sky,
Its old domain. Its curved beak opened wide,
Agape for air. Its large, round, golden eye
Turned one long look of sad, reproachful love
Full on Sir Brasil ; then, with a faint gasp,
That stifling burst from its choked, swollen throat,
It fluttering fell. The silken jesses slipped ;
Its proud head bent in death's last agony ;
And, tumbling from his wrist, it gasped and died !
The stern knight bit his lip as he looked down ;
He loved the bird, but had a hasty hand,
And hastier temper. " Well-a-day ! " he said,
" The bird was mulish and deserved its fate.
Yet would I had not killed it ! " Then he took
With mournful hand his bugle, and a sigh
Fluttered between his lips, like some sad bird
From prison flying blindly. " Well ! " he said,
" 'T is weary work filling these sluggish draughts ;
Each takes an hour at least. I'll to the source
Of this thin stream, and ravish it with lips
As eager as e'er pressed the Sabine maid,
When Roman youth grew hot. I'll dip my horn,

* Milan bells. The tinkling bells that were fastened to the falcon's legs came from this city. It was necessary that their tone should be sonorous and shrill, and they were graduated in a rising scale of semitones.

And raise it diamond-dripping from the wave,
 And as I drink, the abundant stream shall well
 Over the brim, and trickle down my beard,
 Like morning dew. I'll quaff with thirsty joy,
 And when I've drank I'll fling the lucid lees
 On the dry leaves, and arid flowers, that they
 May share the moist delight!" And with these words
 He sought the secret windings of the stream,
 And followed them.

Starkly the falcon lay ;
 The dry leaves rattled with a stealthy sound ;
 The beetle hummed, the insects in the grass
 Made silver whisperings ; the mouse crept out
 From underneath the sod, and, timid, gazed
 On the proud foe that lay so stiff and strange.
 Half fearing stratagem, it dared not move,
 But pricked its ears, and oped its glittering eyes
 Enchained with wonder, till a lizard slim
 Darted from out the grass, and boldly brushed
 The falcon's lifeless wing. Then did the mouse
 Believe its foe was dead. Then did it play
 Around the corpse, and gaze into its eyes,
 Those large, round golden eyes, that from the clouds
 Could pierce the crouching vermin of the earth
 With overhanging death !

The dry leaves fell ;
 The water dropped ; the insects in the grass
 Hummed their sharp songs that sounded in the ear
 Like tiny silver tinklings. In the midst
 Of all this fair monotony of life
 Lay the dead falcon !

With much weary toil
 Sir Brasil traced the windings of the stream,

Through rock defiles, as wild as sculptured dreams
Where naked horrors frowned. Through oozy swamps
Coated with marish oil in which the sun
Made slimy rainbows ; through forsaken beds
Of ancient streams ; o'er massive boulder stones,
Humped with old age, and coated with gray moss ;
O'er trunks of rotting trees that in the night
Lit with pale splendor the dark paths around,
And slept in light ; o'er sharp volcanic soil
That crackled 'neath the tread ; o'er naked plains,
Where the sad wind could find not even a stone
To whet its breath on, but went babbling round
With dull, blunt edge, — Sir Brasil took his way
With weary foot, and tongue that often wagged
In sanctimonious oath. A full, slow hour
Had passed, and e'en the knight, though faint with thirst,
Was nigh to turn upon his steps and wend
Back through the woods, when, lo ! like sapphires seen
Through the smoke-curling clouds of maiden's hair,
Gleamed something blue. It twisted as it shone,
And glanced in distance like an azure spray.
As speeds the Arab after five days' thirst
To the green oasis, — that desert's teat
At which its children suck, — so Brasil sped,
And nerved his flagging limbs to reach the spot
So distant and so dear.

“ At last ! ” he cried,
“ At last, at last, the water glads my sight !
O, I will lave, and drink, and lave again,
Until my very bones the moisture feel,
And half my blood is water ! ” And he ran
Like a young deer ; but as he nearer came,
A poisonous vapor seemed to load the air,

And foul mephitic clouds that clogged each sense
Hovered oppressively with leaden wings.
Sir Brasil staggered on. The poisoned air
Smote on his brain like an invisible sword,
And clove his consciousness. He raved, and reeled,
And threw his arms aloft, and tried to pray,
And spoke pet words to his dead falcon, as
It were alive ; then suddenly he seemed
With one great effort to regain himself,
And onward strode.

But as he neared the place
Whence shot the sapphire gleam, a horrid sight
Burst on his view. Lo ! coiling on a mound
A huge, green serpent lay. Tier upon tier
Of emerald scales that glistered into blue
Swept upwards in grand spirals. His great head
Lay open-jawed, and hanging o'er the brink
Of a steep rock, while slavering from his mouth
A stream of distilled poison, green and rank,
Trickled in sluggish drops, that at the base
Gathered themselves into an oily stream,
And flowed away.

Sir Brasil's heart grew sick ;
For now he saw what he would fain have drunk,
And what the falcon wasted, was the venom
That slavered from the serpent on the rock,
And, filtering through some secret stony way,
Welled out below in green and sluggish drops
Of withering poison. Now like a fierce wind
Remorse howled through his soul, and hunted thought
Fled from its scorching breath. His nature swung
Naked and desolate as a gibbet corpse
From which the flesh drops piecemeal. He did feel

That death should fly him, as a ghost of guilt
More horrid than himself. He felt that God
Held not within his arsenal of curses
One great enough for him ; that earth's green skin
Crept, as he trode, as shudders human flesh
When loathsome beings touch it. He grew white
As the swamp-lily, and upon his cheek
Stood beads of dew, round and distinct as those
That morning winds brush from the shivering trees.
His strong frame shook ; short sobbings dry and fierce
Rang in his throat, and on his swelling chest
The silken doublet rose and fell amain,
Like bellying sail that labors with the wind.
He tore his long, fair curls, and cast them down
And stamped upon them, whilst he cursed himself
For his deep cruelty to so fair a bird.
Then he took counsel with himself, and thought
If it were good to turn his dagger in
And sheathe it in his heart ; but, lo ! within
His soul a spirit rose — like those that flit
From out deep fountains in the even-time
To warn us of dark ills — and spread a mist
Betwixt him and the thought of foul self-murder.
Straightway he turned, and said unto himself,
“The guilty, by the avenging will of God,
Are dragged by secret force toward the spot
Where lie their victims. I will hasten back
To where my dead bird lies by the steep bank,
And mark each footstep with a moan, as monks
Mark rosaries with prayers.” — So saying went,
With ashen cheek, slow step, and muttering lips,
Straight to the spot where the dead falcon lay.
A little while he stood regarding it

With a drear wistful look ; then, stooping down,
 He smoothed its ruffled plumage with his hand,
 Closed its round, staring eyes, and gently folded
 Its stiffened wings along its breast ; then broke
 Into a lamentation wild.

“ O bird,

My soul is darkened in thy death ! strong grief.
 Winds like a snake about my heart, and crushes it
 In its chill clasp. I never yet did feel
 Such bitter wrath against mine own right hand
 As I do now. To think that this fond hand,
 On which so oft thou lovingly hast sat,
 Should turn against thee, and with one foul blow
 Dash all thy life away ! O, 't was a deed
 Becoming some vile lackey, whose coarse wrath
 Is blinded by thick blood ; but not a knight,
 Whose blood was filtered through three thousand years,
 And to cross swords with whom might surely make
 The foe a gentleman ! I mind me well
 The day we came together. Thou wert young,
 Scarce fledged, and with thy talons yet ungrown ;
 But there was courage in thee, and one day,
 When thou didst see a heron in the sky,
 Thou beat'st thy breast against the window-pane,
 And all the falcon sparkled in thine eyes !
 Then 't was my pride to deck thee splendidly.
 Thy silver bells, wrought in old Milan's town,
 Were shrill as whistle, and the ascending tones
 Were modulated cunningly. Thy hood
 Of purple cramoise, worked with threads of gold,
 Came from that maiden's hand whom I do prize
 Beyond all other women. Then thy food
 Was dainty in its kind, as thou hadst been

The merlin of an emperor. I did love thee ;
 All proves that I did love thee ; and I would
 Have chopped this right hand from its arm before
 It should have hurt thee wittingly ; but I
 Am hot, and when thy persevering wing
 Stretched between me and death, it angered me,
 And I — I — O, I cannot think of it,
 Except I curse myself, and wish myself
 Accursed by God and man !

O, never more

Will thy silk jesses twine around my wrist !
 No more will we two wander in the dawn,
 When the wild-flowers are necklaced all with dew,
 And the wet grass pulses with morning life,
 To watch a sedge of herons by the stream,
 Or listen for the bittern's lonely boom
 Rising from out the reeds ! No more, no more,
 When the game springs from out the sedgy pool
 And soars aloft, shall I tear off thy hood,
 Unloose thy jesses, and then launch thee forth
 Upon the deadly race. I ne'er shall see
 Thee rise in airy spirals to the clouds,
 While the wide heron labors far below,
 Till when almost a speck, with sudden swoop,
 Like a live thunderbolt, thou dashest down
 Full on the foe, and, striking at his heart,
 Fall'st fastened to thy victim !

How tell

The maiden fair who worked thy purple hood
 And loved to stroke thy feathers i' the sun, —
 How shall I tell my crime ? Why, she would loathe me,
 And wave me from her sight with crushing look,
 And shut me from her heart. I should be held

By all good knights, and ladies fair, a dastard
 Who raised his hand against a loving bird,
 And killed it for its love. I cannot home!
 The first quest I should hear would be, 'Where is
 Thy falcon, Brasil?' and could I reply,
 'Three times it saved my life, fair dame,
 Therefore I slew it.' O, no home for me!
 Here in this lonely glade I'll lay me down
 Close to my murdered bird — and then — and then —
 Let what will come."

The shades of evening fell,
 The invisible dews dropped spirit-like on earth;
 The woods were silent, and, when the white moon
 Came riding o'er their tops, she sadly saw
 The knight beside the falcon.



KANE.

DIED 16TH FEBRUARY, 1857.

I.

ALOFT, upon an old basaltic crag,
 Which, scalped by keen winds that defend the pole,
 Gazes with dead face on the seas that roll
 Around the secret of the mystic zone,
 A mighty nation's star-bespangled flag
 Flutters alone:
 And underneath, upon the lifeless front
 Of that drear cliff, a simple name is traced!
 Fit type of him, who, famishing and gaunt,
 But with a rocky purpose in his soul,
 Breasted the gathering snows,
 Clung to the drifting flocs,

By want beleaguered, and by winter chased,
Seeking the brother lost amid that frozen waste.

II.

Not many months ago we greeted him,
Crowned with the icy honors of the North.
Across the land his hard-won fame went forth,
And Maine's deep woods were shaken limb by limb.
His own mild Keystone State, sedate and prim,
Burst from its decorous quiet as he came.
Hot southern lips, with eloquence aflame,
Sounded his triumph. Texas, wild and grim,
Proffered its horny hand. The large-lunged West
From out its giant breast
Yelled its frank welcome. And from main to main,
Jubilant to the sky,
Thundered the mighty cry,
HONOR TO KANE!

III.

In vain, in vain, beneath his feet we flung
The reddening roses! All in vain we poured
The golden wine, and round the shining board
Sent the toast circling, till the rafters rung
With the thrice-tripled honors of the feast!
Scarce the buds wilted and the voices ceased
Ere the pure light that sparkled in his eyes,
Bright as auroral fires in southern skies,
Faded and faded; and the brave young heart
That the relentless arctic winds had robbed
Of all its vital heat, in that long quest
For the lost Captain, now within his breast
More and more faintly throbbed.
His was the victory; but as his grasp

Closed on the laurel crown with eager clasp,
 Death launched a whistling dart ;
 And ere the thunders of applause were done
 His bright eyes closed forever on the sun !
 Too late, too late, the splendid prize he won
 In the Olympic race of science and of art !

IV.

Like to some shattered berg that, pale and lone,
 Drifts from the white north to a tropic zone,
 And in the burning day
 Wastes peak by peak away,
 Till on some rosy even
 It dies with sunlight blessing it ; so he
 Tranquilly floated to a southern sea,
 And melted into heaven !

V.

He needs no tears, who lived a noble life !
 We will not weep for him who died so well ;
 But we will gather round the hearth, and tell
 The story of his strife.
 Such homage suits him well ;
 Better than funeral pomp, or passing-bell !

VI.

What tale of peril and self-sacrifice !
 Prisoned amid the fastnesses of ice,
 With hunger howling o'er the wastes of snow !
 Night lengthening into months ; the ravenous floe
 Crunching the massive ships, as the white bear
 Crunches his prey ; the insufficient share
 Of loathsome food ;
 The lethargy of famine ; the despair
 Urging to labor, nervelessly pursued ;

Toil done with skinny arms, and faces hued
 Like pallid masks, while dolefully behind
 Glimmered the fading embers of a mind !
 That awful hour, when through the prostrate band
 Delirium stalked, laying his burning hand

 Upon the ghastly foreheads of the crew, —
 The whispers of rebellion, faint and few
 At first, but deepening ever till they grew
 Into black thoughts of murder, — such the throng
 Of horrors round the Hero. High the song
 Should be that hymns the noble part he played !
 Sinking himself, yet ministering aid

 To all around him ; by a mighty will
 Living defiant of the wants that kill,
 Because his death would seal his comrades' fate ;
 Cheering with ceaseless and inventive skill
 Those polar winters, dark and desolate.

Equal to every trial, every fate,

 He stands, until spring, tardy with relief,
 Unlocks the icy gate,
 And the pale prisoners thread the world once more,
 To the steep cliffs of Greenland's pastoral shore,
 Bearing their dying chief !

VII.

Time was when he should gain his spurs of gold
 From royal hands, who wooed the knightly state :
 The knell of old formalities is tolled,

 And the world's knights are now self-consecrate.
 No grander episode doth chivalry hold

 In all its annals, back to Charlemagne,
 Than that long vigil of unceasing pain,
 Faithfully kept, through hunger and through cold,
 By the good Christian knight, Elisha Kane !

THE LOST STEAMSHIP.

‘Ho, there! Fisherman, hold your hand!
Tell me what is that far away, —
There, where over the isle of sand
Hangs the mist-cloud sullen and gray?
See! it rocks with a ghastly life,
Rising and rolling through clouds of spray,
Right in the midst of the breakers’ strife, —
Tell me what is it, Fisherman, pray?’

‘That, good sir, was a steamer stout
As ever paddled around Cape Race;
And many’s the wild and stormy bout
She had with the winds, in that selfsame place;
But her time was come; and at ten o’clock
Last night she struck on that lonesome shore;
And her sides were gnawed by the hidden rock,
And at dawn this morning she was no more.’

‘Come, as you seem to know, good man,
The terrible fate of this gallant ship,
Tell me about her all that you can;
And here’s my flask to moisten your lip.
Tell me how many she had aboard, —
Wives, and husbands, and lovers true, —
How did it fare with her human hoard?
Lost she many, or lost she few?’

‘Master, I may not drink of your flask,
Already too moist I feel my lip;

But I'm ready to do what else you ask,
And spin you my yarn about the ship :
'T was ten o'clock, as I said, last night,
When she struck the breakers and went ashore ;
And scarce had broken the morning's light
Than she sank in twelve feet of water or more.

' But long ere this they knew her doom,
And the captain called all hands to prayer ;
And solemnly over the ocean's boom
Their orisons wailed on the troublous air.
And round about the vessel there rose
Tall plumes of spray as white as snow,
Like angels in their ascension clothes,
Waiting for those who prayed below.

' So these three hundred people clung
As well as they could to spar and rope ;
With a word of prayer upon every tongue,
Nor on any face a glimmer of hope.
But there was no blubbering weak and wild, —
Of tearful faces I saw but one,
A rough old salt, who cried like a child,
And not for himself, but the captain's son.

' The captain stood on the quarter-deck,
Firm, but pale, with trumpet in hand ;
Sometimes he looked at the breaking wreck,
Sometimes he sadly looked to land.
And often he smiled to cheer the crew —
But, Lord ! the smile was terrible grim —
Till over the quarter a huge sea flew ;
And that was the last they saw of him.

'I saw one young fellow with his bride,
 Standing amidships upon the wreck ;
His face was white as the boiling tide,
 And she was clinging about his neck.
And I saw them try to say good-by,
 But neither could hear the other speak ;
So they floated away through the sea to die —
 Shoulder to shoulder, and cheek to cheek.

'And there was a child, but eight at best,
 Who went his way in a sea she shipped ;
All the while holding upon his breast
 A little pet parrot whose wings were clipped.
And as the boy and the bird went by,
 Swinging away on a tall wave's crest,
They were gripped by a man, with a drowning cry,
 And together the three went down to rest.

'And so the crew went one by one,
 Some with gladness, and few with fear ;
Cold and hardship such work had done
 That few seemed frightened when death was near.
Thus every soul on board went down, —
 Sailor and passenger, little and great ;
The last that sank was a man of my town,
 A capital swimmer, — the second mate.'

'Now, lonely fisherman, who are you
 That say you saw this terrible wreck ?
How do I know what you say is true,
 When every mortal was swept from the deck ?
Where were you in that hour of death ?
 How did you learn what you relate ?'
His answer came in an under-breath, —
 'Master, I was the second mate !'

A FALLEN STAR.

I.

I SAUNTERED home across the park,
And slowly smoked my last cigar ;
The summer night was still and dark,
With not a single star :

And, conjured by I know not what,
A memory floated through my brain,
The vision of a friend forgot,
Or thought of now with pain.

A brilliant boy that once I knew,
In far-off, happy days of old,
With sweet, frank face, and eyes of blue,
And hair that shone like gold :

Fresh crowned with college victory,
The boast and idol of his class, —
With heart as pure, and warm, and free
As sunshine on the grass !

A figure sinewy, lithe, and strong,
A laugh infectious in its glee,
A voice as beautiful as song,
When heard along the sea.

On me, the man of sombre thought,
The radiance of his friendship won,
As round an autumn tree is wrought
The enchantment of the sun.

He loved me with a tender truth,
He clung to me as clings the vine,
And, like a brimming fount of youth,
His nature freshened mine.

Together hand in hand we walked ;
We threaded pleasant country ways,
Or, couched beneath the limes, we talked,
On sultry summer days.

For me he drew aside the veil
Before his bashful heart that hung,
And told a sweet, ingenuous tale
That trembled on his tongue.

He read me songs and amorous lays,
Where through each slender line a fire
Of love flashed lambently, as plays
The lightning through the wire.

A nobler maid he never knew
Than she he longed to call his wife ;
A fresher nature never grew
Along the shores of life.

Thus rearing diamond arches up
Whereon his future life to build,
He quaffed all day the golden cup
That youthful fancy filled.

Like fruit upon a southern slope,
He ripened on all natural food, —
The winds that thrill the skyey cope,
The sunlight's golden blood :



The Knoll

Living Too Fast

By Fitz-James O'Brien



The Birth Day

de Bugh
de came - Sugussu
de Chine.
Dalg seen?

~~Carrages crowding the coplanade~~
seats fleeing from stair case and hall

And soon the engine was unlocked

The humming hissing I heard

The sacred duties that he wrought

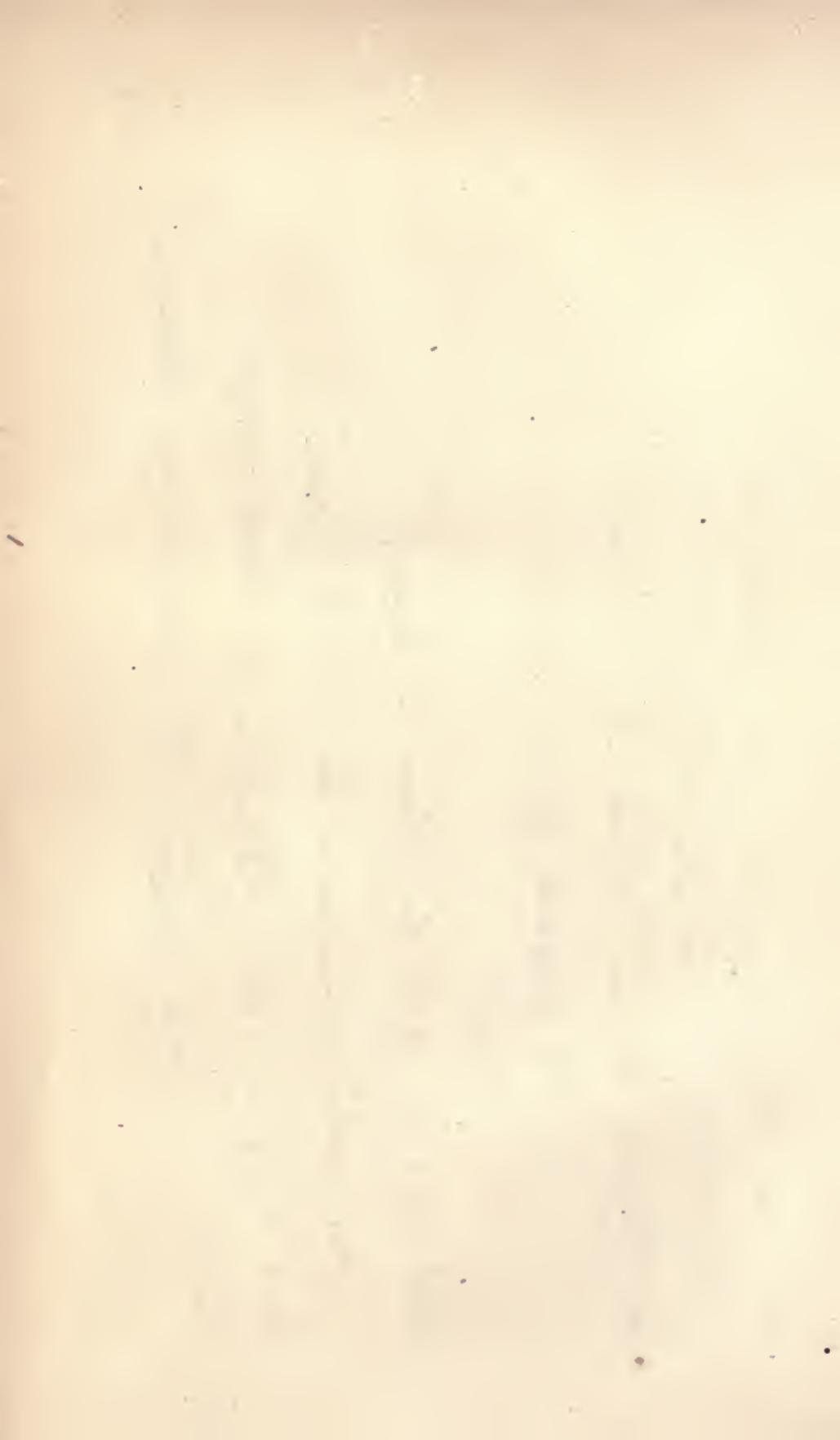
The perfect of his end

And how he did his love a wrong

His wild remorse - his mad career

And now - oh! hearten to that song!

And ~~heart~~ ^{heart} the answering cheer!



And in his talk I oft discerned
A timid music vaguely heard ;
The fragments of a song scarce learned,
The essays of a bird, —

The first faint notes the poet's breast,
Ere yet his pinions warrant flight,
Will, on the margin of the nest,
Utter with strange delight.

Thus rich with promise was the boy,
When, swept abroad by circumstance,
We parted, — he to live, enjoy,
And I to war with chance.

II.

The air was rich with fumes of wine
When next we met. 'T was at a feast,
And he, the boy I thought divine,
Was the unhallowed priest.

There was the once familiar grace,
The old, enchanting smile was there ;
Still shone around his handsome face
The glory of his hair.

But the pure beauty that I knew
Had lowered through some ignoble task ;
Apollo's head was peering through
A drunken bacchant's mask.

The smile, once honest as the day,
Now waked to words of grossest wit ;

The eyes, so simply frank and gay,
With lawless fires were lit.

He was the idol of the board ;
He led the careless, wanton throng ;
The soul that once to heaven had soared
Now grovelled in a song.

He wildly flung his wit away
In small retort, in verbal brawls,
And played with words as jugglers play
With hollow brazen balls.

But often when the laugh was loud,
And highest gleamed the circling bowl,
I saw what unseen passed the crowd, —
The shadow on his soul.

And soon the enigma was unlocked ;
The harrowing history I heard, —
The sacred duties that he mocked,
The forfeiture of word.

And how he did his love a wrong —
His wild remorse — his mad career —
And now — ah ! hearken to that song,
And hark the answering cheer !

III.

Thus musing sadly on the law
That lets such brilliant meteors quench,
Down the dark path a form I saw
Uprising from a bench.

Ragged and pale, in strident tones
It asked for alms, — I knew for what ;
The tremor shivering through its bones
Was eloquent of the sot.

It begged, it prayed, it whined, it cried,
It followed with a shuffling tramp, —
It would not, could not be denied, —
I turned beneath a lamp.

It clutched the coins I gave, and fled
With muttered words of horrid glee,
When, like the white, returning dead,
A vision rose to me.

A nameless something in its air,
A sudden gesture as it moved, —
'T was he, the gay, the debonnaire !
'T was he, the boy I loved !

And while along the lonesome park
The eager drunkard sped afar,
I looked to heaven, and through the dark
I saw a falling star !

THE BALLAD OF THE SHAMROCK.

My boy left me just twelve years ago :

'T was the black year of famine, of sickness and woe,
When the crops died out, and the people died too,
And the land into one great grave-yard grew ;
And our neighbors' faces were as white and thin
As the face of the moon when she first comes in ;
And honest men's hearts were rotten with blight,
And they thieved and prowled like the wolves at night ;
When the whole land was dark as dark could be, —
'T was then that Donal, my boy, left me.

We were turned from our farm where we 'd lived so long,
For we could n't pay the rent, and the law was strong ;
From our low meadow lands, and flax fields blue,
And the handsome green hill where the yellow furze grew,
And the honest old cow that, each evening, would stand
At the little gate, lowing to be milked by my hand ;
And the small patch of garden at the end of the lawn,
Where Donal grew sweet flowers for his Colleen Bawn ;
But Donal and I had to leave all these, —
I to live with father, and he to cross the seas.

For Donal was as proud as any king's son,
And swore he 'd not stand by and see such wrongs done,
But would seek a fortune out in the wide, wide West,
Where the honest can find labor and the weary rest ;
And as soon as he was able why then he 'd send for me
To rest my poor old head in his home across the sea :
And then his young face flushed like a June sky at dawn,

As he said that he was thinking how his Colleen Bawn
Could come along to help me to keep the house straight,
For he knew how much she loved him, and she 'd prom-
ised him to wait.

I think I see him now, as he stood one blessed day,
With his pale smiling face upon the Limerick quay,
And I lying on his breast, with his long, curly hair
Blowing all about my shoulders as if to keep me there ;
And the quivering of his lip, that he tried to keep so
proud, —
Not because of his old mother, but the idle, curious
crowd, —
Then the hoisting of the anchor, and the flapping of the
sail,
And the stopping of my heart when the wild, Irish wail
From the mothers, and the children, and the kinsfolk on
the quay
Told me plainer than all words that my darling was away.
Ten years went dragging by, and I heard but now and
then, —
For my Donal, though a brave boy, was no scholar with
the pen ;
But he sent me kindly words, and bade me not despair,
And sometimes sent me money, perhaps more than he
could spare ;
So I waited and I prayed until it came to pass
That Father Pat he wanted me one Sunday after mass,
When I went, a little fearsome, to the back vestry-room,
Where his reverence sat a-smiling like a sunflower in the
gloom :
And then he up and told me — God bless him ! — that
my boy
Had sent to bring me over, and I nearly died for joy.

All day I was half-crazed as I wandered through the
house ;
The dropping of the sycamore seeds, or the scramble of a
mouse,
Thrilled through me like a gun-shot ; I durst not look
behind,
For the pale face of my darling was always in my mind.
The pale face so sorrowful, the eyes so large and dark,
And soft shining as the deer's are in young Lord Massy's
park ;
And the long chestnut hair blown loosely by the wind, —
All this seemed at my shoulder, and I dared not look be-
hind,
But I said in my own heart, it is but the second sight
Of the day when I shall kiss him, all beautiful and bright.

Then I made my box ready to go across the sea,
My boy had sent a ticket, so my passage it was free ;
But all the time I longed that some little gift I had
To take across the ocean to my own dear lad ;
A pin, or a chain, or something of the kind,
Just to 'mind the poor boy of the land he'd left behind.
But I was too poor to buy it, so I'd nothing left to do
But to go to the old farm, the homestead that he knew ;
To the handsome green hill where my Donal used to play,
And cut a sod of shamrock for the exile far away.

All through the voyage I nursed it, and watered it each day,
And kept its green leaves sheltered from the salt-sea
spray,
And I'd bring it upon deck when the sun was shining
fair,
To watch its triple leaflets opening slowly in the air.

At first the sailors laughed at my little sod of grass,
But when they knew my object they gently let me pass ;
And the ladies in the cabin were very kind to me ;
They made me tell the story of my boy across the sea :
So I told them of my Donal, and his fair, manly face,
Till bare speaking of my darling made a sunshine in the
place.

We landed at the Battery in New York's big bay,
The sun was shining grandly, and the wharves looked gay.
But I could see no sunshine nor beauty in the place,
What I only cared to look on was Donal's sweet face ;
But in all the great crowd, and I turned everywhere,
I could not see a sign of him, — my darling was not there ;
I asked the men around me to go and find my son,
But they only stared or laughed, and left me, one by one,
Till at last an old countryman came up to me and said —
How could I live to hear it ? — that Donal was dead !

The shamrock sod is growing on Greenwood's hill-side.
It grows above the heart of my darling and my pride ;
And on summer days I sit by the headstone all day,
With my heart growing old and my head growing gray ;
And I watch the dead leaves whirl from the sycamore-
trees,
And wonder why it is that I can't die like these ;
But I think that this same winter, and from my heart I
hope,
I'll be lying nice and quiet upon Greenwood's slope,
With my darling close beside me underneath the trickling
dew,
And the shamrocks creeping pleasantly above us two.

AMAZON.

I BURN to tell my love ; to call her mine ;
 To pour upon her heart the fiery tide
 That fills my own ; to open my soul's shrine
 And show her her own image deified !

But vain the web my brain untiring weaves ;
 For hours I school in vain my spellbound tongue.
 My passion hangs, unuttered, on the eaves
 Of my soul's portal. Of a love unsung
 I am the minstrel, for I sing alone.

My own heart is my hermitage, and there
 I chant impassioned hymns, and weep, and groan,
 And to love's phantom dedicate my prayer.
 When on a lonely couch my head I lay,
 What mystic eloquence comes to me unsought !
 In fervent litanies to her I pray,
 And tell my love in rosaries of thought.
 A bold and reckless suitor in the night, —
 A weak and silent coward in the day ;
 When all is dark I long to greet the light,
 But dazzled when light comes, I turn away !

O, you should see her ! She is, of all queens
 That drive their chariots over bleeding hearts,
 The loveliest one ! Not by her sex's means
 She won her throne. She has no need of arts.
 Born to enslave, she conquers with a glance ;
 All blandishments and subtile wiles disdains ;
 A heretic to the antique romance,
 To know she is, is knowing that she reigns.

Like the phosphoric trees in forests dark
 She lights all hearts, and yet herself is cold ;
 And woe to him who, dazzled by the spark,
 Hopes for a heat her heart can never hold !

But she is beautiful ! No vocal dream
 Warbled in slumber by the nightingale,
 Can match her voice's music. Sculptors seem,
 When most inspired, to copy her — and fail !
 To gaze on her is song unto the sight ;
 A harmony of vision, heaven-sent,
 Where all the tones of human charms unite,
 And are in one majestic woman blent !

But once I thought she loved me. Bitter hour,
 Whose mingled joy and torment haunt me still !
 Her eyes look out from every starry flower ;
 I hear her mocking laugh in every rill.
 Yet on this grief I love to muse alone —
 It is a key that hath my nature tuned ;
 Upon my riven heart I gaze as one
 Grows to companionship with even his wound.

'T was in the autumn woods we rode one morn
 To hunt the deer, with wild and willing steeds.
 The young wind gayly blew his mellow horn,
 And beat the tangled coverts of the reeds.
 The golden elms tossed high their lucent leaves,
 While on their giant boles, so rough in form,
 The rugged bark stood out in corded sheaves,
 Like muscles swoln in wrestling with the storm!

A sudden, wayward fancy seized us here
 To pause and act a leafy masquerade.

No idle tongues nor curious eyes were near,
 And silent splendor filled the sunlit glade.
 So, gathering armfuls of the autumn' vines,
 I wove their red ropes round the passive girl,
 Looping the tendrils of the blushing vines
 Round arms, and head, and each escaping curl.
 Then through her horse's mane that blackly shone,
 I plaited mosses long and leaden-hued,
 Until she seemed like some young Amazon
 Chained by the mighty monarch of the wood.

O mockery of conquest! Hidden sting!
 O triumph treacherous as the sleeping seas!
She played the captive, — *I*, the victor-king,
 Threading triumphal arches through the trees!

Sudden, with one wild burst of regal might
 She flung her fluttering fetters to the wind;
 She and her steed with bound of fierce delight
 Dashed through the crashing boughs that closed behind.—
 And so she vanished. From the distance dim
 Her scornful laughter floated to my ear;
 A jest for her, — for me a funeral hymn,
 Sung o'er a love that froze upon its bier!

How shall I conquer her? Since that cursed day
 Her image stands between me and the world!
 Around my cup of life where flowers should lay,
 Forbidding me, a poisoned snake is curled.
 As heron chased by hawk I soar through space,
 The fatal shafts of her disdain to shun,
 And seek the clouds; but vain the dizzy race, —
 I find her still between me and the sun!

O queen, enthroned upon an icy height,
What holocaust does thy proud heart desire?
When will it flame like beacon through the night
With fiery answer to another's fire?
Ah! why so cold — so ever cold to me?
I chafe — I chafe all day from dawn to dark,
As chafes the wave of Adria's glowing sea
Against the pulseless marble of Saint Mark!

THE MAN AT THE DOOR.

I.

How joyous to-day is the little old town,
With banners and streamers as cheery as spring!
They flutter on turrets and battlements brown,
And the ancient cathedral is fine as a king.
The sexton a nosegay has put in his breast,
And his face is as bright as a Jericho rose,
That, after a century's withering rest,
Unwrinkles its petals and suddenly blows.

II.

The brown-breasted swallows aloft and alow
Swoop faster and further than ever before,
And I'm sure that the cock on the steeple will crow
When he hears from the city the jubilant roar.
The girls are as gay as a holiday fleet,
Their ribbons are streaming from bosom and hair,
And they laugh in the face of each young man they meet,
And the young men reply with an insolent stare.

III.

'T is not without reason the old town is gay,
And banners and ribbons are reddening the air,
For beautiful Bertha will marry to-day
With gallant young Albert, the son of the Mayor.
He is brown as a nut from the hazels of Spain ;
Her face, like the twilight, is pensive and sweet ;
As they march hand in hand through the murmuring
lane,
Low blessings, like flowers, fall unseen at their feet.

IV.

While they sweep like twin barks through the waves of
the crowd,
A story is falling from many a tongue,
Of the young gypsy prince who, a year ago, bowed
At the shrine where a hundred their passion had sung ;
And how Bertha heaped scorn on his love and his race,
How she flung in the street the rich presents he sent,
Until he, with the hatred of hell in his face,
Went sullenly back to his tribe and his tent.

V.

Soon all stories are hushed in a gathering roar,
And the people sway back like the ebb of a tide,
And the rosy old sexton stands by the church-door,
To merrily welcome the bridegroom and bride :
But his glee is so great that he does not behold
The tall man that stands near the pillar, hard by,
Nor the flash of the dagger that's hafted with gold,
Nor the still keener flash of the lowering eye.

VI.

On they come, and the sexton bows low to the ground,
The bride smiles a welcome, the bells ring a chime,
While a grand acclamation, in surges of sound,
Thrills up through the sky like a sonorous rhyme.
They are under the porch — when, one dash through the
crowd,
One flash of a dagger, one shriek of despair,
And Bertha falls dead ; while, stern-visaged and proud,
The swarthy-skinned prince of the gypsies is there !

VII.

How sombre to-day is the little old town,
With mourning, and sables, and funeral display ;
Long weepers are hanging from battlements brown,
And the ancient cathedral is haggard and gray.
The sexton a white rose has put in his breast,
While his face is as blank as a snow-laden sky ;
For Bertha and Albert have gone to their rest,
And the prince of the gypsies is swinging on high.



THE ENCHANTED TITAN.

I.

CURSE you ! O, a hundred thousand curses
Weigh upon your soul, you black enchanter !
Could I pour them like the coins from purses,
I would utter such a pile instanter
As would crush you to a bloody pulp.
But my rage I fain am forced to gulp ;

Anathemas are vain against cold iron,
 Nor can I swear this magic box asunder,
 Where I've been stifling since the days of Chiron,
 Fretting on tempered bolts, and hurling muffled thunder.

II.

Through the chinks I see the dim green waters
 Filled with sunshine, or with moonlight hazy ;
 Through them swim the oceanic daughters,
 Beautiful enough to drive me crazy.
 The fishes gaze at me with sphery eyes,
 And seem to say, with cold-blooded surprise,
 What Titan is it, that's so barred and bolted,
 Caged like a rat in some infernal cellar ?
 Why even Enceladus, when the dog revolted,
 Was not so hardly treated by the Cloud-Compeller !

III.

And all, forsooth, because I loved his daughter !
 Loved that child of spells and incantation ;
 Love her now, beneath this dreary water,
 Love her through eternal tribulation !
 I wonder if her lips lament me still,
 In her enchanted castle on the hill ?
 Or has she yielded to that damned magician,
 And with my pygmy rival weakly wedded ?
 O Jove ! the torment of this bare suspicion -
 Preying forever on my heart, and like the Hydra headed !

IV.

O bitter day, when spells, like snakes uprearing,
 Enwrapped my limbs, and, muscular as pliant,
 Pinioned my struggling arms, until despairing
 I lay upon the earth, a captured giant !

Then came the horror of this iron box, —
The closing of its huge enchanted locks ;
Then the cursed wizard to the windy summit
Of the tall cape a coffered prisoner bore me,
And flung me off, until, like seaman's plummet,
I sank, and the drear ocean closed forever o'er me!



LOSS.

STRETCHED silver-spun the spider's nets ;
The quivering sky was white with fire ;
The blackbird's scarlet epaulettes
Reddened the hemlock's topmost spire.

The mountain, in his purple cloak,
His feet with misty vapors wet,
Lay dreamily, and seemed to smoke
All day his giant calumet.

From farm-house bells the noonday rung ;
The teams that ploughed the furrows stopped ;
The ox refreshed his lolling tongue,
And brows were wiped and spades were dropped ;

And down the field the mowers stepped,
With burning brows and figures lithe,
As in their brawny hands they swept
From side to side the hissing scythe ;

Till sudden ceased the noonday task,
The scythes 'mid swaths of grass lay still,
As girls with can and cider-flask
Came romping gayly down the hill.

And over all there swept a stream
Of subtile music, felt, not heard,
As when one conjures in a dream
The distant singing of a bird.

I drank the glory of the scene,
Its autumn splendor fired my veins ;
The woods were like an Indian queen
Who gazed upon her old domains.

And ah ! methought I heard a sigh
Come softly through her leafy lips ;
A mourning over days gone by,
That were before the white man's ships.

And so I came to think on Loss, —
I never much could think on Gain ;
A poet oft will woo a cross
On whom a crown is pressed in vain.

I came to think — I know not how,
Perchance through sense of Indian wrong —
Of losses of my own, that now
Broke for the first time into song ; —

A fluttering strain of feeble words
That scarcely dared to leave my breast ;
But like a brood of fledgling birds
Kept hovering round their natal nest.

'O loss !' I sang, — 'O early loss !
O blight that nipped the buds of spring !
O spell that turned the gold to dross !
O steel that clipped the untried wing !

'I mourn all days, as sorrows he
Whom once they called a merchant prince
Over the ships he sent to sea,
And never, never heard of since.

'To ye, O woods, the annual May
Restores the leaves ye lost before ;
The tide that now forsakes the bay
This night will wash the widowed shore.

'But I shall never see again
The shape that smiled upon my youth ;
A mist of sorrow veils my brain,
And dimly looms the light of truth.

'She faded, fading woods, like you !
And fleeting shone with sweeter grace ;
And as she died, the colors grew
To softer splendor in her face.

'Until one day the hectic flush
Was veiled with death's eternal snow ;
She swept from earth amid a hush,
And I was left alone below !'

While thus I moaned I heard a peal
Of laughter through the meadows flow ;
I saw the farm-boys at their meal, —
I saw the cider circling go.

And still the mountain calmly slept,
His feet with valley vapors wet ;
And slowly circling upward crept
The smoke from out his calumet.

Mine was the sole discordant breath
That marred this dream of peace below.
'O God!' I cried, 'give, give me death,
Or give me grace to bear thy blow!'



OUR CHRISTMAS-TREE. *

O MADAM MILLIONNAIRE,
So wealthy and so fair,
I know how rich and rare
 Is your Christmas-tree.
There the ruddy apples swing,
And the gilded bonbons cling,
And 't is gaudy as a king
 In some Indian sea.

A hundred tapers shine
In the foliage of the pine,
And gifts of rare design
 Make the branches gay.
And in the outer room,
Decked with satin and with plume,
Like roses in their bloom,
 Sweet children play.

But this very Christmas night,
When your home's so warm and bright,
And your children's hearts are light
 As the thistle's down,

I am sitting by my hearth,
With not a ray of mirth,
But a feeling as of dearth,
And, I fear, a frown.

For I'm very, very poor,
And the wolf is at my door,
And a shadow's on my floor
That will not pass by ;
But I do not envy you,
For my heart at least is true,
And, thank God, there are so few
As poor as I !

The weary mother sits
On a little stool, and knits,
While across her face there flits
Look sad to see.
Our eldest gravely sighs
With a face of sad surmise,
And our youngest darling cries
For her Christmas-tree.

So I hush the little one,
And talk cheerly to my son,
And try to make some fun
Out of Christmas-trees ;
And I tell them how I've planned
A tree more fine and grand
Than ever grew on land
Or by distant seas.

My tree is very high, —
For it reaches to the sky,
And sweet birds passing by
 There fold their wings.
Its leaves are ever green,
With a wondrous glossy sheen,
And the summer wind serene
 Around it sings.

And I've hung upon my tree
A myriad gifts you see,
And all the world is free
 To come and take.
There is love and gentle mirth,
There's a happy home and hearth,
And "Peace to all on earth,"
 For the Christ-child's sake.

There are sweet and soothing words
Melodious as the birds,
There is charity that herds
 With the poor forlorn.
There are pardons for all wrongs,
And cheerful peasant songs,
And the virtue that belongs
 To the country born.

There are merry marriage bells,
There's the noble heart that swells
When first young nature tells
 Of great manly hopes.

And underneath, alas!
A tiny wreath we pass,
That once withered on the grass
Of Greenwood's slopes.

So, Madam Millionnaire,
Your tree, I know, is fair,
But it can not quite compare
With this I see :
For heaven has blessed the shoots,
And fancy riped the fruits,
And my heart is round the roots
Of our Christmas-tree.



THE POT OF GOLD.

THE sun flung wide its golden arms
Above the dripping woods of Maine,
And wove across the misty sky
The seven-dyed ribbon of the rain.

An old wife at the cottage door
Sat with her grandson by her knee,
And watched the rainbow belt the clouds
And span the world from sea to sea.

Then, in that quiet evening hour,
The wondering boy a tale she told, —
How he who sought the rainbow's foot
Would find beneath a pot of gold.

The eager boy drank in the tale, —
His eyes were filled with feverish fire ;
And in his fluttering heart there leaped
A wild, impulsive, vague desire.

And as the gorgeous sun went down,
And from the skies the mists were rolled,
He stole with hurrying step away
To seek the wondrous pot of gold.

Through lonesome woods with whispering leaves,
That sung an endless forest hymn,
Where shadowy cat-birds wailed unseen,
And squirrels leaped from limb to limb, —

By rivers thundering to the sea,
By ragged hill and gloomy glen,
Through swamps where slept the sluggish air,
And by the pleasant homes of men, —

The strange boy wandered night and day,
His eyes still filled with quenchless fire ;
While still within his heart there grew
That wild, impulsive, vague desire.

Men marvelled as he passed them by
With weary step and lagging pace ;
And women, as they saw him, sighed
In pity for his childlike face.

And many asked why thus he went
O'er hill and flood, through heat and cold ;
While he the steadfast answer made,
“ I go to seek the pot of gold.”

And then they smiled, and told the boy
That many a youth that quest had tried,
And some had fainted by the way,
And all had failed, and most had died.

For never had the mystic goal
By any human foot been trod ;
The secret of the rainbow's base
Was known but to its builder — God.

He heard, but heeded not : his eyes
Were fixed upon the horizon's brim.
What mattered to him others' fate, —
'T was not the fate in store for him.

And still the rainbow came and went,
And scarf-like hung about the sun ;
And still the seeker's restless soul
Sang of the treasure to be won.

So went the time — till one dark day,
When flesh and blood could bear no more,
Haggard and pale he fainting fell
Close by the well-known cottage door.

With quivering lips he told his tale ;
The pitying tears above him fell ;
Once more around his couch he heard
The voices that he loved so well.

And soon a modest, mild-eyed man,
With quiet tones, stood at his side,
Telling a sweet, entrancing tale
Of One who suffered and who died ;—

And talked about a treasure, too,
 Through pain and suffering to be won,
 That lay beyond the rainbow arch, —
 Ay, and beyond the parent sun.

As the boy heard the simple words,
 From out his eyes the fierce fire fled,
 And straight an unseen presence wove
 A calmer splendor round his head.

And so his young life ebbed away ;
 His heart was still, his limbs were cold ;
 But by the smile upon his face
 They knew he'd found the pot of gold !



MINOT'S LEDGE.

LIKE spectral hounds across the sky
 The white clouds scud before the storm,
 And naked in the howling night
 The red-eyed lighthouse lifts its form.
 The waves with slippery fingers clutch
 The massive tower, and climb and fall,
 And, muttering, growl with baffled rage
 Their curses on the sturdy wall.

Up in the lonely tower he sits,
 The keeper of the crimson light, —
 Silent and awe-struck does he hear
 The imprecations of the night.

The white spray beats against the panes,
Like some wet ghost that down the air
Is hunted by a troop of fiends,
And seeks a shelter anywhere.

He prays aloud — the lonely man —
For every soul that night at sea,
But more than all for that brave boy
Who used to gayly climb his knee, —
Young Charley, with the chestnut hair
And hazel eyes and laughing lip :
“May Heaven look down,” the old man cries,
“Upon my son, and on his ship !”

While thus with pious heart he prays,
Far in the distance sounds a boom :
He pauses, and again there rings
That sullen thunder through the room.
A ship upon the shoal to-night !
She cannot hold for one half-hour !
But clear the ropes and grappling-hooks,
And trust in the Almighty Power !

On the drenched gallery he stands,
Striving to pierce the solid night ;
Across the sea the red eye throws
A steady wake of crimson light,
And where it falls upon the waves
He sees a human head float by,
With long, drenched curls of chestnut hair,
And wild but fearless hazel eye.

Out with the hooks! One mighty fling!
 Adown the wind the long rope curls.
 O, will it catch? Ah, dread suspense!
 While the wild ocean wilder whirls.
 A steady pull — it tautens now!
 O, his old heart will burst with joy
 As on the slippery rocks he drags
 The breathing body of his boy.

Still sweep the spectres through the sky,
 Still scud the clouds before the storm,
 Still naked in the howling night
 The red-eyed lighthouse lifts its form.
 Without, the world is wild with rage,
 Unkennelled demons are abroad,
 But with the father and the son,
 Within, there is the peace of God.



THE LEGEND OF EASTER EGGS.

TRINITY bells with their hollow lungs,
 And their vibrant lips and their brazen tongues,
 Over the roofs of the city pour
 Their Easter music with joyous roar,
 Till the soaring notes to the sun are rolled
 As he swings along in his path of gold.

“Dearest papa,” says my boy to me,
 As he merrily climbs on his mother’s knee,

“ Why are these eggs that you see me hold
Colored so finely with blue and gold ?
And what is the wonderful bird that lays
Such beautiful eggs upon Easter days ? ”

Tenderly shine the April skies,
Like laughter and tears in my child's blue eyes,
And every face in the street is gay, —
Why cloud this youngster's by saying nay ?
So I cudgel my brains for the tale he begs,
And tell him this story of Easter eggs : —

You have heard, my boy, of the Man who died,
Crowned with keen thorns and crucified ;
And how Joseph the wealthy — whom God reward ! —
Cared for the corse of his martyred Lord,
And piously tumbled it within the rock,
And closed the gate with a mighty block.

Now close by the tomb a fair tree grew,
With pendulous leaves, and blossoms of blue ;
And deep in the green tree's shadowy breast
A beautiful singing bird sat on her nest,
Which was bordered with mosses like malachite,
And held four eggs of an ivory white.

Now when the bird from her dim recess
Beheld the Lord in his burial dress,
And looked on the heavenly face so pale,
And the dear hands pierced with the cruel nail,
Her heart nigh broke with a sudden pang,
And out of the depths of her sorrow she sang.

All night long till the moon was up
She sat and sang in her moss-wreathed cup,

A song of sorrow as wild and shrill
As the homeless wind when it roams the hill,
So full of tears, so loud and long,
That the grief of the world seemed turned to song.

But soon there came through the weeping night
A glittering angel clothed in white ;
And he rolled the stone from the tomb away,
Where the Lord of the earth and the heavens lay ;
And Christ arose in the cavern's gloom,
And in living lustre came from the tomb.

Now the bird that sat in the heart of the tree
Beheld this celestial mystery,
And its heart was filled with a sweet delight,
And it poured a song on the throbbing night ;
Notes climbing notes, till higher, higher,
They shot to heaven like spears of fire.

When the glittering, white-robed angel heard
The sorrowing song of the grieving bird,
And, after, the jubilant pæan of mirth
That hailed Christ risen again on earth,
He said, "Sweet bird, be forever blest,
Thyself, thy eggs, and thy moss-wreathed nest !"

And ever, my child, since that blessed night,
When death bowed down to the Lord of light,
The eggs of that sweet bird change their hue,
And burn with red and gold and blue,
Reminding mankind in their simple way
Of the holy marvel of Easter day.

DOWN IN THE GLEN AT IDLEWILD.

THE red moon, like a golden grape,
Hangs slowly ripening in the sky,
And o'er the helmets of the hills
Like plumes the summer lightnings fly.
The solemn pine-trees stoop above
The brook, that, like a sleeping child,
Lies babbling of its simple dreams
Down in the glen at Idlewild.

The red mill in the distance sleeps, —
The old mill that, when winter comes,
Wakes to a wild, spasmodic life,
And through the rocky channel hums.
And starry-flowered water-plants,
With myriad eyes of moistened light,
Peep coyly from their sheltered nooks, —
The shy companions of the night.

But brighter than the starry flowers
There shine a maiden's lustrous eyes,
And yellower shines her yellow hair
Than the full moon that floods the skies,
As where the waters kiss the cliff
She waits for him, the pearl of men,
And idly plucks the ivy leaves,
And listens, and then waits again.

She waits to hear the well-known call,
The echoes of the agile foot,
The bursting of the lacing boughs,
The crackling of the fragile root ;

But ah ! the path is steep and dark,
 The jagged rocks lie far below ;
 And heaven must help the wight who slips,
 Up where those treacherous mosses grow.

At last he comes ! she hears his step !
 But ah ! what means that fearful crash ?
 Down the steep cliff a dark shape falls, —
 From rock to rock she sees it dash.
 Was it for this you waited long,
 O loving heart ! O hapless child !
 Dead at her feet her lover lies,
 Down in the glen at Idlewild !



WANTED — SAINT PATRICK.

I.

WHEN Irish hills were fair and green,
 And Irish fields were white with daisies,
 And harvests, golden and serene,
 Slept in the lazy summer hazes ;
 When bards went singing through the land
 Their grand old songs of knightly story,
 And hearts were found in every hand,
 And all was peace, and love, and glory ; —
 'T was in those happy, happy days
 When every peasant lived in clover,
 And in the pleasant woodland ways
 One never met the begging rover ;

When all was honest, large, and true,
And naught was hollow or theatric ; —
'T was in those days of golden hue
That Erin knew the great Saint Patrick.

II.

He came among the rustics rude
With shining robes and splendid crosier,
And swayed the listening multitude
As breezes sway the beds of osier.
He preached the love of man for man,
And moved the unlettered Celt with wonder,
Till through the simple crowd there ran
A murmur like repeated thunder.
He preached the grand Incarnate Word
By rock and ruin, hill and hollow,
Till warring princes dropped the sword
And left the fields of blood to follow.
For never yet did bardic song,
Though graced with harp and poet's diction,
With such strange charm enchain the throng
As that sad tale of crucifixion.

III.

Though fair the isle and brave the men,
Yet still a blight the land infested ;
Green vipers darted through each glen,
And snakes within the woodlands nested ;
And 'mid the banks where violets blew,
And on the slopes where bloomed the primrose,
Lurked spotted toads of loathsome hue,
And coiling, poisonous serpents grim rose.

Saint Patrick said : “The reptile race
Are types of human degradation ;
From other ills I’ve cleansed the place,
And now of these I’ll rid the nation.”
He waved his crosier o’er his head,
And lo ! each venomed thing took motion,
And toads and snakes and vipers fled
In terror to the circling ocean.

IV.

Why is Saint Patrick dead ? or why
Does he not seek this soil to aid us ?
To wave his mystic crook on high,
And rout the vermin that degrade us ?
Our land is fertile, broad, and fair,
And should be fairer yet and broader ;
But noxious reptiles taint the air,
And poison peace, and law, and order.
For murder stalks along each street,
And theft goes lurking through our alleys, —
What reptiles worse does traveller meet
On India’s hills, in Java’s valleys ?
And when we see this gambling host,
That ’mongst us practise this and that trick,
One knows not which would serve us most,
The Goddess Justice or Saint Patrick !

THE PRIZE-FIGHT.

I.

HAMMER and tongs ! What have we here ?
 Let us approach, but not too near.
 Two men standing breast to breast,
 Head erect and arching chest ;
 Shoulders square and hands hard clenched,
 And both their faces a trifle blenched.
 Their lips are set in a smile so grim,
 And sturdily set each muscular limb.
 Round them circles a ring of rope,
 Over them hangs the heavens' blue cope.
 Why do they glare at each other so ?
 What ! you really then don't know ?
 This is a prize-fight, gentle sir !
This is what makes the papers stir.
 Talk of your ocean telegraph !
 'Tis n't so great an event by half,
 As when two young men lusty and tall,
 With nothing between them of hate or wrongs,
 Come together to batter and maul,
 Come to fight till one shall fall, —
 Hammer and tongs !

II.

Round about is a bestial crowd,
 Heavily-jawed and beetle-browed ;
 Concave faces, trampled in
 As if with the iron hoof of sin ;
 Blasphemies dripping from off their lips,
 Pistols bulging behind their hips ;

Hands accustomed to deal the cards,
 Or strike with the cowardly knuckle-guards.
 Who are these ruffianly fellows, you say,
 That taint the breath of this autumn day?
 These are "the Fancy," gentle sir.
 The Fancy? What are they to *her*?
 O, 't is their fancy to look at a fight,
 To see men struggle, and gouge, and bite.
 Bloody noses and bunged-up eyes, —
 These are the things the Fancy prize.
 And so they get men, lusty and tall,
 With nothing between them of hate or wrongs,
 To come together to batter and maul,
 To come and fight till one shall fall, —
 Hammer and tongs!

III.

Grandly the autumn forests shine,
 Red as the gold in an Indian mine!
 A dreamy mist, a vapory smoke,
 Hangs round the patches of evergreen oak.
 Over the broad lake shines the sun, —
 The lake that Perry battled upon, —
 Striking the upland fields of maize
 That glow through the soft October haze.
 Nature is tracing with languid hand
 Lessons of peace over lake and land.
 Ay! yet this is the tranquil spot
 Chosen by bully, assassin, and sot
 To pit two young men, lusty and tall,
 With nothing between them of hate or wrongs,
 One with the other, to batter and maul,
 To tussle and fight till one shall fall, —
 Hammer and tongs!

IV.

Their faces are rich with a healthy hue,
Their eyes are clear, and bright, and blue ;
Every muscle is clean and fine,
And their blood is pure as the purest wine.
It is a pleasure their limbs to scan, —
Splendid types of the animal man,
Splendid types of that human grace,
The noblest that God has willed to trace,
Brought to this by science and art ;
Trained, and nourished, and kept apart ;
Cunningly fed on the wholesomest food,
Carefully watched in every mood ;
Brought to this state, so noble and proud,
To savagely tussle before a crowd, —
To dim the light of the eyes so clear,
To mash the face to a bloody smear,
To maim, deface, and kill, if they can,
The glory of all creation, — Man !
This the task of those, lusty and tall,
 With nothing between them of hate or wrongs, —
To bruise and wrestle, and batter and maul,
And fight till one or the other shall fall, —
 Hammer and tongs !

V.

With feet firm planted upon the sand,
Face to face at "the scratch" they stand.
Feinting first — a blow — a guard !
Then some hitting, heavy and hard.
The round fist falls with a horrible thud ;
Wherever it falls comes a spout of blood !

Blow after blow, fall after fall,
 For twenty minutes they tussle and maul.
 The lips of the one are a gory gash,
 The others are knocked to eternal smash !
 The bold, bright eyes are bloody and dim,
 And, staggering, shivers each stalwart limb.
 Faces glowing with stupid wrath,
 Hard breaths breathed through a bloody froth ;
 Blind and faint, they rain their blows
 On cheeks like jelly and shapeless nose ;
 While the concave faces around the rope
 Darken with panic or light with hope,
 Till one fierce brute, with a terrible blow,
 Lays the other poor animal low.
 Are these the forms so noble and proud,
 That, kinglike, towered above the crowd ?
 Where are the faces so healthy and fresh ?
 There ! those illegible masses of flesh !
 Thus we see men lusty and tall,
 Who, with nothing between them of hate or wrongs,
 Will bruise and batter, and tussle and maul,
 And fight till one or the other shall fall, —
 Hammer and tongs !

VI.

Trainers, backers, and betters all, —
 Who teach young men to tussle and maul,
 And spend their muscle, and blood, and life,
 Given for good, in a loathsome strife, —
 I know what the Devil will do for you,
 You pistolling, bullying, cowardly crew !
 He 'll light up his furnaces red and blue,
 And treat you all to a roast and stew ;

O, he'll do you up, and he'll do you brown,
 On pitchforks cleft into mighty prongs,
 While chuckling fiends your agonies crown
 By stirring you up and keeping you down
 With hammer and tongs!



THE SONG OF THE LOCOMOTIVE.

I.

FAST through the sombre pine-forests I flash,
 Pounding the track with monotonous crash,
 Lighting the gloom with a comet-like glare,
 Thrilling with noises unearthly the air,
 Startling the turkey and coon from their sleep, —
 Mighty with motion, resistless I sweep.

Bong! Bong!

Smashing along!

I lighten my road with a bit of a song!

II.

O, I can sing, though of iron my throat,
 And discordant my wild, supernatural note!
 And the song that I sing is of danger and dread,
 The midnight collision, the quivering dead;
 The power imperial that nothing can stay;
 The myriad of perils that lurk by the way.

Bong! Bong!

Crashing along!

I shorten the road with a bit of a song!

III.

Ho there, old stoker ! who think you control
 This iron-ribbed animal, body and soul ;
 Why, one pant of my lungs and one heave of my flank
 Would flash you down yonder precipitous bank ;
 So don't be too proud of your muscle and bones,
 For sixty feet down there are horrible stones !

Ding ! Dong !

Bumping along !

Don't think that I 'm singing your funeral song !

IV.

For I know that behind me I carry a treasure,
 And it thrills through my nerves with a singular pleasure.
 There the bride by her newly-wed husband reposes,
 And the bronze of his cheek is faint flushed by her roses ;
 And the pale mother sits with her babe at her bosom,
 Like a lily that just has unfolded a blossom.

Bong ! Bong !

Gently along !

Soft as the winds of the summer my song !

V.

But away with all sentiment ! I am a steed
 That lives on the wild inspiration of speed !
 I feed upon distance, I grapple with space ;
 My soul is a furnace, — my life is a race ;
 The long prairie shakes with my thunderous tread,
 And my dissonance curdles the air overhead !

Bong ! Bong !

Madly along !

The mountains I split with reverberant song !

VI.

Yet sometimes I think, when I'm housed for the night,
 I may live to behold the decay of my might ;
 For not far from my stable I often behold
 A decrepit old Loco, once gallant and bold ;
 Now his piston is gouty, his boiler is "bust,"
 And the gold of his harness is eaten with rust.

Ding! Dong!

Rotting so long,

With never a mouthful of coals, or a song!

VII.

O, better to die in the hour of my pride !
 Far better to perish in tunnel or tide !
 Ha ! what red light is this that's advancing amain ?
 'T is my rival returning, — the haughty down train !
 Clear the track ! I'm upon you ! Hurrah ! what a smash !
 There, old fellow, I think I have settled your hash !

Bong ! Bong !

Slowly along !

I'm rather too crippled to finish my song !



IRISH CASTLES.

'SWEET Norah, come here and look into the fire ;
 Maybe in its embers good luck we might see ;
 But don't come too near, or your glances so shining
 Will put it clean out, like the sunbeams, machree !

‘Just look ’twixt the sods, where so brightly they’re
burning :

There’s a sweet little valley, with river and trees,
And a house on the bank quite as big as the squire’s, —
Who knows but some day we’ll have something like
these ?

‘And now there’s a coach and four galloping horses,
A coachman to drive, and a footman behind ;
That betokens some day we will keep a fine carriage,
And dash through the streets with the speed of the
wind.’

As Dermot was speaking, the rain down the chimney
Soon quenched the turf-fire on the hollowed hearth-
stone, .

While mansion and carriage in smoke-circles vanished,
And left the poor dreamers dejected and lone.

Then Norah to Dermot these words softly whispered :

‘’T is better to strive than to vainly desire ;
And our little hut by the roadside is better
Than palace, and servants, and coach — in the fire !’

’T is years since poor Dermot his fortune was dreaming,
Since Norah’s sweet counsel effected his cure :
For ever since then hath he toiled night and morning,
And now his snug mansion looks down on the Suir.

LOCH INE.

I KNOW a lake where the cool waves break,
 And softly fall on the silver sand ;
 And no steps intrude on that solitude,
 And no voice save mine disturbs the strand :

And a mountain bold, like a giant of old,
 Turned to stone by some magic spell,
 Uprears in might his misty height,
 And his craggy sides are wooded well.

In the midst doth smile a little isle,
 And its verdure shames the emerald's green :
 On its grassy side, in ruined pride,
 A castle of old is darkling seen.

On its lofty crest the wild crane's nest ;
 In its halls the sheep good shelter find ;
 And the ivy shades where a hundred blades
 Were hung, when the owners in sleep reclined.

That chief of old, could he now behold
 His lordly tower a shepherd's pen,
 His corpse, long dead, from its narrow bed
 Would rise, with anger and shame, again.

'T is sweet to gaze when the sun's bright rays
 Are cooling themselves in the trembling wave ;
 But 't is sweeter far when the evening star
 Shines like a smile at friendship's grave.

There the hollow shells through their wreathed cells
Make music on the silent shore,
As the summer breeze, through the distant trees,
Murmurs in fragrant breathings o'er.

And the sea-weed shines like the hidden mines,
Or the fairy cities beneath the sea ;
And the wave-washed stones are bright as the thrones
Of the ancient kings of Araby.

If it were my lot in that fairy spot
To live forever and dream 't were mine,
Courts might woo and kings pursue
Ere I would leave thee, loved Loch Ine.



AN APRIL DAY.

THIS was the day — a year ago —
When first I saw her, sauntering slow
Over the meadow and down the lane,
Where the privet was shining with recent rain.

The world had flung its torpor away,
And breathed the pure air of the April day ;
The sap was pulsing through maple-trees,
And the rivers were rushing to meet the seas.

All the secret thrills that through nature run,
Silent and swift as the threads of the sun,
Shook with their tremors each growing thing,
And worked with the mystic charms of spring.

Like ghosts at the resurrection day,
The snowdrops arose from the torpid clay,
And the violets opened their purple eyes,
And smiled in the face of the tender skies.

The larch-trees were covered with crimson buds
Till their branches seemed streaming with sanguine floods ;
And the ivy looked faded, and old, and sere,
'Mid the greenness that sprouted everywhere.

But though the landscape was passing bright
Her coming lent it a rarer light ;
A tenderer verdure was on the grass,
And flowers grew brighter to see her pass.

Her form and face, as she moved along,
Seemed like a sweet, incarnate song, —
A living hymn that the earth, in glee,
Sung to heaven, the sun, and me.

So seemed she to me a year ago,
When first I saw her, sauntering slow
Over the meadow and down the lane,
Where the privet shone with the April rain.

The year is past — entombed — forgot :
I stand to-day on the selfsame spot :
Still do the pallid snowdrops rise,
And the violets open their purple eyes :

And a coming greenness is in the lane,
And the privet glistens with recent rain ;
The larches sprout, and the blue-birds sing,
And the earth resounds with the joy of spring !

But the joy of the world is gone from me ;
 I see no beauty in field or tree ;
 The flower that bloomed in my path is crushed ;
 The music that solaced my life is hushed.

I see her tombstone from where I stand, —
 Stark and stiff, like a ghastly hand
 Pointing to heaven, as if to say,
 There we shall meet, some April day !



JOHNNY.

I CARE not how you have been blest —
 No maiden ever yet possessed
 A lover like my lover.

His eyes were of a dancing blue ;
 His chestnut hair was just the hue
 That flecks the golden plover.

'T was on a dreamy night in June,
 When earth and heaven throbbed in tune,
 That first he told his passion.
 Together we were sauntering down
 The lonely road that led to town,
 In most romantic fashion.

He took my hand in his, and placed
 His other arm about my waist ;
 His heart went clicky clacket.
 And 'midst an incoherent flow
 Of protestations deep and low,
 He pressed me to — his jacket.

I eight and twenty years had seen,
And Johnny was not quite thirteen ;
 Yet justice I must render :
'Mid all the swains I 've had since then —
And some of them were charming men —
 I ne'er had one more tender.

He swore he loved me more than life ;
He 'd die if I were not his wife ;
 I was his only jewel ;
He dreamed of me by day and night ;
I was his sun, his star, his light, —
 In fact, all kinds of fuel.

I dared not let him see the smile
That glimmered on my lips the while
 He madly was entreating ;
For worlds I would not cause to smart
The honest, manly little heart
 That in his breast was beating.

Then he — ah ! cunning little Jack —
Rehearsed a speech from Telemaque —
 A fact he did not mention ;
While I, with half-averted face,
Kept listening, with the utmost grace
 And most profound attention.

He wished to fly to some far isle
Where summer skies forever smile,
 And fruits are in profusion ;
And there, away from haunts of men,
We 'd live the golden age again,
 In exquisite seclusion.

The sun of love our days should gild,
And stalwart he would straightway build
 A beautiful pavilion ;
And we would live on deer and fish,
With grapes as much as we could wish,
 And kisses by the million.

I listened gravely to his plan —
The loving, noble little man —
 So earnest and so funny ;
Then hinted that to reach this haunt
Of wedded bliss, why, we might want
 A little ready money.

The blow was fatal : Johnny's face
Grew solemn at a fearful pace,
 And silently we parted.
I went my way : he went to bed
Revolving finance in his head,
 And nearly broken-hearted.

I need not say we did not fly
To that eternal summer sky,
 So far across the water.
I hear no more of Telemaque, —
For I, in short, may say that Jack
 Is married to my daughter.

THE SKATERS.

LIKE clouds they scud across the ice,
His hand holds hers as in a vice ;
The moonlight strikes the back-blown hair
Of handsome Madge and Rupert Clare.

The ice resounds beneath the steel ;
It groans to feel his spurning steel ;
While ever with the following wind
A shadowy skater flits behind.

‘ Why skate we thus so far from land ?
O Rupert Clare, let go my hand !
I cannot see — I cannot hear —
The wind about us moans with fear ! ’

His hand is stiffer than a vice,
His touch is colder than the ice,
His face is paler than the moon
That paves with light the lone lagoon !

‘ O Rupert Clare, I feel — I trace
A something awful in your face !
You crush my hand — you sweep me on —
Until my breath and sense are gone ! ’

His grasp is stiffer than a vice,
His touch is colder than the ice ;
She only hears the ringing tune
Of skates upon the lone lagoon.

‘O Rupert Clare! sweet Rupert Clare!
 For heaven’s mercy hear my prayer!
 I could not help my heart you know!
 Poor Willy Gray, — he loves me so!’

His grip is stiffer than a vice,
 His lip is bluer than the ice;
 While ever thrills the ringing tune
 Of skates along the lone lagoon.

‘O Rupert Clare! where are your eyes?
 The rotten ice before us lies!
 You dastard! Loose your hold, I say! —
 O God! Where are you, Willy Gray?’

A shriek that seems to split the sky, —
 A wilder light in Rupert’s eye, —
 She cannot — cannot loose that grip;
 His sinewy arm is round her hip!

But like an arrow on the wind
 The shadowy skater scuds behind;
 The lithe ice rises to the stroke
 Of steel-shod heels that seem to smoke.

He hurls himself upon the pair;
 He tears his bride from Rupert Clare;
 His fainting Madge, whose moist eyes say,
 Ah! here, at last, is Willy Gray!

The lovers stand with heart to heart, —
 ‘No more,’ they cry, ‘no more to part!’
 But still along the lone lagoon
 The steel skates ring a ghostly tune!

And in the moonlight, pale and cold,
The panting lovers still behold
The self-appointed sacrifice
Skating toward the rotten ice!



THE DEMON OF THE GIBBET.

THERE was no west, there was no east,
No star abroad for eye to see ;
And Norman spurred his jaded beast
Hard by the terrible gallows-tree.

‘O Norman, haste across this waste, —
For something seems to follow me!’
‘Cheer up, dear Maud, for, thanked be God,
We nigh have passed the gallows-tree!’

He kissed her lip : then — spur and whip!
And fast they fled across the lea!
But vain the heel and rowel steel, —
For something leaped from the gallows-tree!

‘Give me your cloak, your knightly cloak,
That wrapped you oft beyond the sea ;
The wind is bold, my bones are old,
And I am cold on the gallows-tree.’

‘O holy God! O dearest Maud,
Quick, quick, some prayers, — the best that be!
A bony hand my neck has spanned,
And tears my knightly cloak from me!’

‘Give me your wine, — the red, red wine,
 That in the flask hangs by your knee!
 Ten summers burst on me accurst,
 And I’m athirst on the gallows-tree.’

‘O Maud, my life! my loving wife!
 Have you no prayer to set us free?
 My belt unclasps, — a demon grasps
 And drags my wine-flask from my knee!’

‘Give me your bride, your bonnie bride,
 That left her nest with you to flee!
 O, she hath flown to be my own,
 For I’m alone on the gallows-tree!’

‘Cling closer, Maud, and trust in God!
 Cling close! — Ah, heaven, she slips from me!’ —
 A prayer, a groan, and he alone
 Rode on that night from the gallows-tree.



THE WHARF RAT.

I.

THE wharf is silent and black, and motionless lie the ships;
 The ebb-tide sucks at the piles with its cold and slimy lips;
 And down through the tortuous lane a sailor comes sing-
 ing along,
 And a girl in the Gallipagos isles is the burden of his
 song.

II.

Behind the white cotton bales a figure is crouching low ;
 It listens with eager ears, as the straggling footsteps go.
 It follows the singing sailor, stealing upon his track,
 And when he reaches the river-side, the wharf rat's at
 his back.

III.

A man is missing next day, and a paragraph tells the fact ;
 But the way he went, or the road he took, will never,
 never be tracked !
 For the lips of the tide are dumb, and it keeps such se-
 crets well,
 And the fate of the singing sailor boy the wharf rat alone
 can tell.



THE HAVELOCK.

ON southern uplands I was born,
 Kissed by the lips of the golden morn ;
 Strong, and tall, and straight was I,
 And my white plumes danced as the wind went by,
 Till the hills above and the vales below
 Seemed drowned in a mist of drifting snow.

But by and by my plumes were stripped
 By negroes lusty and dusky-lipped,
 And they bore me off to a darksome mill,
 With jaws and teeth that never were still ;
 And there I was mangled and whirled about,
 Till it chewed me up and it spat me out.

Bagged and bound with canvas and rope,
I hung on the edge of a dizzy slope,
Till I saw the panting steamer glide
Close to the edge of the terrible slide, —
When they pushed me over and let me go,
And swift as a bullet I plunged below.

So down the river they bore me then,
And passed me over to trading men,
And bartered me off, and shipped me to sea,
From the crowded wharf of the long levee ;
And so we sailed for many a day,
Till the mud of the Mersey around us lay.

Through dingy factories then I passed,
Where flickered the shuttle flashing fast ;
And British fingers all wan and thin
With labor, and hunger, and drink, and sin,
Twisted my threads, in the fetid gloom,
And wove them close on the whirring loom.

So back to my country I came again,
Fit for the uses of busy men ;
And the time went by, till one summer day
In a beautiful maiden's lap I lay,
While with scissors, and thimble, and needle, and thread,
She fashioned me thus for a soldier's head.

For the light of battle was in the sky,
And the armed thousands were hurrying by,
And the brawny farmer and slender clerk
Were side by side in the holy work ;
For a wondrous fire through the people ran, —
Through maid, and woman, and child, and man.

Ah! 't was a tender and sorrowful day
When the soldier lover went marching away;
For that selfsame morn he had called her bride,
As they stood at the altar side by side;
Then with one long kiss and a hushed good-by
He went with his comrades to do or die!

To-day I am on the selfsame earth
That nourished my parents and gave me birth;
But the waving snow is no longer there,
And muskets flash in the sunlit air,
And the hillside shakes with the heavy tramp
Of the hostile armies from camp to camp.

And the head that I cover is thinking now
Of the fair hands that placed me upon his brow,
And wonders whether, in the coming fight
That will redden these southern slopes to-night,
I shall safely ride through the stormy fray,
Or ownerless lie in the crimson clay.

And northward far, at the selfsame time
That he dreaming stands in this sunny clime,
The hands that made me are raised in prayer,
And her voice ascends through the silent air;
And if pureness and goodness have power to charm,
The head that I cover is safe from harm.

THE COUNTERSIGN.

ALAS ! the weary hours pass slow,
The night is very dark and still,
And in the marshes far below
I hear the bearded whippoorwill.
I scarce can see a yard ahead,
My ears are strained to catch each sound ;
I hear the leaves about me shed,
And the springs bubbling through the ground.

Along the beaten path I pace,
Where white rags mark my sentry's track ;
In formless shrubs I seem to trace
The foeman's form with bending back.
I think I see him crouching low,
I stop and list — I stoop and peer —
Until the neighboring hillocks grow
To groups of soldiers far and near.

With ready piece I wait and watch,
Until my eyes, familiar grown,
Detect each harmless earthen notch,
And turn guerillas into stone.
And then amid the lonely gloom,
Beneath the weird old tulip-trees,
My silent marches I resume,
And think on other times than these.

Sweet visions through the silent night !
The deep bay-windows fringed with vine,

The room within, in softened light,
The tender, milk-white hand in mine;
The timid pressure, and the pause
That oftentimes overcame our speech, —
That time when by mysterious laws
We each felt all in all to each.

And then that bitter, bitter day,
When came the final hour to part,
When, clad in soldier's honest gray,
I pressed her weeping to my heart.
Too proud of me to bid me stay,
Too fond of me to let me go, —
I had to tear myself away,
And left her stolid in her woe.

So comes the dream — so fleets the night —
When distant in the darksome glen,
Approaching up the sombre height,
I hear the solid march of men ;
Till over stubble, over sward,
And fields where gleams the golden sheaf,
I see the lantern of the guard
Advancing with the night relief.

“Halt ! who goes there ?” my challenge cry :
It rings along the watchful line.
“Relief !” I hear a voice reply.
“Advance, and give the countersign !”
With bayonet at the charge, I wait,
The corporal gives the mystic spell ;
With arms at port I charge my mate,
And onward pass, and all is well.

But in the tent that night awake,
 I think, if in the fray I fall,
 Can I the mystic answer make
 When the angelic sentries call?
 And pray that heaven may so ordain,
 That when I near the camp divine,
 Whate'er my travail or my pain,
 I yet may have the countersign.

CAMP CAMERON, *July*, 1861.



THE ZOUAVES.

To bugle-note and beat of drum
 They come, — the gallant Zouaves come!
 With gleams of blue and glints of red;
 With airy, light, elastic tread;
 With dashing, wild, insouciant air;
 With figures sinewy, lithe, and spare;
 With gait replete with fiery grace;
 With cloudless eye and boyish face,
 And agile play of feet and hands,
 Swift as a Bedouin of the sands,
 They come, — the gay Zouaves!

Lo! as they file along the green,
 I seem to see the Algerine!
 The marble piles of building fade,
 And the vast desert, without shade —
 Save where the oasis uplifts
 Its green plumes 'mid the sandy drifts —

Stretches before my dazzled sight
 While, rising o'er a distant height,
 On lean, swift steeds, with slender spears,
 The sallow Arab troop appears,
 To chase the French Zouaves !

They slope along the gold-red sand ;
 Their keen eyes sweep the sky and land ;
 The lean steeds snuff the desert wind ;
 The watchful vulture soars behind,
 But nothing moves upon the plain ;
 The keen eyes search the sands in vain.
 Before, behind, and left and right,
 A sandy ripple meets the sight :
 Not even these black-eyed devils know
 That, nigh yon sand-hill, lying low,
 Are crouched the brave Zouaves !

Four puffs of smoke that seem to float
 From out the earth, — a crackling note, —
 Four saddles emptied in the troop !
 Then, wild and shrill the Arab whoop,
 And, spurring with the stirruped feet,
 And dashing of the coursers fleet,
 And then — four puffs of smoke once more,
 Four saddles emptied as before.
 In vain their Allah they invoke, —
 With pertinacious puffs of smoke
 Reply the brave Zouaves !

Out of the earth, like Genii, rise
 The red Zouaves with flashing eyes,
 And on the sallow Arab troop
 Like hawks upon a bird they swoop,

With bayonet keen, with murderous gun,
 With curious, planned, erratic run,
 With sudden fall upon the sand,
 With quick deploy, with gun in hand :
 Thus like a meteor of the skies,
 Vivid with red and blue, arise
 The dauntless French Zouaves !

Over the tawny sands they fly,
 Now seem they far, now seem they nigh.
 They fire and fall, they fall and fire,
 They scud on limbs of sinewy wire ;
 In each manœuvre seeming wild,
 Each soldier 's docile as a child ;
 And even the fleetest Arab finds
 A foe that 's fleeter than the winds.
 Thus, outmanœuvred and outsped,
 He turns and hides his haughty head
 Before the French Zouaves !

Your Zouave corps, O haughty France !
 We looked on as a wild romance,
 And many a voice was heard to scoff
 At Algiers and at Malakoff ;
 Nor did we Yankees credit quite
 Their evolutions in the fight.
 But now we 're very sure what they
 Have done can here be done to-day,
 When thus before our sight deploys
 The gallant corps from Illinois, —
 American Zouaves !

A SOLDIER'S LETTER.

January 20, 1862.

WITH the head of a drum for my desk, I sit on a southern
slope,

While the sunlight streaks the apples that hang in the
orchard hard by,

And puzzle my brains over verses and many a marvellous
trope,

And vainly seek inspiration from out the sky.

What can I tell you now that you have not known before ?

How dearly I love you, Mary, and how hard the parting
was,

And how bravely you kissed my lips when we stood at the
open door,

And blessed me for going with heart and hand in the
cause !

O, sweet as a lily flushed with the red of the roses near

When beat by the hot, implacable sun above,

Was the hue of your angel face, as tear after tear

Rose to your ivory eyelids and welled with love !

War is not quite so hard as you poor townspeople think ;

We have plenty of food to eat, and a good, warm blanket
at night,

And now and then, you know, a quiet, moderate drink ;

Which does n't hurt us, dearest, and makes things
right.

But the greatest blessing of all is the total want of
care ;

The happy, complete reliance of the carefully-guardianed
child
Who has no thought for his dinner, and is given good
clothes to wear,
And whose leisure moments are with innocent sports
beguiled.
The drill of the soldier is pleasant, if one works with a
willing heart,
It is only the worthless fellow that grumbles at double-
quick ;
I like the ingenious manœuvres that constitute war an
art,
And not even the cleaning of arms can make me sick.

One of the comrades five that sleep in the tent with me
Is a handsome, fair-faced boy, with curling, sun-burned
hair ;
Like me, he has left a sweetheart on the shore of the
northern sea,
And, like her I love, he says she also is good and fair.
So we talk of our girls at night when the other chaps are
asleep, —
Talk in the sacred whispers that are low with the choke
of love, —
And often when we are silent I think I can hear him weep,
And murmur her name in accents that croon like the
nesting dove.
Then, when we are out on picket, and the nights are calm
and still,
When our beats lie close together, we pause and chatter
the same ;
And the weary hours pass swiftly, till over the distant hill
The sun comes up unclouded and fierce with flame.

The scene that I look on is lovely! The cotton-fields
smooth and white,

With the bending negroes shelling the flocculent, burst-
ing pods,

And the quiet sentinels slowly pacing the neighboring
height,

And now and then hidden by groups of the golden-rods.
Beautiful are the isles that mottle the slumberous bay ;

Beautiful are the azure veins of the creeks ;

Beautiful is the crimson that, far away,

Burns on the woods like the paint on an Indian's cheeks !
Beautiful are the thoughts of the time when — Hist !

What sound is that I hear? 'T is the rifle's continuous
crack !

The long-roll beats to arms! I must not — cannot be
missed.

Dear love, I'll finish this letter when I come back.

January 30.

Don't be startled, my darling, at this handwriting not
being mine :

I have been a little ill, and the comrade I spoke of before
Has kindly offered to take from my loving lips this line ;

So he holds, as you see, the pen I can hold no more.

That was a skirmish that came, as I wrote to you, out on
the hill ;

We had sharp fighting a while, and I lost my arm.

There! don't cry, my darling! — it will not kill,

And other poor fellows there met greater harm.

I have my left arm still to fold you close to my heart,

All the strength of my lost one will pass into that, I
know ;

We soon shall be together, never, never to part,

And to suffer thus for your country is bliss, not woe!

THE PRISONER OF WAR.

As I lie in my cot at night, and look through the open
door,
And watch the silken sky that is woven with threads
of stars,
While the white tents sleep on the field like sheep on a
tawny moor,
And the hushed streets traverse the camp like dusky
bars,
I think of my comrade afar, lying down in a southern
cell,
With his life on a paper lot and a loving heart on his
life,
And my blood boils up in my veins, and I feel like a fiend
of hell,
And I long to vent my hate and my rage in strife.

I loved him with all my love ; loved him even as well as
she
Whose hair he carried away in a locket close to his
heart ;
I remember how jealous I felt when under the sycamore-
tree,
The night ere the regiment started, I saw them part.
We had been chums together, — had studied and drank
in tune ;
The joy or the grief that struck him rebounded also
on me, —

As his joy arose mine followed, as waters follow the moon,
And his tears found their way to my heart as a stream
to the sea.

I sing the irregular song of a soul that is bursting with
pain !

There is no metre for sorrow, no rhythm for real despair :
Go count the feet of the wind as it tramples the naked
plain,

Or mimic the silent sadness of snow in the air !
I cannot control my heart, nor my innate desire of song,
I only know that a wild and impetuous grief,
A fierce, athletic, vengeful feeling of wrong,
Beats at my brain to-night and must have relief !

Spite of all I do to crush it, his sorrowful face will come,
Come with its awful framework of interlaced bars and
stone,

And out of his patient visage, and lips that are terribly
dumb,

I hear the imprisoned whisper, "I am alone !"
Solitude thus for him, the life and soul of his throng ;
Whose wit electric wakened the sluggish board ;
Whose voice, though sweet in converse, was sweeter still
in song ;
Whose heart like a cornucopia always poured !

I mind me when by the Charles River we twain have
walked,

Close to the elms so hallowed in unwritten song,
And over the college topics gravely pondered and talked,
With devious student ideas of right and wrong.

Ah! the river flows there in its usual placid way ;
The wherries are moored at the boat-house, the elm-
trees leaf and fall,
But there is not a voice that now could make the old
college gay,
His dusty cap and his gown are worth them all.

How can he be a prisoner there when I have him here in
my heart ?

Closer I hold his image than they in the south hold him ;
It is wrapped and corded with fibres that never, never
will part,
And shrined in love and friendship instead of a dun-
geon grim.

Up on the fatal bluff where the gallant Baker fell,
And the foe, insidious, fired from thicket, and copse,
and tree, —

There, after fighting long, and bravely, and well,
The friend of my heart was cut off as a stream by the sea !

Lying here in my tent at night, and looking out at the
door,

It is I who am the prisoner, not you, O beloved friend !
It is I who feel the shackles, and the prick of the healing
sore,

And all the prison sufferings without end.
I see the mocking faces all day through the windows
stare, —

I know they are staring at you, but they sneeringly
lower on me, —

And I swear an oath as sacred as a soldier ever can swear
That I will be with you there, or you will be free !

WINTER.

COLD wind, white snow,
Sweeps fast, falls slow,
And chills the landscape's autumn glow ;
The ice-bolts freeze
The naked trees,
And seal the old year's obsequies.

A leaden sky
Droops heavily,
As dull and glazed as dead man's eye ;
The sweeping clouds,
In cold, cold crowds,
Enfold the day with ghostly shrouds.

The woods lie bare,
And here and there
The gray moss hangs its mournful hair ;
The leaves sun-burned,
By fierce winds spurned,
Lie mouldering 'mid the soil inurned.

The leafless lines
Of trailing vines
Stretch, harp-like, through the sounding pines ;
From their festoons
Float wailing croons,
As weird and grim as northern runes.

The day is cold,
 The earth is old,
 And mourns her summer's squandered gold ;
 The birds are dumb,
 The springs are numb,
 For winter in his might has come.



THE SEWING BIRD.

I.

A CHIMNEY'S shadow, flung by the sun
 As it sank in the west when the day was done,
 Silent and dark as the noiseless bat
 Crept through the room where the work-girl sat, —
 Where she sat all day at her poor pine table,
 Working, as long as her hands were able,
 On shirt and collar and chemisette,
 On gowns of silk and on veils of net,
 Till her busy fingers seemed to be
 A skeleton kind of machinery.
 The table was strewn with threads of silk,
 With pearly buttons that shone like milk,
 With gaudy stuffs of a thousand dyes,
 And beads that gleamed in the gloom like eyes ;
 While in the midst of these beautiful things
 Glimmered a Sewing Bird's silver wings.
 But the blankets that lay on her bed were poor,
 And cracks were plain in the crazy door,
 The roof was low and the floor was old,
 And the work-girl shivered as if a-cold ;

And to judge by the veins in her wan white hand,
She did not live on the fat of the land.

II.

Now when the shadow crept through the room,
Filling the place with a cheerless gloom,
So that the weary work was stopped,
Her thin, mechanical hands she dropped,
And gazed at the wall so bare and bald,
Where the shadowy feet of the twilight crawled.
If at that moment she dreamed at all,
Or peopled with visions the cold, white wall,
She thought perhaps of that one bright day,
In the month of June or the month of May,
When, rich with the savings of many a week,
She felt fresh winds blow over her cheek,
As, with friends as poor and lowly as she,
She caught her first glimpse of the calm, blue sea,
Or roamed by copses or sunny lea,
And learned how bright the world could be.
But I doubt if the poor are rich in dreams,
Or build fine castles by golden streams ;
For want, like frost-bite, kills the grain
That Fancy sows in the teeming brain,
And it is not every dreamy stare
That is filling with fairies the twilight air.

III.

Yet still she sat, and, it may be, dreamed —
I hope so — until there suddenly seemed
To sweep through the room a rustle of wings,
With a tinkling as if of silver rings,

And then a low and a soaring song,
 That every instant grew more strong.
 She looked at wall and window and floor,
 She peered through the gloom at the crazy door ;
 Nothing was visible anywhere,
 Yet still the song was thrilling the air ;
 Then she turned her eyes to the table of pine,
 And saw something shiver and dimly shine ;
 And lo ! from the midst of the shreds of silk,
 And the pearly buttons that shone like milk,
 There came the song of the silver rings,
 And the gleam and flutter of shining wings ;
 As up from the table the Sewing Bird sprang,
 While singing it soared, and soaring it sang :—

*“ Follow me up and follow me down,
 Hither and thither, through all the town ;
 For there are lessons that must be taught,
 And there are changes that must be wrought,
 And there are wrongs that the world shall know, —
 So follow, follow, where'er I go ! ”*

IV.

Then the work-girl rose from her rickety chair,
 And opened the door that led on the stair,
 While swift overhead the Sewing Bird flew,
 And carolled and fluttered as if it knew
 That it led her spirit in threads as strong
 As the chains of love or the poet's song ;
 While ever there rang through the corridor hollow
 The silvery strain of *“ Follow ! Follow ! ”*

V.

So down the avenue of Broadway,
Where the lamp-light shone like an amber day,
The Sewing Bird led the maiden along,
To the airy tune of its fairy song.
They came to a palace ornate and tall,
With marble pillars and marble wall,
And windows of glass so large and clear
That the panes seemed lucid as atmosphere.
The work-girl stopped as the crowd went by,
And gazed through the windows with wistful eye ;
For the walls were splendid with paint and gold,
The couches were fit for the Sybarites old,
And the floor was soft with the Brussels woof,
And flowery frescos ran over the roof,
While a delicate radiance from globes of glass
Fell soft as sunlight upon the grass.

VI.

Who are the princes — the work-girl thought —
That dwell in this palace by Genii wrought ?
She looked, and beheld some dozen or ten
Young and excessively nice young men ;
Their faces were beardless, rosy, and fair,
An astonishing curl was in their hair,
Their feet were squeezed into shiny boots,
Their nails were pink, and white at the roots,
Their hands were as taper, their limbs as fine,
As an Arab maiden's in Palestine ;
Their waistcoats were miracles to behold,
Ribbed with velvet and flecked with gold ;

And perfect rivers of watch-chain ran
 Over the breast of each nice young man.
 But you could not see in a single face
 Of courage or manhood the faintest trace ;
 Through every feature the sentiment ran,
 " If you please, I would rather not be a man !"
 One of them sat in an easy chair,
 With smirking, impudent, indolent air,
 Blandly explaining, with smile serene,
 The merits of Cantator's sewing-machine ;
 While others lounged through the gorgeous room,
 Diffusing the odors of Lubin's perfume,
 Or gossiping over the last new play,
 Or their " spree " last week — and " Was n't it gay ?"
 But the crowd at the windows thought them sublime
 And wished that they had such an easy time.
 As the work-girl gazed at this splendid array
 Of Cantator's youths on show in Broadway,
 She gathered her shawl round her wasted form,
 While her breath congealed on the window-panes warm,
 And sighed, " Ah me ! ah me ! ah me !
This is the place where I should be !"

VII.

Then the Sewing Bird swelled his silvery throat,
 And trilled through the air his crystalline note : —
*" Follow me up and follow me down,
 Hither and thither, through all the town ;
 For there are still more splendid marts,
 That never will warm the work-girls' hearts,
 And the lesson is still to be fully learned
 How woman's pittance by man is earned !"*

VIII.

'T was a vast, majestic dry-goods store,
 Into whose portals from every shore
 Came cashmeres, satins, and silks, and shawls,
 To flood the counters and fill the halls :
 There Paris sent its delicate gloves,
 With mantles, "Such beauties!" and bonnets, "Such
 loves!"

And China yielded from primitive looms
 Its silks shot over with changeable blooms,
 While India's golden tissues blent
 With camel's-hair from the Syrian's tent.
 At each counter was something, — not man, not boy, —
 A sort of effeminate hobbledehoy,
 And over the laces it simpered and smiled,
 And blandly each feminine idiot beguiled
 With "Charmingest fashion!" and "Is n't it sweet?"
 "Just allow me to show you — remarkably neat!"
 "No pattern is like it — on honor — in town,
 Just becomes your complexion, — shall I put it down?"
 And its frippery fingers went dabbling through tapes,
 And its glozing discourse was of trimmings and capes,
 And to see its expressionless eyes you 'd have thought
 That its soul, like its tapes, had been long ago bought.
 As the work-girl gazed on this muscleless crew,
 Who were doing the things she was suited to do,
 She sighed, "Ah me! ah me! ah me!
 This is the place where I should be!"

IX.

Then the Sewing Bird swelled his silvery throat,
 And uttered a piercing, reverberant note :—

*“ Follow me here, and follow me there,
 Out through the free-blowing mountain air,
 Up to the heart of the healthy hill,
 Deep in the heart of the backwoods still ;
 For the lesson still remains for you —
 To show you the labor that men should do.”*

X.

Up in a wild Californian hill,
 Where the torrents swept with a mighty will,
 And the grandeur of nature filled the air,
 And the cliffs were lofty, rugged, and bare,
 Some thousands of lusty fellows she saw
 Obeying the first great natural law.
 From the mountain's side they had scooped the earth
 Down to the veins where the gold had birth,
 And the mighty pits they had girdled about
 With ramparts massive, and wide, and stout ;
 And they curbed the torrents, and swept them round
 Wheresoever they willed, through virgin ground.
 They rocked huge cradles the livelong day,
 And shovelled the heavy, tenacious clay,
 And grasped the nugget of gleaming ore,
 The sinew of commerce on every shore.
 Their beards were rough and their eyes were bright,
 For their labor was healthy, their hearts were light ;
 And the kings and princes of distant lands
 Blessed the work of their stalwart hands.

Then high o'er the shovel's and pickaxe's clang
 Loudly the song of the Sewing Bird rang :—

“*See, see, see, see!*”

THIS is the place where MEN should be!”

And he soared once more through the boundless air,
While the work-girl followed him, wondering where.

XI.

She saw a region of mighty woods
Stretching away for millions of roods ;
The odorous cedar and pine-tree tall,
And the live oak, the grandest among them all,
And the solemn hemlock, massive and grim,
Claiming broad space for each mighty limb.
Then she heard the clang of the woodman's axe
Booming along through the lumber-tracks,
And she heard the crack of the yielding trunk,
As deeper and deeper the keen axe sunk,
And the swishing fall — the sonorous thrill —
And the following stillness, more than still.
Then, moving among the avenues dim,
She saw the lumbermen, giant of limb ;
The frankness of heaven was in each face,
And their forms were grand with untutored grace ;
Their laugh was hearty, their blow was strong,
And sweet as the wood-notes their working song,
As they hewed the limbs from the giant tree,
And stripped off his leafy mystery ;
They breathed the air with elastic lungs,
They trolled their ditties with mirthful tongues,
And to see it would do a citizen good,
With what unction they relished their homely food ;
For their hunger was keen as their trenchant axe,
And their jokes as broad as their brawny backs.

Then the Sewing Bird sang, again and again,
 As he soared o'er the sonorous woods of Maine,
 "See, see, see, see !"
 THIS *is the place where MEN should be !*"
 And he floated once more through the azure air,
 And the work-girl followed him, wondering where.

XII.

Vast plateaus of loamy land she saw,
 Quickening with life in the early thaw.
 The pulse of the waking spring she heard,
 And the broken trills of the gladdened bird,
 And the teams afield with their heavy plod
 As they dragged the share through the juicy sod.
 Through the crisp, clear air she heard the voice
 Of sturdy ploughmen and farmer-boys,
 And a busy din from the farm-yards rang,
 And she heard the spades in the furrows clang.
 Then a sudden change swept over the scene,
 As the summer sun with a light serene
 Smiled upon cottage and field and fold,
 And reddened the harvests of waving gold.
 Then down through the golden sea there came
 The mowers swarthy and stout of frame ;
 And the cradle-scythe in their hands they swung
 Till the hiss of the blade through the grain-fields rung,
 As they cut their way with a mighty motion,
 Like sharp-prowed ships in a yellow ocean.

Then the Sewing Bird sang like a mellow horn,
 As it soared o'er Ohio's land of corn,
 "See, see, see, see !"
 THIS *is the place where MEN should be !*"

XIII.

The work-girl sat in her attic room,
Cold and silent, and wrapped in gloom ;
There was no longer a glimmer of day,
And the Sewing Bird still on the table lay.
The voice was silent that once had sung,
And silent forever the silver tongue ;
But she pondered long on the strange decree
That she, wherever she turned, must see
Men in the places where women should be !



A SUMMER IDYL.

It was a moonlit summer night ;
The heavens were drenched with silver rain,
And frowning rose Katahdin's height
Above the murmuring woods of Maine.

Close by our resting-place a stream
That seemed to long to kiss our feet
Sang, as it went, some fairy theme, —
Musical, low, and incomplete.

The world was hushed, but nothing slept.
The cricket shrilled amid the sheaves,
And through the mighty woods there crept
The mystic utterances of leaves.

Never had moonbeams shone so bright,
Never had earth seemed half so fair ;
I loved the stream, the trees, the night,
The wondrous azure of the air.

And through my very finger-tips
I felt the full enjoyment thrill ;
I wished I could with loving lips
Kiss the sweet moon that crowned the hill !

Ah, why ? Another moon I knew,
Less luminous, but all as fair,
Above my shoulder shining, through
A wondrous haze of golden hair ; —

Shining as once Diana shone
Upon the boy, in Ida's grove ;
Her stooping face, no longer wan,
Flushed in the harvest-time of love.

So not for me that orb serene,
That grandly crowned the mountain-crest ;
And, turning to my proper queen,
I drew her down upon my breast.

' O Amy,' said I, ' shine on me
Through all my life as that moon shines,
Shedding o'er each asperity
The light that softens and refines ; —

' So mildly, that my eyes can rest
Untiring on your gentle face,
Yet not so distant but my breast
May be your happy resting-place.

' Bestow that sweet, attractive spell
That draws the sea toward the skies,
And let my tide of being swell
Beneath the lustre of your eyes.

' And if some sullen cloud should sail
'Twi'xt you and me in social space,
Why, when 't is past I will inhale
A sweeter influence from your face.

' Be changeful, too, like that sweet moon !
Change is the law of earthly life,
And nature hums the varying tune
Of weal and woe, of peace and strife.'

She ruffled all her yellow hair,
But, answering not a single word,
Veiled in the dusky twilight air,
She nestled to me like a bird.

And in the vague electric spark,
Felt only when cheek touches cheek,
I knew through all the shadows dark
The promise that she did not speak.

O blessed moonlit summer night !
When earth seemed drenched with silver rain,
And frowning rose Katahdin's height
Above the murmuring woods of Maine.

BY THE PASSAIC.

WHERE the river seeks the cover
Of the trees whose boughs hang over,
And the slopes are green with clover,
 In the quiet month of May ;
Where the eddies meet and mingle,
Babbling o'er the stony shingle,
 There I angle,
 There I dangle,
 All the day.

O, 't is sweet to feel the plastic
Rod, with top and butt elastic,
Shoot the line in coils fantastic,
 Till, like thistle-down, the fly
Lightly drops upon the water,
Thirsting for the finny slaughter,
 As I angle,
 And I dangle,
 Mute and sly.

Then I gently shake the tackle,
Till the barbed and fatal hackle
In its tempered jaws shall shackle
 That old trout, so wary grown.
Now I strike him ! joy ecstatic !
Scouring runs ! leaps acrobatic !
 So I angle,
 So I dangle,
 All alone.

Then when grows the sun too fervent,
And the lurking trouts, observant,
Say to me, 'Your humble servant!
Now we see your treacherous hook!'
Maud, as if by hazard wholly,
Saunters down the pathway slowly,
While I angle,
There to dangle
With her hook.

Then somehow the rod reposes,
And the book no page uncloses ;
But I read the leaves of roses
That unfold upon her cheek ;
And her small hand, white and tender,
Rests in mine. Ah ! what can send her
Thus to dangle
While I angle ?
Cupid, speak !

THE THREE GANNETS.

I.

ON a wrinkled rock, in a distant sea,
Three white gannets sat in the sun ;
They shook the brine from their feathers so fine,
And lazily, one by one,
They sunnily slept — while the tempest crept.

II.

In a painted boat, on a distant sea,
Three fowlers sailed merrily on,
And each took aim, as he came near the game,
And the gannets fell, one by one,
And fluttered and died — while the tempest sighed.

III.

Then a cloud came over the distant sea,
A darkness came over the sun,
And a storm-wind smote on the painted boat,
And the fowlers sank, one by one,
Down, down with their craft — while the tempest laughed.

THE SEA.

EBB and flow ! ebb and flow !
By basalt crags, through caverns low,
Through rifted rocks, o'er pebbly strand,
On windy beaches of naked sand !

To and fro ! to and fro !
Chanting ever and chanting slow,
Thy harp is swept with liquid hands,
And thy voice is breathing of distant lands !

Sweet and low ! sweet and low !
Those golden echoes I surely know.
Thy lips are rich with the lazy south,
And the tuneful icebergs have touched thy mouth.

Come and go ! come and go !
The sun may shine and the winds may blow,
But thou wilt forever sing, O sea !
And I never, ah ! never, shall sing like thee !

December, 1854.

WILLY AND I.

WE grew together in wind and rain,
We shared the pleasure, we shared the pain ;
I would have died for him, and he,
I thought, would have done the same for me, —
 Willy and I.

Summer and winter found us together,
Through snow and storm and shiny weather ;
Together we hid in the scented hay,
Or plucked the blooms of our English May, —
 Willy and I.

I called him husband, he called me wife,
We builded the dream of a perfect life :
He was to conquer some noble state,
And I was to love him through every fate, —
 Willy and I.

O, he was so fair, with his golden hair,
And his breath was sweet as our homestead air !
My cheeks were red, — and the neighbors said,
A thousand pities we were not wed, —
 Willy and I.

Now I stand alone in the wind and rain,
With none of the pleasure and all the pain ;
I am a beggar, and Willy is dead,
And the blood of another is on his head, —
 Willy and I.

THE CHALLENGE.

A WARRIOR hung his plumed helm
On the rugged trunk of an aged elm ;
'Where is the knight so bold,' he cried,
'That dares my haughty crest deride ?'

The wind came by with a sullen howl,
And dashed the helm on the pathway foul,
And shook in scorn each sturdy limb, —
For where was the knight that could fight with him ?



WHEN I CAME BACK FROM SEA.

WHEN we set sail to chase the whale
From old Nantucket Bay,
O, a lighter, merrier heart than mine
Never yet sailed away !
While some were sad, and none was glad,
I was singing with glee ;
For I was to marry sweet Maggie Gray
When I came back from sea.

Her hair was brown as the kelp that drifts
Where sea-currents come and go ;
Like gentians peeping through snowy rifts,
Her blue eyes shone in snow.

And further down the sea-pink grew,
Healthy, hardy, and free ;
And all these treasures would be mine
When I came back from sea.

Wherever I went in the far, far south,
In strait or in calm lagoon,
My heart, like the cheerful heart it was,
Kept singing a merry tune.
It shortened the watch of the weary nights,
It lightened my work for me ;
For it sang, ' You 'll marry sweet Maggie Gray
When you come back from sea.'

My comrades too, though rude and rough,
Ever ready to give and take,
Were gentle, — for all of them knew my bird,
And were kind to me for her sake ;
And none ever dared, in our fo'castle games,
To make ribald jests to me ;
For I was to marry sweet Maggie Gray
When I came back from sea.

For three long years we sailed and whaled,
Until we had filled our hold ;
Then homeward sped, while every head
Was running on wages and gold.
But I did not care what would be my share,
However large it might be ;
My only thought was of Maggie Gray,
As I came back from sea.

At last one day we saw the bay
And the old Nantucket shore ;
I landed and ran like an Indian man
To Maggie's cottage door.
But the door was barred, and there was not a soul
To give word or welcome to me ;
For Maggie Gray had gone away,
And I — had come back from sea !

I ran like mad through the little town,
And questioned all I met ;
But I only got a shake of the head,
Or a look of sad regret ;
Until old Ben — a rough man too —
Came kindly up to me,
Saying, ' Lad, 't were better a thousand times
You 'd never come back from sea.'

Then I heard it all, — how a gay gallant
Had come from Boston down,
And robbed the nest of my little pet bird,
And carried her off to town ;
While I was left with a broken heart,
And nothing to welcome me,
But a tale of shame and a ruined name,
When I came back from sea.

AN OLD STORY.

THE snow falls fast in the silent street,
And the wind is laden with cutting sleet,
And there is a pitiless glare in the sky,
As a haggard woman goes wandering by.

The rags that wrap her wasted form
Are frozen stiff in the perishing storm,
And she is so cold that the snow-flakes rest
Unmelted upon her marble breast.

Ah! who could believe that those rayless eyes
Were once as sunny as April skies,
And the flowers she plucked in the early spring
Loved to be touched by so pure a thing?

'T is past, — and the fierce wind, shrieking by,
Drowns the faint gasp of her parting sigh;
And lifeless she falls at the outer gate
Of him who has left her desolate!

Silently falls the snow on her face,
Clothing her form in its stainless grace;
As though God, in his mercy, had willed that she
Should die in a garment of purity.

HELEN LEE.

ROSY-CHEEKED, dark-haired October
Through the land was passing gayly,
Crowned with maize-leaves, and behind him
Followed Plenty with her horn,
Calling in the later harvests,
Flattering the chuckling farmer,
Pelting him with ruddy apples,
And with shocks of yellow corn.

He it was whose royal pleasure
Clothed the woods in gold and purple ;
He it was whose fickle pleasure
Clothed them, stripped, and left them bare ;
Then, as if in late contrition,
Summoned back the truant summer,
Wove of smoke an azure mantle
For the shivering earth to wear.

Poor amends the Indian summer
Made, with all its pitying sunshine,
For the loss of leafy glory,
Painted flower, and singing bird ;
So from rocks, and trees, and hedges,
From the fallen leaves and grasses,
Came a sound of mourning, as the
Melancholy breezes stirred.

Yet the train of hale October
 Rang with laughter, song, and dancing,
 As the young men and the maidens
 Sang and danced the harvest-home ;
 As from many a low-roofed farmhouse
 Flashed the lights of merry-making,
 Rose the note of ready-making
 For the merriment to come.

Pleasant was the starry evening,
 Pleasant, though the air was chilly,
 When the youths and maidens gathered
 At the call of David Lee, —
 David Lee, the hearty farmer,
 Who had wrestled with his acres,
 And in barn, and stack, and cellar
 Stored the spoils of victory.

As the beaks of captured vessels,
 Gilded ensigns, suits of armor,
 Shone as trophies on the temples
 Of the gods, in classic days,
 So around the farmer's kitchen
 Hung long rows of golden melons ;
 So along the farmer's rafters
 Hung festoons of perfect maize.

Not a child had Farmer David, —
 He had known the loss of children,
 Known a parent's voiceless anguish,
 When the rose forsakes the cheek, —

When the hand grows thin and thinner,
And the pulses fainter, feebler, —
When the eyes are sunk and leaden,
 And the tongue forgets to speak.

One bright spring a pair of rosebuds,
Growing in the father's garden,
Filled his hope with crimson promise,
 They were gone in early June.
Then there came a tiny daughter,
Learned to kiss and call him 'Father,'
Vanished like an April snow-flake, —
 And the mother followed soon.

Then his face grew dark and stony,
Then his soul shrunk up in sorrow,
As a flower shuts at nightfall
 From the dampness and the cold ;
Till a sister, dying, left him
Her one child, a blue-eyed darling,
Whose dear love and tender graces
 Kept his heart from growing old.

Maidenhood stole softly on her,
Like the changing of the seasons,
Till the neighbors came to think her
 Beautiful as one could be ;
And the young men, when they met her,
Blushed, they knew not why, and stammered,
And would prize a kingdom cheaper
 Than a smile of Helen Lee.

In the barn the youths and maidens
Stripped the corn of husk and tassel,
Warmed the chillness of October
 With the life of spring and May ;
While through every chink the lanterns,
And sonorous gusts of laughter,
Made assault on night and silence
 With the counterfeit of day.

Songs were sung, — sweet English ballads, —
Which their fathers and their mothers
Sang together by the rivers
 Of the dear old fatherland ;
Tales were told, — quaint English stories,
Tales of humor and of pathos ;
Tales of love, and home, and fireside,
 That a child could understand.

Most they called on Richard Miller,
Prince among the story-tellers ;
Young and graceful, strong and handsome,
 Rich in all that blesses life ;
For his stories ended happy, —
Ended always with a marriage ;
Every youth became a husband,
 Every maid became a wife.

So he told how Harry Marline
Roved about the world a long time,
Then returned to find the maiden
 Whom he loved had proven true, —

How he brought home gold and silver,
How they made a famous wedding ;
And he closed by saying slyly,
 ' An example, girls, for you ! '

Then said Helen, smiling archly,
' I will never have a husband ! '
And the ear which she was husking
 Fell into the basket, red ;
Whereupon they clapped and shouted,
For a red ear means a lover,
And the maiden, vexed and blushing,
 In the shadow hid her head.

Soon the jest was quite forgotten,
And her face again she lifted
To behold his eyes upon her
 With a look so strange and new,
That, when games and dancing followed,
And she chanced to touch his fingers,
In her hand she felt a tremor,
 On her cheek a warmer hue.

When the candles burning dimly,
Flaring, smoking in the socket,
Sent the party homeward, shouting,
 Through the starlight crisp and clear,
Richard lingered in the doorway,
Took the bashful hand of Helen,
Whispered softly in the darkness
 Pleasant words for maid to hear.

When she sought her little chamber,
Long she could not sleep for thinking
Of his looks, his voice, and language,
 For the youth had turned her head ;
In her dreams she murmured, ' Richard,'
When she woke her thought was, ' Richard,'
When she bade ' Good morning, father !'
 ' Richard,' she had almost said.

O the pleasant, pleasant autumn !
How it seemed like spring-time to them !
How the flowers budded, blossomed,
 In their hearts afresh each day !
O the walks they had together,
From the singing-schools and parties,
In the white and frosty moonlight,
 In the starlight cold and gray !

O the happy winter evenings !
Long, indeed, to want and sickness,
Short enough to youth and maiden
 By the hearth of David Lee ;
Looking in each other's faces,
Listening to each other's voices,
Blending with the golden present
 Golden days that were to be.

When the voice of spring was calling
To the flowers in field and forest,
' It is time to waken, children !'
 And the flowers obeyed the call ;

When the cattle on the hillside,
And the fishes in the river,
Felt anew the joy of living,
 Was a wedding festival.

Violets and honeysuckles
Bloomed on window-sill and mantel,
On the old clock's oaken turret,
 In the young bride's flaxen hair ;
And the sweet-brier filled the morning
With its eloquence of odor ;—
' Life is cold, but love can warm it ;
 O, be faithful, happy pair !'

Solemnly the village pastor
Said the simple marriage-service ;
Then came one, with roguish twinkle,
 Asking, ' had another heard
Of a certain little maiden
Who would never have a husband ?'
And the young bride turned to Richard,
 Smiled, but answered not a word.

And as Farmer Lee looked on them,
Down his cheek the tears were falling,
But a light shone from his features
 On the circle gathered round,
And he leaned on Richard's shoulder,
Saying, ' Friends, be happy with me,
For I have not lost a daughter,
 But a worthy son have found !'

STRAWBERRIES.

I.

THE garden was filled with odors
From jasmine and heliotrope,
And the tender moss-rose, muffled
In its beautiful velvet cope ;
White currants, like beads of amber,
Strung upon sea-green silk,
Mingled their spicy clusters
With snowberries white as milk.

II.

I watched her plucking the strawberries,
And bending over the bank,
Where the luscious rubies lay hiding,
As if from her search they shrank ;
And when she bit them, she opened
Lips ripe and red as they, —
Ah! if I had been the strawberries,
I would not have hidden away.

III.

'Are you not fond of strawberries?
Why don't you pluck and eat ?
See, here is a noble fellow,
Juicy, and red, and sweet.
Don't stand there looking so solemn,
As if you thought 't was a sin
To eat of such delicate morsels,
But open your mouth and begin.'

IV.

‘ Ah ! Imogen, dear,’ I answered,
‘ I care for no fruit but one :
’T is as ripe and red as this berry,
And as full of the blood of the sun.
But you selfishly hold it from me,
Nor offer me even a part.’
‘ What is this fruit ?’ she questioned.
‘ This fruit,’ I said, ‘ is your heart !’

V.

The strawberry dropped from her fingers,
And she stretched out her little hand,
And I knew that, instead of the fruit, it held
The sweetest heart in the land.
So we left the strawberries lying
In their shadowy leaves that day,
And silently walked in the garden,
While the long hours stole away.



BATTLEDORES.

I.

MAY is blond and Madge is brown,
And ’twixt the two I fly ;
One lives in country, one in town,
But yet for both I sigh.

Madge says that I'm in love with May,
And pouts a sweet disdain,
Yet all the while her brown eyes say,
'I fear no rival's reign.'

II.

May is calm, and like the moon
That sails the summer sky,
Her voice is sweeter than the tune
That scented night-winds sigh ;
And underneath her quiet glance
All happily I lie,
And live a dreamy, sweet romance
When her fair form is nigh.

III.

Thus 'twixt the two my heart is thrown,
And shuttle-like I fly ;
For blue-eyed May is all my own,
When brown Madge is not by.
But loving each, and loving both,
I know not how to lie,
So here 's to both, however loth,
Good-by, good-by, good-by !

THE FINISHING SCHOOL.

THE SCHOOL.

MISS MARY DEGAI, at the age of sixteen,
Was as pretty a maiden as ever was seen.

Her eyes were deep blue, —

Not that meaningless hue

That one sees on old china, and sometimes on new ;

Which really implies

Hers were not saucer eyes,

Though the people declared — and I'm not sure which
worser is —

That, though not saucer eyes, they had worked many
sorceries.

Her hair was that shade of which poets are fond,

A compromise lustrous 'twixt chestnut and blond.

Her figure was fragile,

Yet springy and agile ;

While her clear, pallid skin, so essentially Frenchy,

Neither brunette nor fair,

Just gave her the air

Of a sort of Fifth Avenue Beatrix Cenci.

With a spick and span new, superfine education,

Befitting a maid of such fortunate station,

Miss Mary Degai had just made her *début*,

From the very select,

Genteel, circumspect

Establishment kept by — it cannot be wrong

Just to mention the name — by one Madame Cancan.

This Madame Cancan was a perfect Parisian,
Her morals infernal, her manners elysian.



She was slender and graceful, and rouged with much art,
A mistress of dumb show, from ogle to start.

Her voice was delightful, her teeth not her own, —
 And a cane-bottomed chair when she sat seemed a throne.
 In short, this dear, elegant Madame Cancan
 Was like a French dinner at some restaurant, —
 That is, she completely was made *à la carte*,
 And I think she'd a truffle instead of a heart.
 But then what good rearing she gave to her pupils!
 They dressed like those elegant ladies at Goupil's
 One sees in the prints just imported from France;
 With what marvellous grace did they join in the dance!
 No Puritan modesty marred their *tournure*, —
 Being modest is nearly as bad as being poor, —
 No shudder attacked them when man laid his hand on
 Their waists in the redowa's graceful *abandon*,
 As they swung in that waltz to voluptuous music.

Ah! did we but see

Our sisters so free,

I warrant the sight would make both me and you sick!
 Thus no trouble was spared through those young misses'
 lives

To make them good partners, and — very bad wives.
 Receptions were given each week on a Wednesday, —
 Which day by the school was entitled "the men's day,"
 Because on such date young New York was allowed
 To visit *en masse* that ingenuous crowd,
 When they talked threadbare nothings and flat shilly-
 shally,

Of Gottschalk's mustache, or Signora Vestvali,
 Followed up by the *thrillingest* questions and answers,
 Such as — which they liked best, the schottische or the
 lancers?

No flirting, of course, was permitted: O dear!
 If Madame Cancan such a word were to hear,

She would look a whole beltful of dagger-blades at you,
And faint in the style of some favorite statue.



The men were invited alone to impart
To her young *protégées* that most difficult art

Of conversing with ease ; and if ease was the aim
 That Madame had in view she was not much to blame,
 For I vow she succeeded so well with her shes,
 That her school might take rank as a chapel of ease !
Au reste, Madame's *pension* was quite in the fashion :
 None better knew how to put shawl or pin sash on
 Than did her young ladies ; 't was good as a play
 To watch the well-bred and impertinent way
 They could enter a room in. Their gait in the street
 Was five-barred, — one might say, — 't was so high and
 complete.

Then their boots were so small, and their stockings so neat, —
 Alas ! that such dainty and elegant feet

Should be trained *à la mode*

In that vicious gymnasium, the modern girls' school,
 To trip down the road

That, while easy and broad,

Conducts to a place that 's more spacious than cool !

Miss Mary Degai

Was the pet *protégée*

Of dear Madame Cancan. She was excellent pay,
 In her own right an heiress, — a plum at the least, —
 A plantation down south and a coal-mine down east, —
 I can't state the sum of her fortune in figures,
 But I know she had plenty of dollars and niggers.

She was petted and *fêted*,

And splendidly treated,

Lay abed when she chose, and her school-teachers cheated ;
 Smuggled candy in school ; smoked cigars, and — O, fie ! —
 Read a great many very queer books on the sly.
 She 'd a love affair, too, — quite a sweet episode, —
 With a wonderful foreign young Count, who abode

In the opposite dwelling, — a Count Cherami, —
A charming young beau,



Who was *très comme il faut*,
And who was with our boarding-school Miss *bien pris*.

So he shot letters on to the roof with an arrow,
 And thence they were picked by a provident sparrow,
 An amiable housemaid, who thought that the course
 Of true love *should* run smooth,
 And had pity on youth, —
 So, sooner than leave the fond pair no resource,
 Disinterestedly brought all the letters to Mary,
 At a dollar apiece, — the beneficent fairy !

THE BALL.

'T was the height of the season, the spring-time of Brown,
 Who sowed invitations all over the town.
Soirées musicale, tableaux, matinées,
 Turned days into nights, and the nights into days ;
 And women went mad upon feathers and flounces,
 And scruples gave way to auriferous ounces.
 Amanda came over her father with new arts
 To grant her a credit at amiable Stewart's,
 And sulked till he'd promised that, if she'd not miff any,
 He'd give her the bracelet she wanted from Tiffany.
 As a matter of course,
 Young New York was in force.
 Tight boots and loose coats,
 Stiff, dog-collared throats ;
 Champagne under chair,
 Drunk with dare-devil air.
 Mr. Brown's light brigade
 Was in splendor arrayed.
 O, that season, I wot,
 Will be never forgot !
 For 't was then that young Beelzebub proved all his vigor
 Of mind by inventing a wonderful figure,

To be danced every night by "his set" in that million
Of marvellous mazes, — the German cotillon.



'T was the height of the winter. The poor summer flowers
Were forced to come out at unreasonable hours.

Camellias, amazed at the frost and the snow,
 Without asking their leaves, were requested to blow ;
 And gardeners, relentless, awaked the moss-roses
 From slumbers hybernant to tickle the noses
 Of maidens just budding, like them, out of season ;
 And pale, purple violets, sick and etiolate,
 Tried in vain to preserve their wan blossoms inviolate.



In short, 't was the time of the ball-giving season,
 The reign of low dresses, ice-creams, and unreason,
 And the greatest event of the night — not the day, —
 Though the latter's the phrase the most proper to say, —
 Was the *bal de début* of Miss Mary Degai.

What a ball that one was ! All the city was there.
 Brown reigned like a king on the white marble stair,
 And whistled — perhaps 't was to drive away care —
 Loud, shrilly, and long, to each carriage and pair

As it landed its burden of feminine fair,
And Kammerer, hid in a nice little lair
Of thick-tufted laurels, played many an air,



Soft waltz, wild mazourka, quick polka, slow Schottische,
With all those quadrilles called by Jullien "the Scottish."

Globed lamps shed soft light over shoulders of satin,
 While men, hat in hand, — fashion *à la* Manhattan, —
 Talked in tones that were muffled in sweet modulation
 To all those fair flowers of a fairer creation,
 About — whether the play or the ballet were properer?
 Or — they did not observe them last night at the opera.

O the nooks and the corners — the secret expansions —
 That are found in the depths of Fifth Avenue mansions!
 The deeply-bayed windows, screened off by camellias,
 Just made for the loves of the Toms and Amelias;

The dim little boudoir

Where nestles — *proh pudor!* —

That pair of young doves, in the deep shadow cooing, —
 Which means, in plain English, legitimate wooing.
 The ancients, I know, or I've got the idea,
 Placed love in some spot that they called Cytherea, —
 A commonplace garden, with nothing but sparrows
 To shoot at, — and that would be wasting love's arrows, —
 And where, if he sat on the grass with his Psyche,
 He'd probably start before long with, "O, Criky!
 There's a bug on my — tunic!" But that was all gam-
 mon.

The true home of love is the palace of mammon,
 Where gardens grow up, under glass, nice and neat,
 And lovers may wander,
 And ever grow fonder,
 Without even once getting wet on their feet!

In one of those bowers, remote and secluded,
 With pale-blossomed roses ingeniously wooded,
 Through whose light-scented leaves a faint music stole in, —
 Like perfume made audible, — here might be seen

Tête-à-tête, that is, close as 't was proper to be,
Miss Mary Degai and the Count Cherami.



The Count was exactly the man for sixteen,
He was tall, he was dark, he was haughty of mien,

He had beautiful feet, and his smile was serene ;
Though his hair might have needed a little wahpene,
Still what he had left was of glossiest sheen ;
His age — let me see — well, his age might have been
Between thirty and forty, — a dangerous age, —
All the passions of youth, and the wit of the sage.
The Count was an exile, — a matter of course, —
A foreigner here has no other resource ;
The Count was an exile for reasons political,
Though some said — but people are really so critical —
That he was but a *croupier* who 'd made a good swoop,
And had tried change of air for his fit of the *croupe*.
And 't was true that his eyes had a villanous flash, —
But then he had got such a lovely mustache,
And his English was broken to exquisite smash !

There he sat *tête-à-tête* with Miss Mary Degai,
Talking low in her ear, in his Frenchified way,
Of his château at home, and the balls at the Tuileries,
Longchamps, and Chantilly, and other tom-fooleries,
While poor Madison Mowbray — a rising young lawyer
Who promised, his friends said, to be a top-sawyer —
Disconsolate wandered in search of Miss Mary, —
Seeking here, seeking there, that invisible fairy,
Who had promised her hand for the very next waltz,
And who now was accused as the falsest of false.
O Madison Mowbray, go home to your briefs, —
To your Chitty and Blackstone, and such like reliefs !
For though Mary Degai pledged her hand for the
 dance,
And though Mr. Degai promised it in advance
To your keeping forever, you 'll never possess it,
Or swear at the altar to hold and caress it ;

For while you are moping in blankest amazement,
Two black-shrouded figures slip out of the basement,



And so to the corner, then into a carriage, —
Which looks rather like an elopement and marriage.

But, to cut matters short, of the whole the amount
Is that Mary Degai has run off with the Count.



DÉNOUEMENT.

There 's a tenement-house in Mulberry Street,
Where thieves, and beggars, and loafers meet, —
A house whose face wears a leprous taint
Of mouldy plaster and peeling paint.
The windows are dull as the bleary eyes
Of a drunken sot, and a black pool lies
Full of festering garbage outside the door.
The old stairs shudder from floor to floor,
As if they shrank with an occult dread
From the frequent criminal's guilty tread.
And blasphemous women and drunken men
Inhabit this foul, accurséd den,

And oaths and quarrels disturb the night,
And ruffianly faces offend the light,
And wretches that dare not look on the sun
Burrow within till the day is done.

Here, in a room on the highest flat, —
The playground of beetle and of rat, —
Almost roofless, and bare, and cold,
With the damp walls reeking with slimy mould,
A woman hung o'er one smouldering ember
That lay in the grate — it was in December.
O, how thin she was, and wan!
What sunken eyes! what lips thin drawn!
 Her mouth how it quivered!
 Her form how it shivered!
Her teeth how they chattered, as if they 'd cheat
 Each skeleton limb
 With the pantomime grim
Of having something at last to eat!

There is no sight more awful, say I,
To look upon, whether in earth or sky,
Than the terrible glare of a hungry eye!

The woman sat over the smouldering ember,
Pinched with the cold of that bitter December,
Passing her hand in a weariful way
O'er the faint firelight's flickering spray,
Till might be seen the faint red ray
Gleam through the thin, transparent palm,
As one beholds the sunshine calm
Through a painted window play.
Who that beheld her in sunnier day,

Lapped in roses and bathed in balm,
Would credit that this was Mary Degai?



But where was the money in stocks and in rents?
All squandered! The niggers? All sold! The per cents?

All gone ! The magnificent Count Cherami
 Had made with her money a seven-years spree
 In Paris and London : had known *figurantes*,
 Played at poker and bluff with one-thousand-franc antes,
 Bred racers, built yachts, and in seven years' time
 Neither husband nor wife had as much as a dime.

There was no help from father. The old man was dead,
 With the curse unrevoked that he'd laid on her head.
 No help from her husband. A Count could not work
 And slave to enrich some tyrannical Turk.
 No help from herself, — thanks to Madame Cancán,
 She had not a notion of getting along.
 Her fingers revolted from needle and thread,
 And to earn a loaf were by far too well bred.
 Too proud for a beggar, too thin for the stage,
 She lay like a log in this hard-working age, —
 The dreary result of a fashion fanatic,
 And helplessly starved in a comfortless attic.

Hark ! a step on the stairs ! How her thin cheek grows
 white

As she cowers away with a shiver of fright.
 And the door is burst open, — the Count staggers in,
 With a hiccup and oath, and a blasphemous din.
 Mad with drink, crazed with hunger, and weary of life,
 He revenges his sins on the head of his wife.
 Let us hasten the door of that garret to close
 On the nakedness, poverty, hunger, and woes, —
 On the oaths, on the shrieks, on the cowardly blows !

O young ladies who sigh over novels in yellow,
 And think Eugène Sue an exceeding smart fellow,

There are more aims in life than a crinoline skirt,
And a maid may be charming and yet not a flirt ;
And merit is better than title, my dears :
In this country we 've no occupation for peers
Save those ones that our beautiful harbor affords,
And those piers are worth more than the whole House of
Lords.

And though money, I know,
Is voted quite slow

In circles pretending to elegant rank,
There 's no very great sin in a sum at the bank.
Nor is marriage the portal to idle enjoyment :
The true salt of life is an active employment.
And if you have money there 's plenty of work
In the back-slums and alleys, where starvingly lurk
Humanity's outcasts, 'mid want and disease, —
Broken hearts to be healed, craving wants to appease.
Above all, ye young heroines, take this amount
Of wholesome advice,
Which like curry with rice
Gives a flavor, and saves one from saying things twice.
Be this axiom forever with you paramount :
Don't you ever advance all your cash on a Count.

Madame Cancan still lives, and still ogles and teaches,
And still her lay sermons on fashion she preaches ;
Still keeps of smooth phrases the choicest assortment ;
Still lectures on dress, easy carriage, deportment ;
And spends all her skill in thus moulding her pets
Into very-genteelly-got-up marionettes.
Yes ! puppet 's the word ; for there 's nothing inside
But a clock work of vanity, fashion, and pride ;

Puppets warranted sound, that without any falter
When wound up will go — just as far as the altar ;



But when once the cap's donned with the matronly border,
Lo! the quiet machine goes at once out of order.

Ah! Madame Cancan, you may paint, you may plaster
Each crevice of time that comes faster and faster;
But you cannot avert that black day of disaster,
When in turn you'll be summoned yourself by a Master!
You may speak perfect French, and Italian, and Spanish,
And know how to enter a room and to vanish,
To flirt with your fan quite as well as did Soto,
To play well-bred games from *écarté* to *loto*;
But in spite of all this, won't you look rather small
When you're called up before the great Teacher of all?
False teacher, false friend,—more, false speaker, false wife,
Dare you stand to be parsed in the grammar of life?
What account will you give of the many pure souls
To be guided by you through the quicksands and shoals
That beset their youth's shore? Were they harbored or
wrecked?

You did n't take trouble to think, I expect;
For each cockle-shell boat,
When you set it afloat,
Had guitar-strings for ropes, crinoline for a sail,—
Nice rigging that was to encounter a gale!

Ah! Madame Cancan, our great Master above,
Who instructs us in charity, virtue, and love,
When he finds you deficient in all of your lessons,
A deliberate dunce both in substance and essence,
Will send you, I fear, to a Finishing School,
Which differs from yours though, in being less cool,
And kept on the corporal-punishment rule.
There's excellent company there to be found:
The uppermost ranks you'll see floating around;
Some for grinding the poor are placed there underground,—
So the hind has his justice as well as the hound.

Nor is dress much less thought of there than in Manhattan,
You may not find silks, but you 'll surely find Satan ;
And I doubt if you 'll like their severe education, —
There 's lots to be learned, and no recreation,
And what 's worse is — *you 'll never have any vacation.*





STORIES.



"Pray you sit by us, and tell's a tale."

SHAKESPEARE.





FITZ-JAMES O'BRIEN.

From a drawing by Sol Eytinge, Jr.

STORIES.

THE DIAMOND LENS.

I.

THE BENDING OF THE TWIG.

FROM a very early period of my life the entire bent of my inclinations had been towards microscopic investigations. When I was not more than ten years old, a distant relative of our family, hoping to astonish my inexperience, constructed a simple microscope for me, by drilling in a disk of copper a small hole, in which a drop of pure water was sustained by capillary attraction. This very primitive apparatus, magnifying some fifty diameters, presented, it is true, only indistinct and imperfect forms, but still sufficiently wonderful to work up my imagination to a preternatural state of excitement.

Seeing me so interested in this rude instrument, my cousin explained to me all that he knew about the principles of the microscope, related to me a few of the wonders which had been accomplished through its agency, and ended by promising to send me one regularly constructed, immediately on his return to the city. I counted the days, the hours, the minutes, that intervened between that promise and his departure.

Meantime I was not idle. Every transparent substance

that bore the remotest resemblance to a lens I eagerly seized upon, and employed in vain attempts to realize that instrument, the theory of whose construction I as yet only vaguely comprehended. All panes of glass containing those oblate spheroidal knots familiarly known as "bull's-eyes" were ruthlessly destroyed, in the hope of obtaining lenses of marvellous power. I even went so far as to extract the crystalline humor from the eyes of fishes and animals, and endeavored to press it into the microscopic service. I plead guilty to having stolen the glasses from my Aunt Agatha's spectacles, with a dim idea of grinding them into lenses of wondrous magnifying properties, — in which attempt it is scarcely necessary to say that I totally failed.

At last the promised instrument came. It was of that order known as Field's simple microscope, and had cost perhaps about fifteen dollars. As far as educational purposes went, a better apparatus could not have been selected. Accompanying it was a small treatise on the microscope, — its history, uses, and discoveries. I comprehended then for the first time the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments." The dull veil of ordinary existence that hung across the world seemed suddenly to roll away, and to lay bare a land of enchantments. I felt towards my companions as the seer might feel towards the ordinary masses of men. I held conversations with nature in a tongue which they could not understand. I was in daily communication with living wonders, such as they never imagined in their wildest visions. I penetrated beyond the external portal of things, and roamed through the sanctuaries. Where they beheld only a drop of rain slowly rolling down the window-glass, I saw a universe of beings animated with all the passions common to physical

life, and convulsing their minute sphere with struggles as fierce and protracted as those of men. In the common spots of mould, which my mother, good housekeeper that she was, fiercely scooped away from her jam pots, there abode for me, under the name of mildew, enchanted gardens, filled with dells and avenues of the densest foliage and most astonishing verdure, while from the fantastic boughs of these microscopic forests hung strange fruits glittering with green, and silver, and gold.

It was no scientific thirst that at this time filled my mind. It was the pure enjoyment of a poet to whom a world of wonders has been disclosed. I talked of my solitary pleasures to none. Alone with my microscope, I dimmed my sight, day after day and night after night, poring over the marvels which it unfolded to me. I was like one who, having discovered the ancient Eden still existing in all its primitive glory, should resolve to enjoy it in solitude, and never betray to mortal the secret of its locality. The rod of my life was bent at this moment. I destined myself to be a microscopist.

Of course, like every novice, I fancied myself a discoverer. I was ignorant at the time of the thousands of acute intellects engaged in the same pursuit as myself, and with the advantage of instruments a thousand times more powerful than mine. The names of Leeuwenhoek, Williamson, Spencer, Ehrenberg, Schultz, Dujardin, Schact, and Schleiden were then entirely unknown to me, or if known, I was ignorant of their patient and wonderful researches. In every fresh specimen of cryptogamia which I placed beneath my instrument I believed that I discovered wonders of which the world was as yet ignorant. I remember well the thrill of delight and admiration that shot through me the first time that I discovered the com-

mon wheel animalcule (*Rotifera vulgaris*) expanding and contracting its flexible spokes, and seemingly rotating through the water. Alas! as I grew older, and obtained some works treating of my favorite study, I found that I was only on the threshold of a science to the investigation of which some of the greatest men of the age were devoting their lives and intellects.

As I grew up, my parents, who saw but little likelihood of anything practical resulting from the examination of bits of moss and drops of water through a brass tube and a piece of glass, were anxious that I should choose a profession. It was their desire that I should enter the counting-house of my uncle, Ethan Blake, a prosperous merchant, who carried on business in New York. This suggestion I decisively combated. I had no taste for trade; I should only make a failure; in short, I refused to become a merchant.

But it was necessary for me to select some pursuit. My parents were staid New England people, who insisted on the necessity of labor; and therefore, although, thanks to the bequest of my poor Aunt Agatha, I should, on coming of age, inherit a small fortune sufficient to place me above want, it was decided that, instead of waiting for this, I should act the nobler part, and employ the intervening years in rendering myself independent.

After much cogitation I complied with the wishes of my family, and selected a profession. I determined to study medicine at the New York Academy. This disposition of my future suited me. A removal from my relatives would enable me to dispose of my time as I pleased without fear of detection. As long as I paid my Academy fees, I might shirk attending the lectures if I chose; and, as I never had the remotest intention of standing an

examination, there was no danger of my being "plucked." Besides, a metropolis was the place for me. There I could obtain excellent instruments, the newest publications, intimacy with men of pursuits kindred with my own, — in short, all things necessary to insure a profitable devotion of my life to my beloved science. I had an abundance of money, few desires that were not bounded by my illuminating mirror on one side and my object-glass on the other; what, therefore, was to prevent my becoming an illustrious investigator of the veiled worlds? It was with the most buoyant hope that I left my New England home and established myself in New York.



II.

THE LONGING OF A MAN OF SCIENCE.

MY first step, of course, was to find suitable apartments. These I obtained, after a couple of days' search, in Fourth Avenue; a very pretty second-floor unfurnished, containing sitting-room, bedroom, and a smaller apartment which I intended to fit up as a laboratory. I furnished my lodgings simply, but rather elegantly, and then devoted all my energies to the adornment of the temple of my worship. I visited Pike, the celebrated optician, and passed in review his splendid collection of microscopes, — Field's Compound, Hingham's, Spencer's, Nacet's Binocular, (that founded on the principles of the stereoscope,) and at length fixed upon that form known as Spencer's Trunnion Microscope, as combining the greatest number of improvements with an almost perfect freedom from tremor. Along with this I purchased every possible accessory, — draw-tubes, micrometers, a *camera-lucida*, lever-stage,

achromatic condensers, white cloud illuminators, prisms, parabolic condensers, polarizing apparatus, forceps, aquatic boxes, fishing-tubes, with a host of other articles, all of which would have been useful in the hands of an experienced microscopist, but, as I afterwards discovered, were not of the slightest present value to me. It takes years of practice to know how to use a complicated microscope. The optician looked suspiciously at me as I made these wholesale purchases. He evidently was uncertain whether to set me down as some scientific celebrity or a madman. I think he inclined to the latter belief. I suppose I was mad. Every great genius is mad upon the subject in which he is greatest. The unsuccessful madman is disgraced and called a lunatic.

Mad or not, I set myself to work with a zeal which few scientific students have ever equalled. I had everything to learn relative to the delicate study upon which I had embarked, — a study involving the most earnest patience, the most rigid analytic powers, the steadiest hand, the most untiring eye, the most refined and subtile manipulation.

For a long time half my apparatus lay inactively on the shelves of my laboratory, which was now most amply furnished with every possible contrivance for facilitating my investigations. The fact was that I did not know how to use some of my scientific implements, — never having been taught microscopics, — and those whose use I understood theoretically were of little avail, until by practice I could attain the necessary delicacy of handling. Still, such was the fury of my ambition, such the untiring perseverance of my experiments, that, difficult of credit as it may be, in the course of one year I became theoretically and practically an accomplished microscopist.

During this period of my labors, in which I submitted specimens of every substance that came under my observation to the action of my lenses, I became a discoverer, — in a small way, it is true, for I was very young, but still a discoverer. It was I who destroyed Ehrenberg's theory that the *Volvox globator* was an animal, and proved that his "monads" with stomachs and eyes were merely phases of the formation of a vegetable cell, and were, when they reached their mature state, incapable of the act of conjugation, or any true generative act, without which no organism rising to any stage of life higher than vegetable can be said to be complete. It was I who resolved the singular problem of rotation in the cells and hairs of plants into ciliary attraction, in spite of the assertions of Mr. Wenham and others, that my explanation was the result of an optical illusion.

But notwithstanding these discoveries, laboriously and painfully made as they were, I felt horribly dissatisfied. At every step I found myself stopped by the imperfections of my instruments. Like all active microscopists, I gave my imagination full play. Indeed, it is a common complaint against many such, that they supply the defects of their instruments with the creations of their brains. I imagined depths beyond depths in nature which the limited power of my lenses prohibited me from exploring. I lay awake at night constructing imaginary microscopes of immeasurable power, with which I seemed to pierce through all the envelopes of matter down to its original atom. How I cursed those imperfect mediums which necessity through ignorance compelled me to use! How I longed to discover the secret of some perfect lens, whose magnifying power should be limited only by the resolvability of the object, and which at the same time should

be free from spherical and chromatic aberrations, in short from all the obstacles over which the poor microscopist finds himself continually stumbling! I felt convinced that the simple microscope, composed of a single lens of such vast yet perfect power was possible of construction. To attempt to bring the compound microscope up to such a pitch would have been commencing at the wrong end; this latter being simply a partially successful endeavor to remedy those very defects of the simple instrument, which, if conquered, would leave nothing to be desired.

It was in this mood of mind that I became a constructive microscopist. After another year passed in this new pursuit, experimenting on every imaginable substance, — glass, gems, flints, crystals, artificial crystals formed of the alloy of various vitreous materials, — in short, having constructed as many varieties of lenses as Argus had eyes, I found myself precisely where I started, with nothing gained save an extensive knowledge of glass-making. I was almost dead with despair. My parents were surprised at my apparent want of progress in my medical studies, (I had not attended one lecture since my arrival in the city,) and the expenses of my mad pursuit had been so great as to embarrass me very seriously.

I was in this frame of mind one day, experimenting in my laboratory on a small diamond, — that stone, from its great refracting power, having always occupied my attention more than any other, — when a young Frenchman, who lived on the floor above me, and who was in the habit of occasionally visiting me, entered the room.

I think that Jules Simon was a Jew. He had many traits of the Hebrew character: a love of jewelry, of dress, and of good living. There was something mysterious about him. He always had something to sell, and yet

went into excellent society. When I say sell, I should perhaps have said peddle ; for his operations were generally confined to the disposal of single articles, — a picture, for instance, or a rare carving in ivory, or a pair of duelling-pistols, or the dress of a Mexican *caballero*. When I was first furnishing my rooms, he paid me a visit, which ended in my purchasing an antique silver lamp, which he assured me was a Cellini, — it was handsome enough even for that, — and some other knickknacks for my sitting-room. Why Simon should pursue this petty trade I never could imagine. He apparently had plenty of money, and had the *entrée* of the best houses in the city, — taking care, however, I suppose, to drive no bargains within the enchanted circle of the Upper Ten. I came at length to the conclusion that this peddling was but a mask to cover some greater object, and even went so far as to believe my young acquaintance to be implicated in the slave-trade. That, however, was none of my affair.

On the present occasion, Simon entered my room in a state of considerable excitement.

“*Ah ! mon ami !*” he cried, before I could even offer him the ordinary salutation, “it has occurred to me to be the witness of the most astonishing things in the world. I promenaded myself to the house of Madame — How does the little animal — *le renard* — name himself in the Latin ?”

“*Vulpes,*” I answered.

“Ah ! yes, — *Vulpes*. I promenaded myself to the house of Madame *Vulpes*.”

“The spirit medium ?”

“Yes, the great medium. Great heavens ! what a woman ! I write on a slip of paper many of questions concerning affairs the most secret, — affairs that conceal

themselves in the abysses of my heart the most profound ; and behold ! by example ! what occurs ? This devil of a woman makes me replies the most truthful to all of them. She talks to me of things that I do not love to talk of to myself. What am I to think ? I am fixed to the earth !”

“Am I to understand you, M. Simon, that this Mrs. Vulpes replied to questions secretly written by you, which questions related to events known only to yourself?”

“Ah ! more than that, more than that,” he answered, with an air of some alarm. “She related to me things — But,” he added, after a pause, and suddenly changing his manner, “why occupy ourselves with these follies ? It was all the biology, without doubt. It goes without saying that it has not my credence. — But why are we here, *mon ami* ? It has occurred to me to discover the most beautiful thing as you can imagine, — a vase with green lizards on it, composed by the great Bernard Palissy. It is in my apartment ; let us mount. I go to show it to you.”

I followed Simon mechanically ; but my thoughts were far from Palissy and his enamelled ware, although I, like him, was seeking in the dark a great discovery. This casual mention of the spiritualist, Madame Vulpes, set me on a new track. What if this spiritualism should be really a great fact ? What if, through communication with more subtile organisms than my own, I could reach at a single bound the goal, which perhaps a life of agonizing mental toil would never enable me to attain ?

While purchasing the Palissy vase from my friend Simon, I was mentally arranging a visit to Madame Vulpes.

III.

THE SPIRIT OF LEEUWENHOEK.

Two evenings after this, thanks to an arrangement by letter and the promise of an ample fee, I found Madame Vulpes awaiting me at her residence alone. She was a coarse-featured woman, with keen and rather cruel dark eyes, and an exceedingly sensual expression about her mouth and under jaw. She received me in perfect silence, in an apartment on the ground floor, very sparsely furnished. In the centre of the room, close to where Mrs. Vulpes sat, there was a common round mahogany table. If I had come for the purpose of sweeping her chimney, the woman could not have looked more indifferent to my appearance. There was no attempt to inspire the visitor with awe. Everything bore a simple and practical aspect. This intercourse with the spiritual world was evidently as familiar an occupation with Mrs. Vulpes as eating her dinner or riding in an omnibus.

“You come for a communication, Mr. Linley?” said the medium, in a dry, business-like tone of voice.

“By appointment, — yes.”

“What sort of communication do you want? — a written one?”

“Yes, — I wish for a written one.”

“From any particular spirit?”

“Yes.”

“Have you ever known this spirit on this earth?”

“Never. He died long before I was born. I wish merely to obtain from him some information which he ought to be able to give better than any other.”

“Will you seat yourself at the table, Mr. Linley,” said the medium, “and place your hands upon it?”

I obeyed, — Mrs. Vulpes being seated opposite to me, with her hands also on the table. We remained thus for about a minute and a half, when a violent succession of raps came on the table, on the back of my chair, on the floor immediately under my feet, and even on the window-panes. Mrs. Vulpes smiled composedly.

“They are very strong to-night,” she remarked. “You are fortunate.” She then continued, “Will the spirits communicate with this gentleman?”

Vigorous affirmative.

“Will the particular spirit he desires to speak with communicate?”

A very confused rapping followed this question.

“I know what they mean,” said Mrs. Vulpes, addressing herself to me; “they wish you to write down the name of the particular spirit that you desire to converse with. Is that so?” she added, speaking to her invisible guests.

That it was so was evident from the numerous affirmative responses. While this was going on, I tore a slip from my pocket-book, and scribbled a name, under the table.

“Will this spirit communicate in writing with this gentleman?” asked the medium once more.

After a moment's pause, her hand seemed to be seized with a violent tremor, shaking so forcibly that the table vibrated. She said that a spirit had seized her hand and would write. I handed her some sheets of paper that were on the table, and a pencil. The latter she held loosely in her hand, which presently began to move over the paper with a singular and seemingly involuntary mo-

tion. After a few moments had elapsed, she handed me the paper, on which I found written, in a large, uncultivated hand, the words, "He is not here, but has been sent for." A pause of a minute or so now ensued, during which Mrs. Vulpes remained perfectly silent, but the raps continued at regular intervals. When the short period I mention had elapsed, the hand of the medium was again seized with its convulsive tremor, and she wrote, under this strange influence, a few words on the paper, which she handed to me. They were as follows :—

"I am here. Question me.

"LEEUWENHOEK."

I was astounded. The name was identical with that I had written beneath the table, and carefully kept concealed. Neither was it at all probable that an uncultivated woman like Mrs. Vulpes should know even the name of the great father of microscopics. It may have been biology ; but this theory was soon doomed to be destroyed. I wrote on my slip—still concealing it from Mrs. Vulpes—a series of questions, which, to avoid tediousness, I shall place with the responses, in the order in which they occurred :—

I. — Can the microscope be brought to perfection ?

SPIRIT. — Yes.

I. — Am I destined to accomplish this great task ?

SPIRIT. — You are.

I. — I wish to know how to proceed to attain this end. For the love which you bear to science, help me !

SPIRIT. — A diamond of one hundred and forty carats, submitted to electro-magnetic currents for a long period, will experience a rearrangement of its atoms *inter se*, and from that stone you will form the universal lens.

I. — Will great discoveries result from the use of such a lens ?

SPIRIT. — So great that all that has gone before is as nothing.

I. — But the refractive power of the diamond is so immense, that the image will be formed within the lens. How is that difficulty to be surmounted ?

SPIRIT. — Pierce the lens through its axis, and the difficulty is obviated. The image will be formed in the pierced space, which will itself serve as a tube to look through. Now I am called. Good night.

I cannot at all describe the effect that these extraordinary communications had upon me. I felt completely bewildered. No biological theory could account for the *discovery* of the lens. The medium might, by means of biological *rapport* with my mind, have gone so far as to read my questions, and reply to them coherently. But biology could not enable her to discover that magnetic currents would so alter the crystals of the diamond as to remedy its previous defects, and admit of its being polished into a perfect lens. Some such theory may have passed through my head, it is true ; but if so, I had forgotten it. In my excited condition of mind there was no course left but to become a convert, and it was in a state of the most painful nervous exaltation that I left the medium's house that evening. She accompanied me to the door, hoping that I was satisfied. The raps followed us as we went through the hall, sounding on the balusters, the flooring, and even the lintels of the door. I hastily expressed my satisfaction, and escaped hurriedly into the cool night air. I walked home with but one thought possessing me, — how to obtain a diamond of the immense size required. My entire means multiplied a hundred

times over would have been inadequate to its purchase. Besides, such stones are rare, and become historical. I could find such only in the regalia of Eastern or European monarchs.



IV.

THE EYE OF MORNING.

THERE was a light in Simon's room as I entered my house. A vague impulse urged me to visit him. As I opened the door of his sitting-room unannounced, he was bending, with his back toward me, over a carcel lamp, apparently engaged in minutely examining some object which he held in his hands. As I entered, he started suddenly, thrust his hand into his breast pocket, and turned to me with a face crimson with confusion.

"What!" I cried, "poring over the miniature of some fair lady? Well, don't blush so much; I won't ask to see it."

Simon laughed awkwardly enough, but made none of the negative protestations usual on such occasions. He asked me to take a seat.

"Simon," said I, "I have just come from Madame Vulpes."

This time Simon turned as white as a sheet, and seemed stupefied, as if a sudden electric shock had smitten him. He babbled some incoherent words, and went hastily to a small closet where he usually kept his liquors. Although astonished at his emotion, I was too preoccupied with my own idea to pay much attention to anything else.

"You say truly when you call Madame Vulpes a devil of a woman," I continued. "Simon, she told me wonder-

ful things to-night, or rather was the means of telling me wonderful things. Ah! if I could only get a diamond that weighed one hundred and forty carats!"

Scarcely had the sigh with which I uttered this desire died upon my lips, when Simon, with the aspect of a wild beast, glared at me savagely, and, rushing to the mantel-piece, where some foreign weapons hung on the wall, caught up a Malay creese, and brandished it furiously before him.

"No!" he cried in French, into which he always broke when excited. "No! you shall not have it! You are perfidious! You have consulted with that demon, and desire my treasure! But I will die first! Me! I am brave! You cannot make me fear!"

All this, uttered in a loud voice trembling with excitement, astounded me. I saw at a glance that I had accidentally trodden upon the edges of Simon's secret, whatever it was. It was necessary to reassure him.

"My dear Simon," I said, "I am entirely at a loss to know what you mean. I went to Madame Vulpes to consult with her on a scientific problem, to the solution of which I discovered that a diamond of the size I just mentioned was necessary. You were never alluded to during the evening, nor, so far as I was concerned, even thought of. What can be the meaning of this outburst? If you happen to have a set of valuable diamonds in your possession, you need fear nothing from me. The diamond which I require you could not possess; or, if you did possess it, you would not be living here."

Something in my tone must have completely reassured him; for his expression immediately changed to a sort of constrained merriment, combined, however, with a certain suspicious attention to my movements. He laughed, and

said that I must bear with him; that he was at certain moments subject to a species of vertigo, which betrayed itself in incoherent speeches, and that the attacks passed off as rapidly as they came. He put his weapon aside while making this explanation, and endeavored, with some success, to assume a more cheerful air.

All this did not impose on me in the least. I was too much accustomed to analytical labors to be baffled by so flimsy a veil. I determined to probe the mystery to the bottom.

"Simon," I said, gayly, "let us forget all this over a bottle of Burgundy. I have a case of Lausseure's *Clos Vougeot* down-stairs, fragrant with the odors and ruddy with the sunlight of the Côte d'Or. Let us have up a couple of bottles. What say you?"

"With all my heart," answered Simon, smilingly.

I produced the wine and we seated ourselves to drink. It was of a famous vintage, that of 1848, a year when war and wine throve together, — and its pure but powerful juice seemed to impart renewed vitality to the system. By the time we had half finished the second bottle, Simon's head, which I knew was a weak one, had begun to yield, while I remained calm as ever, only that every draught seemed to send a flush of vigor through my limbs. Simon's utterance became more and more indistinct. He took to singing French *chansons* of a not very moral tendency. I rose suddenly from the table just at the conclusion of one of those incoherent verses, and, fixing my eyes on him with a quiet smile, said: "Simon, I have deceived you. I learned your secret this evening. You may as well be frank with me. Mrs. Vulpes, or rather one of her spirits, told me all."

He started with horror. His intoxication seemed for

the moment to fade away, and he made a movement towards the weapon that he had a short time before laid down. I stopped him with my hand.

“Monster!” he cried, passionately, “I am ruined! What shall I do? You shall never have it! I swear by my mother!”

“I don’t want it,” I said; “rest secure, but be frank with me. Tell me all about it.”

The drunkenness began to return. He protested with maudlin earnestness that I was entirely mistaken, — that I was intoxicated; then asked me to swear eternal secrecy, and promised to disclose the mystery to me. I pledged myself, of course, to all. With an uneasy look in his eyes, and hands unsteady with drink and nervousness, he drew a small case from his breast and opened it. Heavens! How the mild lamp-light was shivered into a thousand prismatic arrows, as it fell upon a vast rose-diamond that glittered in the case! I was no judge of diamonds, but I saw at a glance that this was a gem of rare size and purity. I looked at Simon with wonder, and — must I confess it? — with envy. How could he have obtained this treasure? In reply to my questions, I could just gather from his drunken statements (of which, I fancy, half the incoherence was affected) that he had been superintending a gang of slaves engaged in diamond-washing in Brazil; that he had seen one of them secrete a diamond, but, instead of informing his employers, had quietly watched the negro until he saw him bury his treasure; that he had dug it up and fled with it, but that as yet he was afraid to attempt to dispose of it publicly, — so valuable a gem being almost certain to attract too much attention to its owner’s antecedents, — and he had not been able to discover any of those obscure chan-

nels by which such matters are conveyed away safely. He added, that, in accordance with oriental practice, he had named his diamond with the fanciful title of "The Eye of Morning."

While Simon was relating this to me, I regarded the great diamond attentively. Never had I beheld anything so beautiful. All the glories of light, ever imagined or described, seemed to pulsate in its crystalline chambers. Its weight, as I learned from Simon, was exactly one hundred and forty carats. Here was an amazing coincidence. The hand of destiny seemed in it. On the very evening when the spirit of Leeuwenhoek communicates to me the great secret of the microscope, the priceless means which he directs me to employ start up within my easy reach! I determined, with the most perfect deliberation, to possess myself of Simon's diamond.

I sat opposite to him while he nodded over his glass, and calmly revolved the whole affair. I did not for an instant contemplate so foolish an act as a common theft, which would of course be discovered, or at least necessitate flight and concealment, all of which must interfere with my scientific plans. There was but one step to be taken, — to kill Simon. After all, what was the life of a little peddling Jew, in comparison with the interests of science? Human beings are taken every day from the condemned prisons to be experimented on by surgeons. This man, Simon, was by his own confession a criminal, a robber, and I believed on my soul a murderer. He deserved death quite as much as any felon condemned by the laws: why should I not, like government, contrive that his punishment should contribute to the progress of human knowledge?

The means for accomplishing everything I desired lay

within my reach. There stood upon the mantel-piece a bottle half full of French laudanum. Simon was so occupied with his diamond, which I had just restored to him, that it was an affair of no difficulty to drug his glass. In a quarter of an hour he was in a profound sleep.

I now opened his waistcoat, took the diamond from the inner pocket in which he had placed it, and removed him to the bed, on which I laid him so that his feet hung down over the edge. I had possessed myself of the Malay creese, which I held in my right hand, while with the other I discovered as accurately as I could by pulsation the exact locality of the heart. It was essential that all the aspects of his death should lead to the surmise of self-murder. I calculated the exact angle at which it was probable that the weapon, if levelled by Simon's own hand, would enter his breast; then with one powerful blow I thrust it up to the hilt in the very spot which I desired to penetrate. A convulsive thrill ran through Simon's limbs. I heard a smothered sound issue from his throat, precisely like the bursting of a large air-bubble, sent up by a diver, when it reaches the surface of the water; he turned half round on his side, and, as if to assist my plans more effectually, his right hand, moved by some mere spasmodic impulse, clasped the handle of the creese, which it remained holding with extraordinary muscular tenacity. Beyond this there was no apparent struggle. The laudanum, I presume, paralyzed the usual nervous action. He must have died instantly.

There was yet something to be done. To make it certain that all suspicion of the act should be diverted from any inhabitant of the house to Simon himself, it was necessary that the door should be found in the morning *locked on the inside*. How to do this, and after-

wards escape myself? Not by the window; that was a physical impossibility. Besides, I was determined that the windows *also* should be found bolted. The solution was simple enough. I descended softly to my own room for a peculiar instrument which I had used for holding small slippery substances, such as minute spheres of glass, etc. This instrument was nothing more than a long slender hand-vice, with a very powerful grip, and a considerable leverage, which last was accidentally owing to the shape of the handle. Nothing was simpler than, when the key was in the lock, to seize the end of its stem in this vice, through the keyhole, from the outside, and so lock the door. Previously, however, to doing this, I burned a number of papers on Simon's hearth. Suicides almost always burn papers before they destroy themselves. I also emptied some more laudanum into Simon's glass, — having first removed from it all traces of wine, — cleaned the other wine-glass, and brought the bottles away with me. If traces of two persons drinking had been found in the room, the question naturally would have arisen, Who was the second? Besides, the wine-bottles might have been identified as belonging to me. The laudanum I poured out to account for its presence in his stomach, in case of a *post-mortem* examination. The theory naturally would be, that he first intended to poison himself, but, after swallowing a little of the drug, was either disgusted with its taste, or changed his mind from other motives, and chose the dagger. These arrangements made, I walked out, leaving the gas burning, locked the door with my vice, and went to bed.

Simon's death was not discovered until nearly three in the afternoon. The servant, astonished at seeing the gas burning, — the light streaming on the dark landing from

under the door, — peeped through the keyhole and saw Simon on the bed. She gave the alarm. The door was burst open, and the neighborhood was in a fever of excitement.

Every one in the house was arrested, myself included. There was an inquest; but no clew to his death beyond that of suicide could be obtained. Curiously enough, he had made several speeches to his friends the preceding week, that seemed to point to self-destruction. One gentleman swore that Simon had said in his presence that “he was tired of life.” His landlord affirmed that Simon, when paying him his last month’s rent, remarked that “he should not pay him rent much longer.” All the other evidence corresponded, — the door locked inside, the position of the corpse, the burnt papers. As I anticipated, no one knew of the possession of the diamond by Simon, so that no motive was suggested for his murder. The jury, after a prolonged examination, brought in the usual verdict, and the neighborhood once more settled down into its accustomed quiet.



V.

ANIMULA.

THE three months succeeding Simon’s catastrophe I devoted night and day to my diamond lens. I had constructed a vast galvanic battery, composed of nearly two thousand pairs of plates, — a higher power I dared not use, lest the diamond should be calcined. By means of this enormous engine I was enabled to send a powerful current of electricity continually through my great diamond, which it seemed to me gained in lustre every day.

At the expiration of a month I commenced the grinding and polishing of the lens, a work of intense toil and exquisite delicacy. The great density of the stone, and the care required to be taken with the curvatures of the surfaces of the lens, rendered the labor the severest and most harassing that I had yet undergone.

At last the eventful moment came ; the lens was completed. I stood trembling on the threshold of new worlds. I had the realization of Alexander's famous wish before me. The lens lay on the table, ready to be placed upon its platform. My hand fairly shook as I enveloped a drop of water with a thin coating of oil of turpentine, preparatory to its examination, — a process necessary in order to prevent the rapid evaporation of the water. I now placed the drop on a thin slip of glass under the lens, and throwing upon it, by the combined aid of a prism and a mirror, a powerful stream of light, I approached my eye to the minute hole drilled through the axis of the lens. For an instant I saw nothing save what seemed to be an illuminated chaos, a vast luminous abyss. A pure white light, cloudless and serene, and seemingly limitless as space itself, was my first impression. Gently, and with the greatest care, I depressed the lens a few hair's-breadths. The wondrous illumination still continued, but as the lens approached the object a scene of indescribable beauty was unfolded to my view.

I seemed to gaze upon a vast space, the limits of which extended far beyond my vision. An atmosphere of magical luminousness permeated the entire field of view. I was amazed to see no trace of animalculous life. Not a living thing, apparently, inhabited that dazzling expanse. I comprehended instantly that, by the wondrous power of my lens, I had penetrated beyond the grosser particles

of aqueous matter, beyond the realms of infusoria and protozoa, down to the original gaseous globule, into whose luminous interior I was gazing, as into an almost boundless dome filled with a supernatural radiance.

It was, however, no brilliant void into which I looked. On every side I beheld beautiful inorganic forms, of unknown texture, and colored with the most enchanting hues. These forms presented the appearance of what might be called, for want of a more specific definition, foliated clouds of the highest rarity ; that is, they undulated and broke into vegetable formations, and were tinged with splendors compared with which the gilding of our autumn woodlands is as dross compared with gold. Far away into the illimitable distance stretched long avenues of these gaseous forests, dimly transparent, and painted with prismatic hues of unimaginable brilliancy. The pendent branches waved along the fluid glades until every vista seemed to break through half-lucent ranks of many-colored drooping silken pennons. What seemed to be either fruits or flowers, pied with a thousand hues, lustrous and ever varying, bubbled from the crowns of this fairy foliage. No hills, no lakes, no rivers, no forms animate or inanimate, were to be seen, save those vast auroral corses that floated serenely in the luminous stillness, with leaves and fruits and flowers gleaming with unknown fires, unrealizable by mere imagination.

How strange, I thought, that this sphere should be thus condemned to solitude ! I had hoped, at least, to discover some new form of animal life, — perhaps of a lower class than any with which we are at present acquainted, but still, some living organism. I found my newly discovered world, if I may so speak, a beautiful chromatic desert.

While I was speculating on the singular arrangements

of the internal economy of Nature, with which she so frequently splinters into atoms our most compact theories, I thought I beheld a form moving slowly through the glades of one of the prismatic forests. I looked more attentively, and found that I was not mistaken. Words cannot depict the anxiety with which I awaited the nearer approach of this mysterious object. Was it merely some inanimate substance, held in suspense in the attenuated atmosphere of the globule? or was it an animal endowed with vitality and motion? It approached, flitting behind the gauzy, colored veils of cloud-foliage, for seconds dimly revealed, then vanishing. At last the violet pennons that trailed nearest to me vibrated; they were gently pushed aside, and the form floated out into the broad light.

It was a female human shape. When I say human, I mean it possessed the outlines of humanity, — but there the analogy ends. Its adorable beauty lifted it illimitable heights beyond the loveliest daughter of Adam.

I cannot, I dare not, attempt to inventory the charms of this divine revelation of perfect beauty. Those eyes of mystic violet, dewy and serene, evade my words. Her long, lustrous hair following her glorious head in a golden wake, like the track sown in heaven by a falling star, seems to quench my most burning phrases with its splendors. If all the bees of Hybla nestled upon my lips, they would still sing but hoarsely the wondrous harmonies of outline that enclosed her form.

She swept out from between the rainbow-curtains of the cloud-trees into the broad sea of light that lay beyond. Her motions were those of some graceful naiad, cleaving, by a mere effort of her will, the clear, unruffled waters that fill the chambers of the sea. She floated forth with the serene grace of a frail bubble ascending through the

still atmosphere of a June day. The perfect roundness of her limbs formed suave and enchanting curves. It was like listening to the most spiritual symphony of Beethoven the divine, to watch the harmonious flow of lines. This, indeed, was a pleasure cheaply purchased at any price. What cared I, if I had waded to the portal of this wonder through another's blood? I would have given my own to enjoy one such moment of intoxication and delight.

Breathless with gazing on this lovely wonder, and forgetful for an instant of everything save her presence, I withdrew my eye from the microscope eagerly, — alas! As my gaze fell on the thin slide that lay beneath my instrument, the bright light from mirror and from prism sparkled on a colorless drop of water! There, in that tiny bead of dew, this beautiful being was forever imprisoned. The planet Neptune was not more distant from me than she. I hastened once more to apply my eye to the microscope.

Animula (let me now call her by that dear name which I subsequently bestowed on her) had changed her position. She had again approached the wondrous forest, and was gazing earnestly upwards. Presently one of the trees — as I must call them — unfolded a long ciliary process, with which it seized one of the gleaming fruits that glittered on its summit, and, sweeping slowly down, held it within reach of Animula. The sylph took it in her delicate hand and began to eat. My attention was so entirely absorbed by her, that I could not apply myself to the task of determining whether this singular plant was or was not instinct with volition.

I watched her, as she made her repast, with the most profound attention. The suppleness of her motions sent

a thrill of delight through my frame ; my heart beat madly as she turned her beautiful eyes in the direction of the spot in which I stood. What would I not have given to have had the power to precipitate myself into that luminous ocean, and float with her through those groves of purple and gold ! While I was thus breathlessly following her every movement, she suddenly started, seemed to listen for a moment, and then cleaving the brilliant ether in which she was floating, like a flash of light, pierced through the opaline forest, and disappeared.

Instantly a series of the most singular sensations attacked me. It seemed as if I had suddenly gone blind. The luminous sphere was still before me, but my daylight had vanished. What caused this sudden disappearance ? Had she a lover or a husband ? Yes, that was the solution ! Some signal from a happy fellow-being had vibrated through the avenues of the forest, and she had obeyed the summons.

The agony of my sensations, as I arrived at this conclusion, startled me. I tried to reject the conviction that my reason forced upon me. I battled against the fatal conclusion, — but in vain. It was so. I had no escape from it. I loved an animalcule !

It is true that, thanks to the marvellous power of my microscope, she appeared of human proportions. Instead of presenting the revolting aspect of the coarser creatures, that live and struggle and die, in the more easily resolvable portions of the water-drop, she was fair and delicate and of surpassing beauty. But of what account was all that ? Every time that my eye was withdrawn from the instrument, it fell on a miserable drop of water, within which, I must be content to know, dwelt all that could make my life lovely.

Could she but see me once ! Could I for one moment pierce the mystical walls that so inexorably rose to separate us, and whisper all that filled my soul, I might consent to be satisfied for the rest of my life with the knowledge of her remote sympathy. It would be something to have established even the faintest personal link to bind us together, — to know that at times, when roaming through those enchanted glades, she might think of the wonderful stranger, who had broken the monotony of her life with his presence, and left a gentle memory in her heart !

But it could not be. No invention of which human intellect was capable could break down the barriers that nature had erected. I might feast my soul upon her wondrous beauty, yet she must always remain ignorant of the adoring eyes that day and night gazed upon her, and, even when closed, beheld her in dreams. With a bitter cry of anguish I fled from the room, and, flinging myself on my bed, sobbed myself to sleep like a child.



VI.

THE SPILLING OF THE CUP.

I AROSE the next morning almost at daybreak, and rushed to my microscope. I trembled as I sought the luminous world in miniature that contained my all. *Animula* was there. I had left the gas-lamp, surrounded by its moderators, burning, when I went to bed the night before. I found the sylph bathing, as it were, with an expression of pleasure animating her features, in the brilliant light which surrounded her. She tossed her lustrous golden hair over her shoulders with innocent coquetry.

She lay at full length in the transparent medium, in which she supported herself with ease, and gambolled with the enchanting grace that the nymph Salmacis might have exhibited when she sought to conquer the modest Hermaphroditus. I tried an experiment to satisfy myself if her powers of reflection were developed. I lessened the lamp-light considerably. By the dim light that remained, I could see an expression of pain flit across her face. She looked upward suddenly, and her brows contracted. I flooded the stage of the microscope again with a full stream of light, and her whole expression changed. She sprang forward like some substance deprived of all weight. Her eyes sparkled and her lips moved. Ah! if science had only the means of conducting and reduplicating sounds, as it does the rays of light, what carols of happiness would then have entranced my ears! what jubilant hymns to Adonais would have thrilled the illumined air!

I now comprehended how it was that the Count de Gabbalis peopled his mystic world with sylphs, — beautiful beings whose breath of life was lambent fire, and who sported forever in regions of purest ether and purest light. The Rosicrucian had anticipated the wonder that I had practically realized.

How long this worship of my strange divinity went on thus I scarcely know. I lost all note of time. All day from early dawn, and far into the night, I was to be found peering through that wonderful lens. I saw no one, went nowhere, and scarce allowed myself sufficient time for my meals. My whole life was absorbed in contemplation as rapt as that of any of the Romish saints. Every hour that I gazed upon the divine form strengthened my passion, — a passion that was always overshadowed

owed by the maddening conviction, that, although I could gaze on her at will, she never, never could behold me!

At length, I grew so pale and emaciated, from want of rest, and continual brooding over my insane love and its cruel conditions, that I determined to make some effort to wean myself from it. "Come," I said, "this is at best but a fantasy. Your imagination has bestowed on Animula charms which in reality she does not possess. Seclusion from female society has produced this morbid condition of mind. Compare her with the beautiful women of your own world, and this false enchantment will vanish."

I looked over the newspapers by chance. There I beheld the advertisement of a celebrated *danseuse* who appeared nightly at Niblo's. The Signorina Caradolce had the reputation of being the most beautiful as well as the most graceful woman in the world. I instantly dressed and went to the theatre.

The curtain drew up. The usual semicircle of fairies in white muslin were standing on the right toe around the enamelled flower-bank, of green canvas, on which the belated prince was sleeping. Suddenly a flute is heard. The fairies start. The trees open, the fairies all stand on the left toe, and the queen enters. It was the Signorina. She bounded forward amid thunders of applause, and, lighting on one foot, remained poised in air. Heavens! was this the great enchantress that had drawn monarchs at her chariot-wheels? Those heavy muscular limbs, those thick ankles, those cavernous eyes, that stereotyped smile, those crudely painted cheeks! Where were the vermeil blooms, the liquid expressive eyes, the harmonious limbs of Animula?

The Signorina danced. What gross, discordant move-

ments ! The play of her limbs was all false and artificial. Her bounds were painful athletic efforts ; her poses were angular and distressed the eye. I could bear it no longer ; with an exclamation of disgust that drew every eye upon me, I rose from my seat in the very middle of the Signorina's *pas-de-fascination*, and abruptly quitted the house.

I hastened home to feast my eyes once more on the lovely form of my sylph. I felt that henceforth to combat this passion would be impossible. I applied my eye to the lens. Animula was there, — but what could have happened ? Some terrible change seemed to have taken place during my absence. Some secret grief seemed to cloud the lovely features of her I gazed upon. Her face had grown thin and haggard ; her limbs trailed heavily ; the wondrous lustre of her golden hair had faded. She was ill ! — ill, and I could not assist her ! I believe at that moment I would have gladly forfeited all claims to my human birthright, if I could only have been dwarfed to the size of an animalcule, and permitted to console her from whom fate had forever divided me.

I racked my brain for the solution of this mystery. What was it that afflicted the sylph ? She seemed to suffer intense pain. Her features contracted, and she even writhed, as if with some internal agony. The wondrous forests appeared also to have lost half their beauty. Their hues were dim and in some places faded away altogether. I watched Animula for hours with a breaking heart, and she seemed absolutely to wither away under my very eye. Suddenly I remembered that I had not looked at the water-drop for several days. In fact, I hated to see it ; for it reminded me of the natural barrier between Animula and myself. I hurriedly looked down on the stage of the microscope. The slide was still there, — but, great

heavens! the water-drop had vanished! The awful truth burst upon me; it had evaporated, until it had become so minute as to be invisible to the naked eye; I had been gazing on its last atom, the one that contained Animula, — and she was dying!

I rushed again to the front of the lens, and looked through. Alas! the last agony had seized her. The rainbow-hued forests had all melted away, and Animula lay struggling feebly in what seemed to be a spot of dim light. Ah! the sight was horrible: the limbs once so round and lovely shrivelling up into nothings; the eyes — those eyes that shone like heaven — being quenched into black dust; the lustrous golden hair now lank and discolored. The last throes came. I beheld that final struggle of the blackening form — and I fainted.

When I awoke out of a trance of many hours, I found myself lying amid the wreck of my instrument, myself as shattered in mind and body as it. I crawled feebly to my bed, from which I did not rise for months.

They say now that I am mad; but they are mistaken. I am poor, for I have neither the heart nor the will to work; all my money is spent, and I live on charity. Young men's associations that love a joke invite me to lecture on Optics before them, for which they pay me, and laugh at me while I lecture. "Linley, the mad microscopist," is the name I go by. I suppose that I talk incoherently while I lecture. Who could talk sense when his brain is haunted by such ghastly memories, while ever and anon among the shapes of death I behold the radiant form of my lost Animula!

THE WONDERSMITH.



I.

GOLOSH STREET AND ITS PEOPLE.

A SMALL lane, the name of which I have forgotten, or do not choose to remember, slants suddenly off from Chatham Street, (before that headlong thoroughfare rushes into the Park,) and retreats suddenly down towards the East River, as if it were disgusted with the smell of old clothes, and had determined to wash itself clean. This excellent intention it has, however, evidently contributed towards the making of that imaginary pavement mentioned in the old adage ; for it is still emphatically a dirty street. It has never been able to shake off the Hebraic taint of filth which it inherits from the ancestral thoroughfare. It is slushy and greasy, as if it were twin brother of the Roman Ghetto.

I like a dirty slum ; not because I am naturally unclean, — I have not a drop of Neapolitan blood in my veins, — but because I generally find a certain sediment of philosophy precipitated in its gutters. A clean street is terribly prosaic. There is no food for thought in carefully swept pavements, barren kennels, and vulgarly spotless houses. But when I go down a street which has been left so long to itself that it has acquired a distinct outward character, I find plenty to think about. The scraps of sodden letters lying in the ash-barrel have their

meaning: desperate appeals, perhaps, from Tom, the baker's assistant, to Amelia, the daughter of the dry-goods retailer, who is always selling at a sacrifice in consequence of the late fire. That may be Tom himself who is now passing me in a white apron, and I look up at the windows of the house (which does not, however, give any signs of a recent conflagration) and almost hope to see Amelia wave a white pocket-handkerchief. The bit of orange-peel lying on the sidewalk inspires thought. Who will fall over it? who but the industrious mother of six children, the youngest of which is only nine months old, all of whom are dependent on her exertions for support? I see her slip and tumble. I see the pale face convulsed with agony, and the vain struggle to get up; the pitying crowd closing her off from all air; the anxious young doctor who happened to be passing by; the manipulation of the broken limb, the shake of the head, the moan of the victim, the litter borne on men's shoulders, the gates of the New York Hospital unclosing, the subscription taken up on the spot. There is some food for speculation in that three-year-old, tattered child, masked with dirt, who is throwing a brick at another three-year-old, tattered child, masked with dirt. It is not difficult to perceive that he is destined to lurk, as it were, through life. His bad, flat face — or, at least, what can be seen of it — does not look as if it were made for the light of day. The mire in which he wallows now is but a type of the moral mire in which he will wallow hereafter. The feeble little hand lifted at this instant to smite his companion, half in earnest, half in jest, will be raised against his fellow-beings forevermore.

Golosh Street — as I will call this nameless lane before alluded to — is an interesting locality. All the oddities

of trade seemed to have found their way thither and made an eccentric mercantile settlement. There is a bird-shop at one corner wainscoted with little cages containing linnets, waxwings, canaries, blackbirds, Minobirds, with a hundred other varieties, known only to naturalists. Immediately opposite is an establishment where they sell nothing but ornaments made out of the tinted leaves of autumn, varnished and gummed into various forms. Further down is a second-hand book-stall, which looks like a sentry-box mangled out flat, and which is remarkable for not containing a complete set of any work. There is a small chink between two ordinary-sized houses, in which a little Frenchman makes and sells artificial eyes, specimens of which, ranged on a black velvet cushion, stare at you unwinkingly through the window as you pass, until you shudder and hurry on, thinking how awful the world would be if every one went about without eyelids. There are junk-shops in Golosh Street that seem to have got hold of all the old nails in the ark and all the old brass of Corinth. Madame Filomel, the fortune-teller, lives at No. 12 Golosh Street, second story front, pull the bell on the left-hand side. Next door to Madame is the shop of Herr Hippe, commonly called the Wondersmith.

Herr Hippe's shop is the largest in Golosh Street, and to all appearance is furnished with the smallest stock. Beyond a few packing-cases, a turner's lathe, and a shelf laden with dissected maps of Europe, the interior of the shop is entirely unfurnished. The window, which is lofty and wide, but much begrimed with dirt, contains the only pleasant object in the place. This is a beautiful little miniature theatre,—that is to say, the orchestra and stage. It is fitted with charmingly painted scenery

and all the appliances for scenic changes. There are tiny traps, and delicately constructed "lifts," and real foot-lights fed with burning-fluid, and in the orchestra sits a diminutive conductor before his desk, surrounded by musical manikins, all provided with the smallest of violoncellos, flutes, oboes, drums, and such like. There are characters also on the stage. A Templar in a white cloak is dragging a fainting female form to the parapet of a ruined bridge, while behind a great black rock on the left one can see a man concealed, who, kneeling, levels an arquebuse at the knight's heart. But the orchestra is silent; the conductor never beats the time, the musicians never play a note; the Templar never drags his victim an inch nearer to the bridge; the masked avenger takes an eternal aim with his weapon. This repose appears unnatural; for so admirably are the figures executed that they seem replete with life. One is almost led to believe, in looking on them, that they are resting beneath some spell which hinders their motion. One expects every moment to hear the loud explosion of the arquebuse, — to see the blue smoke curling, the Templar falling, — to hear the orchestra playing the requiem of the guilty.

Few people knew what Herr Hippe's business or trade really was. That he worked at something was evident; else why the shop? Some people inclined to the belief that he was an inventor, or mechanician. His workshop was in the rear of the store, and into that sanctuary no one but himself had admission. He arrived in Golosh Street eight or ten years ago, and one fine morning, the neighbors, taking down their shutters, observed that No. 13 had got a tenant. A tall, thin, sallow-faced man stood on a ladder outside the shop entrance, nailing up a large board, on which "Herr Hippe, Wondersmith," was

painted in black letters on a yellow ground. The little theatre stood in the window, where it stood ever after, and Herr Hippe was established.

But what was a Wondersmith? people asked each other. No one could reply. Madame Filomel was consulted; but she looked grave, and said that it was none of her business. Mr. Pippel, the bird-fancier, who was a German, and ought to know best, thought it was the English for some singular Teutonic profession; but his replies were so vague that Golosh Street was as unsatisfied as ever. Solon, the little humpback, who kept the odd-volume book-stall at the lowest corner, could throw no light upon it. And at length people had to come to the conclusion that Herr Hippe was either a coiner or a magician, and opinions were divided.



II.

A BOTTLEFUL OF SOULS.

It was a dull December evening. There was little trade doing in Golosh Street, and the shutters were up at most of the shops. Hippe's store had been closed at least an hour, and the Mino-birds and Bohemian wax-wings at Mr. Pippel's had their heads tucked under their wings in their first sleep.

Herr Hippe sat in his parlor, which was lit by a pleasant wood-fire. There were no candles in the room, and the flickering blaze played fantastic tricks on the pale gray walls. It seemed the festival of shadows. Processions of shapes, obscure and indistinct, passed across the leaden-hued panels and vanished in the dusk corners. Every fresh blaze flung up by the wayward logs created

new images. Now it was a funeral throng, with the bowed figures of mourners, the shrouded coffin, the plumes that waved like extinguished torches; now a knightly cavalcade with flags and lances, and weird horses, that rushed silently along until they met the angle of the room, when they pranced through the wall and vanished.

On a table close to where Herr Hippe sat was placed a large square box of some dark wood, while over it was spread a casing of steel, so elaborately wrought in an open arabesque pattern that it seemed like a shining blue lace which was lightly stretched over its surface.

Herr Hippe lay luxuriously in his arm-chair, looking meditatively into the fire. He was tall and thin, and his skin was of a dull saffron hue. Long, straight hair, sharply cut, regular features, a long, thin mustache, that curled like a dark asp around his mouth, the expression of which was so bitter and cruel that it seemed to distil the venom of the ideal serpent, and a bony, muscular form, were the prominent characteristics of the Wondersmith.

The profound silence that reigned in the chamber was broken by a peculiar scratching at the panel of the door, like that which at the French court was formerly substituted for the ordinary knock, when it was necessary to demand admission to the royal apartments. Herr Hippe started, raised his head, which vibrated on his long neck like the head of a cobra when about to strike, and after a moment's silence uttered a strange guttural sound. The door unclosed, and a squat, broad-shouldered woman, with large, wild, oriental eyes, entered softly.

“Ah! Filomel, you are come!” said the Wondersmith, sinking back in his chair. “Where are the rest of them?”

“They will be here presently,” answered Madame Filomel, seating herself in an arm-chair much too narrow for a person of her proportions, and over the sides of which she bulged like a pudding.

“Have you brought the souls?” asked the Wondersmith.

“They are here,” said the fortune-teller, drawing a large pot-bellied black bottle from under her cloak. “Ah! I have had such trouble with them!”

“Are they of the right brand,—wild, tearing, dark, devilish fellows? We want no essence of milk and honey, you know. None but souls bitter as hemlock or scorching as lightning will suit our purpose.”

“You will see, you will see, Grand Duke of Egypt! They are ethereal demons, every one of them. They are the pick of a thousand births. Do you think that I, old midwife that I am, don’t know the squall of the demon child from that of the angel child, the very moment they are delivered? Ask a musician how he knows, even in the dark, a note struck by Thalberg from one struck by Listz!”

“I long to test them,” cried the Wondersmith, rubbing his hands joyfully. “I long to see how the little devils will behave when I give them their shapes. Ah! it will be a proud day for us when we let them loose upon the cursed Christian children! Through the length and breadth of the land they will go; wherever our wandering people set foot, and wherever they are, the children of the Christians shall die. Then we, the despised Bohemians, the gypsies, as they call us, will be once more lords of the earth, as we were in the days when the accursed things called cities did not exist, and men lived in the free woods and hunted the game of the forest.

Toys indeed! Ay, ay, we will give the little dears toys! toys that all day will sleep calmly in their boxes, seemingly stiff and wooden and without life, — but at night, when the souls enter them, will arise and surround the cots of the sleeping children, and pierce their hearts with their keen, envenomed blades! Toys indeed! O, yes! I will sell them toys!”

And the Wondersmith laughed horribly, while the snaky mustache on his upper lip writhed as if it had truly a serpent's power and could sting.

“Have you got your first batch, Herr Hippe?” asked Madame Filomel. “Are they all ready?”

“O, ay! they are ready,” answered the Wondersmith with gusto, — opening, as he spoke, the box covered with the blue steel lace-work; “they are here.”

The box contained a quantity of exquisitely carved wooden manikins of both sexes, painted with great dexterity so as to present a miniature resemblance to nature. They were, in fact, nothing more than admirable specimens of those toys which children delight in placing in various positions on the table, — in regiments, or sitting at meals, or grouped under the stiff green trees which always accompany them in the boxes in which they are sold at the toy-shops.

The peculiarity, however, about the manikins of Herr Hippe was not alone the artistic truth with which the limbs and the features were gifted; but on the countenance of each little puppet the carver's art had wrought an expression of wickedness that was appalling. Every tiny face had its special stamp of ferocity. The lips were thin and brimful of malice; the small black bead-like eyes glittered with the fire of a universal hate. There was not one of the manikins, male or female, that did

not hold in his or her hand some miniature weapon. The little men, scowling like demons, clasped in their wooden fingers swords delicate as a housewife's needle. The women, whose countenances expressed treachery and cruelty, clutched infinitesimal daggers, with which they seemed about to take some terrible vengeance.

"Good!" said Madame Filomel, taking one of the manikins out of the box and examining it attentively; "you work well, Duke Balthazar! These little ones are of the right stamp; they look as if they had mischief in them. Ah! here come our brothers."

At this moment the same scratching that preceded the entrance of Madame Filomel was heard at the door, and Herr Hippe replied with a hoarse, guttural cry. The next moment two men entered. The first was a small man with very brilliant eyes. He was wrapt in a long shabby cloak, and wore a strange nondescript species of cap on his head, such a cap as one sees only in the low billiard-rooms in Paris. His companion was tall, long-limbed, and slender; and his dress, although of the ordinary cut, either from the disposition of colors, or from the careless, graceful attitudes of the wearer, assumed a certain air of picturesqueness. Both the men possessed the same marked oriental type of countenance which distinguished the Wondersmith and Madame Filomel. True gypsies they seemed, who would not have been out of place telling fortunes, or stealing chickens in the green lanes of England, or wandering with their wild music and their sleight-of-hand tricks through Bohemian villages.

"Welcome, brothers!" said the Wondersmith; "you are in time. Sister Filomel has brought the souls, and we are about to test them. Monsieur Kerplonne, take off your cloak. Brother Oaksmith, take a chair. I promise

you some amusement this evening ; so make yourselves comfortable. Here is something to aid you."

And while the Frenchman Kerplonne, and his tall companion, Oaksmith, were obeying Hippe's invitation, he reached over to a little closet let into the wall, and took thence a squat bottle and some glasses, which he placed on the table.

"Drink, brothers!" he said ; "it is not Christian blood, but good stout wine of Oporto. It goes right to the heart, and warms one like the sunshine of the south."

"It is good," said Kerplonne, smacking his lips with enthusiasm.

"Why don't you keep brandy? Hang wine!" cried Oaksmith, after having swallowed two bumpers in rapid succession.

"Bah! Brandy has been the ruin of our race. It has made us sots and thieves. It shall never cross my threshold," cried the Wondersmith, with a sombre indignation.

"A little of it is not bad, though, Duke," said the fortune-teller. "It consoles us for our misfortunes; it gives us the crowns we once wore; it restores to us the power we once wielded; it carries us back, as if by magic, to that land of the sun from which fate has driven us; it darkens the memory of all the evils that we have for centuries suffered."

"It is a devil; may it be cursed!" cried Herr Hippe, passionately. "It is a demon that stole from me my son, the finest youth in all Courland. Yes! my son, the son of the Waywode Balthazar, Grand Duke of Lower Egypt, died raving in a gutter, with an empty brandy-bottle in his hands. Were it not that the plant is a sacred one to our race, I would curse the grape and the vine that bore it."

This outburst was delivered with such energy that the three gypsies kept silence. Oaksmith helped himself to another glass of port, and the fortune-teller rocked to and fro in her chair, too much overawed by the Wondersmith's vehemence of manner to reply. The little Frenchman, Kerplonne, took no part in the discussion, but seemed lost in admiration of the manikins, which he took from the box in which they lay, handling them with the greatest care.

After the silence had lasted for about a minute, Herr Hippe broke it with the sudden question, "How does your eye get on, Kerplonne?"

"Excellently, Duke. It is finished. I have it here." And the little Frenchman put his hand into his breeches pocket and pulled out a large artificial human eye. Its great size was the only thing in this eye that would lead any one to suspect its artificiality. It was at least twice the size of life; but there was a fearful speculative light in its iris, which seemed to expand and contract like the eye of a living being, that rendered it a horrible staring paradox. It looked like the naked eye of the Cyclops, torn from his forehead, and still burning with wrath and the desire for vengeance.

The little Frenchman laughed pleasantly as he held the eye in his hand, and gazed down on that huge, dark pupil, that stared back at him, it seemed, with an air of defiance and mistrust.

"It is a devil of an eye," said the little man, wiping the enamelled surface with an old silk pocket-handkerchief; "it reads like a demon. My niece — the unhappy one — has a wretch of a lover, and I have a long time feared that she would run away with him. I could not read her correspondence, for she kept her writing-desk closely

locked. But I asked her yesterday to keep this eye in some very safe place for me. She put it, as I knew she would, into her desk, and by its aid I read every one of her letters. She was to run away next Monday, the ungrateful! but she will find herself disappointed."

And the little man laughed heartily at the success of his stratagem, and polished and fondled the great eye until that optic seemed to grow sore with rubbing.

"And you have been at work, too, I see, Herr Hippe. Your manikins are excellent. But where are the souls?"

"In that bottle," answered the Wondersmith, pointing to the pot-bellied black bottle that Madame Filomel had brought with her. "Yes, Monsieur Kerplonne," he continued, "my manikins are well made. I invoked the aid of Abigor, the demon of soldiery, and he inspired me. The little fellows will be famous assassins when they are animated. We will try them to-night."

"Good!" cried Kerplonne, rubbing his hands joyously. "It is close upon New Year's day. We will fabricate millions of the little murderers by New Year's eve, and sell them in large quantities; and when the households are all asleep, and the Christian children are waiting for Santa Claus to come, the small ones will troop from their boxes, and the Christian children will die. It is famous! Health to Abigor!"

"Let us try them at once," said Oaksmith. "Is your daughter, Zonéla, in bed, Herr Hippe? Are we secure from intrusion?"

"No one is stirring about the house," replied the Wondersmith, gloomily.

Filomel leaned over to Oaksmith, and said in an undertone, "Why do you mention his daughter? You know he does not like to have her spoken about."

“I will take care that we are not disturbed,” said Kerplonne, rising. “I will put my eye outside the door, to watch.”

He went to the door and placed his great eye upon the floor with tender care. As he did so, a dark form, unseen by him or his second vision, glided along the passage noiselessly, and was lost in the darkness.

“Now for it!” exclaimed Madame Filomel, taking up her fat black bottle. “Herr Hippe, prepare your manikins!”

The Wondersmith took the little dolls out, one by one, and set them upon the table. Such an array of villanous countenances was never seen. An army of Italian bravoës, seen through the wrong end of a telescope, or a band of prisoners at the galleys in Liliput, will give some faint idea of the appearance they presented. While Madame Filomel uncorked the black bottle, Herr Hippe covered the dolls with a species of linen tent, which he took also from the box. This done, the fortune-teller held the mouth of the bottle to the door of the tent, gathering the loose cloth closely round the glass neck. Immediately tiny noises were heard inside the tent. Madame Filomel removed the bottle, and the Wondersmith lifted the covering in which he had enveloped his little people.

A wonderful transformation had taken place. Wooden and inflexible no longer, the crowd of manikins were now in full motion. The bead-like eyes turned, glittering, on all sides; the thin, wicked lips quivered with bad passions; the tiny hands sheathed and unsheathed the little swords and daggers. Episodes, common to life, were taking place in every direction. Here two martial manikins paid court to a pretty, sly-faced female, who smiled on each alternately, but gave her hand to be kissed to a

third manikin, an ugly little scoundrel, who crouched behind her. There a pair of friendly dolls walked arm in arm, apparently on the best terms, while, all the time, one was watching his opportunity to stab the other in the back.

“I think they’ll do,” said the Wondersmith, chuckling as he watched these various incidents. “Treacherous, cruel, bloodthirsty. All goes marvellously well. But stay! I will put the grand test to them.”

So saying, he drew a gold dollar from his pocket, and let it fall on the table, in the very midst of the throng of manikins. It had hardly touched the table when there was a pause on all sides. Every head was turned towards the dollar. Then about twenty of the little creatures rushed towards the glittering coin. One, fleetier than the rest, leaped upon it and drew his sword. The entire crowd of little people had now gathered round this new centre of attraction. Men and women struggled and shoved to get nearer to the piece of gold. Hardly had the first Liliputian mounted upon the treasure, when a hundred blades flashed back a defiant answer to his, and a dozen men, sword in hand, leaped upon the yellow platform and drove him off at the sword’s point. Then commenced a general battle. The miniature faces were convulsed with rage and avarice. Each furious doll tried to plunge dagger or sword into his or her neighbor, and the women seemed possessed by a thousand devils.

“They will break themselves into atoms,” cried Filomel, as she watched with eagerness this savage *mêlée*. “You had better gather them up, Herr Hippe. I will exhaust my bottle and suck all the souls back from them.”

“O, they are perfect devils! they are magnificent

little demons!" cried the Frenchman, with enthusiasm. "Hippe, you are a wonderful man. Brother Oaksmith, you have no such man as Hippe among your English gypsies."

"Not exactly," answered Oaksmith, rather sullenly, "not exactly. But we have men there who can make a twelve-year-old horse look like a four-year-old, — and who can take you and Herr Hippe up with one hand, and throw you over their shoulders."

"The good God forbid!" said the little Frenchman. "I do not love such play. It is incommodious."

While Oaksmith and Kerplonne were talking, the Wondersmith had placed the linen tent over the struggling dolls, and Madame Filomel, who had been performing some mysterious manipulations with her black bottle, put the mouth once more to the door of the tent. In an instant the confused murmur within ceased. Madame Filomel corked the bottle quickly. The Wondersmith withdrew the tent, and, lo! the furious dolls were once more wooden-jointed and inflexible; and the old sinister look was again frozen on their faces.

"They must have blood, though," said Herr Hippe, as he gathered them up and put them into their box. "Mr. Pippel, the bird-fancier, is asleep. I have a key that opens his door. We will let them loose among the birds; it will be rare fun."

"Magnificent!" cried Kerplonne. "Let us go on the instant. But first let me gather up my eye."

The Frenchman pocketed his eye, after having given it a polish with the silk handkerchief; Herr Hippe extinguished the lamp; Oaksmith took a last bumper of port; and the four gypsies departed for Mr. Pippel's, carrying the box of manikins with them.

III.

SOLON.

THE shadow that glided along the dark corridor, at the moment that Monsieur Kerplonne deposited his sentinel eye outside the door of the Wondersmith's apartment, sped swiftly through the passage and ascended the stairs to the attic. Here the shadow stopped at the entrance to one of the chambers and knocked at the door. There was no reply.

"Zonéla, are you asleep?" said the shadow, softly.

"O, Solon, is it you?" replied a sweet low voice from within. "I thought it was Herr Hippe. Come in."

The shadow opened the door and entered. There were neither candles nor lamp in the room; but through the projecting window, which was open, there came the faint gleams of the starlight, by which one could distinguish a female figure seated on a low stool in the middle of the floor.

"Has he left you without light again, Zonéla?" asked the shadow, closing the door of the apartment. "I have brought my little lantern with me, though."

"Thank you, Solon," answered she called Zonéla; "you are a good fellow. He never gives me any light of an evening, but bids me go to bed. I like to sit sometimes and look at the moon and the stars,—the stars more than all; for they seem all the time to look right back into my face, very sadly, as if they would say, 'We see you, and pity you, and would help you, if we could.' But it is so mournful to be always looking at such myriads of melancholy eyes! and I long so to read those nice books that you lend me, Solon!"

By this time the shadow had lit the lantern and was a shadow no longer. A large head, covered with a profusion of long blonde hair, which was cut after that fashion known as *à l'enfants d'Edouard*; a beautiful pale face, lit with wide, blue, dreamy eyes; long arms and slender hands, attenuated legs, and — an enormous hump; — such was Solon, the shadow. As soon as the humpback had lit the lamp, Zonéla arose from the low stool on which she had been seated, and took Solon's hand affectionately in hers.

Zonéla was surely not of gypsy blood. That rich auburn hair, that looked almost black in the lamp-light, that pale, transparent skin, tinged with an under-glow of warm rich blood, the hazel eyes, large and soft as those of a fawn, were never begotten of a Zingaro. Zonéla was seemingly about sixteen; her figure, although somewhat thin and angular, was full of the unconscious grace of youth. She was dressed in an old cotton print, which had been once of an exceedingly boisterous pattern, but was now a mere suggestion of former splendor; while round her head was twisted, in fantastic fashion, a silk handkerchief of green ground spotted with bright crimson. This strange head-dress gave her an elfish appearance.

"I have been out all day with the organ, and I am so tired, Solon! — not sleepy, but weary, I mean. Poor Furbelow was sleepy, though, and he's gone to bed."

"I'm weary, too, Zonéla; — not weary as you are, though, for I sit in my little book-stall all day long, and do not drag round an organ and a monkey and play old tunes for pennies, — but weary of myself, of life, of the load that I carry on my shoulders"; and, as he said this, the poor humpback glanced sideways, as if to call attention to his deformed person.

“Well, but you ought not to be melancholy amidst your books, Solon. Gracious! If I could only sit in the sun and read as you do, how happy I should be! But it’s very tiresome to trudge round all day with that nasty organ, and look up at the houses, and know that you are annoying the people inside; and then the boys play such bad tricks on poor Furbelow, throwing him hot pennies to pick up, and burning his poor little hands; and oh! sometimes, Solon, the men in the street make me so afraid, — they speak to me and look at me so oddly! — I’d a great deal rather sit in your book-stall and read.”

“I have nothing but odd volumes in my stall,” answered the humpback. “Perhaps that’s right, though; for, after all, I’m nothing but an odd volume myself.”

“Come, don’t be melancholy, Solon. Sit down and tell me a story. I’ll bring Furbelow to listen.”

So saying, she went to a dusk corner of the cheerless attic room, and returned with a little Brazilian monkey in her arms, — a poor, mild, drowsy thing, that looked as if it had cried itself to sleep. She sat down on her little stool, with Furbelow in her lap, and nodded her head to Solon, as much as to say, “Go on; we are attentive.”

“You want a story, do you?” said the humpback, with a mournful smile. “Well, I’ll tell you one. Only what will your father say, if he catches me here?”

“Herr Hippe is not my father,” cried Zonéla, indignantly. “He’s a gypsy, and I know I’m stolen; and I’d run away from him, if I only knew where to run to. If I were his child, do you think that he would treat me as he does? make me trudge round the city, all day long, with a barrel-organ and a monkey, — though I love poor, dear little Furbelow, — and keep me up in a garret, and

give me ever so little to eat? I know I'm not his child, for he hates me."

"Listen to my story, Zonéla, and we'll talk of that afterwards. Let me sit at your feet";—and, having coiled himself up at the little maiden's feet, he commenced :—

"There once lived in a great city, just like this city of New York, a poor little hunchback. He kept a second-hand book-stall, where he made barely enough money to keep body and soul together. He was very sad at times, because he knew scarce any one, and those that he did know did not love him. He had passed a sickly, secluded youth. The children of his neighborhood would not play with him, for he was not made like them; and the people in the streets stared at him with pity, or scoffed at him when he went by. Ah! Zonéla, how his poor heart was wrung with bitterness when he beheld the procession of shapely men and fine women that every day passed him by in the thoroughfares of the great city! How he repined and cursed his fate as the torrent of fleet-footed firemen dashed past him to the toll of the bells, magnificent in their overflowing vitality and strength! But there was one consolation left him,—one drop of honey in the jar of gall, so sweet that it ameliorated all the bitterness of life. God had given him a deformed body, but his mind was straight and healthy. So the poor hunchback shut himself into the world of books, and was, if not happy, at least contented. He kept company with courteous paladins, and romantic heroes, and beautiful women; and this society was of such excellent breeding that it never so much as once noticed his poor crooked back or his lame walk. The love of books grew upon him with his years. He was remarked for his studious habits;

and when, one day, the obscure people that he called father and mother — parents only in name — died, a compassionate book-vender gave him enough stock in trade to set up a little stall of his own. Here, in his book-stall, he sat in the sun all day, waiting for the customers that seldom came, and reading the fine deeds of the people of the ancient time, or the beautiful thoughts of the poets that had warmed millions of hearts before that hour, and still glowed for him with undiminished fire. One day, when he was reading some book, that, small as it was, was big enough to shut the whole world out from him, he heard some music in the street. Looking up from his book, he saw a little girl, with large eyes, playing an organ, while a monkey begged for alms from a crowd of idlers who had nothing in their pockets but their hands. The girl was playing, but she was also weeping. The merry notes of the polka were ground out to a silent accompaniment of tears. She looked very sad, this organ-girl, and her monkey seemed to have caught the infection, for his large brown eyes were moist, as if he also wept. The poor hunchback was struck with pity, and called the little girl over to give her a penny, — not, dear Zonéla, because he wished to bestow alms, but because he wanted to speak with her. She came, and they talked together. She came the next day, — for it turned out that they were neighbors, — and the next, and, in short, every day. They became friends. They were both lonely and afflicted, with this difference, that she was beautiful, and he — was a hunchback."

"Why, Solon," cried Zonéla, "that's the very way you and I met!"

"It was then," continued Solon, with a faint smile, "that life seemed to have its music. A great harmony

seemed to the poor cripple to fill the world. The carts that took the flour-barrels from the wharves to the store-houses seemed to emit joyous melodies from their wheels. The hum of the great business streets sounded like grand symphonies of triumph. As one who has been travelling through a barren country without much heed feels with singular force the sterility of the lands he has passed through when he reaches the fertile plains that lie at the end of his journey, so the humpback, after his vision had been freshened with this blooming flower, remembered for the first time the misery of the life that he had led. But he did not allow himself to dwell upon the past. The present was so delightful that it occupied all his thoughts. Zonéla, he was in love with the organ-girl."

"O, that's so nice!" said Zonéla, innocently, — pinching poor Furbelow, as she spoke, in order to dispel a very evident snooze that was creeping over him. "It's going to be a love-story."

"Ah! but, Zonéla, he did not know whether she loved him in return. You forget that he was deformed."

"But," answered the girl gravely, "he was good."

A light like the flash of an aurora illuminated Solon's face for an instant. He put out his hand suddenly, as if to take Zonéla's and press it to his heart; but an unaccountable timidity seemed to arrest the impulse, and he only stroked Furbelow's head, — upon which that individual opened one large brown eye to the extent of the eighth of an inch, and, seeing that it was only Solon, instantly closed it again, and resumed his dream of a city where there were no organs and all the copper coin of the realm was iced.

"He hoped and feared," continued Solon, in a low, mournful voice; "but at times he was very miserable,

because he did not think it possible that so much happiness was reserved for him as the love of this beautiful, innocent girl. At night, when he was in bed, and all the world was dreaming, he lay awake looking up at the old books against the walls, thinking how he could bring about the charming of her heart. One night, when he was thinking of this, with his eyes fixed upon the mouldy backs of the odd volumes that lay on their shelves, and looked back at him wistfully, as if they would say, 'We also are like you, and wait to be completed,' it seemed as if he heard a rustle of leaves. Then, one by one, the books came down from their places to the floor, as if shifted by invisible hands, opened their worm-eaten covers, and from between the pages of each the hunchback saw issue forth a curious throng of little people that danced here and there through the apartment. Each one of these little creatures was shaped so as to bear resemblance to some one of the letters of the alphabet. One tall, long-legged fellow seemed like the letter A; a burly fellow, with a big head and a paunch, was the model of B; another leering little chap might have passed for a Q; and so on through the whole. These fairies — for fairies they were — climbed upon the hunchback's bed, and clustered thick as bees upon his pillow. 'Come!' they cried to him, 'we will lead you into fairy-land.' So saying, they seized his hand, and he suddenly found himself in a beautiful country, where the light did not come from sun or moon or stars, but floated round and over and in everything like the atmosphere. On all sides he heard mysterious melodies sung by strangely musical voices. None of the features of the landscape was definite; yet when he looked on the vague harmonies of color that melted one into another before his sight he was filled

with a sense of inexplicable beauty. On every side of him fluttered radiant bodies, which darted to and fro through the illumined space. They were not birds, yet they flew like birds; and as each one crossed the path of his vision he felt a strange delight flash through his brain, and straightway an interior voice seemed to sing beneath the vaulted dome of his temples a verse containing some beautiful thought. The little fairies were all this time dancing and fluttering around him, perching on his head, on his shoulders, or balancing themselves on his fingertips. 'Where am I?' he asked, at last, of his friends, the fairies. 'Ah, Solon!' he heard them whisper, in tones that sounded like the distant tinkling of silver bells, 'this land is nameless; but those whom we lead hither, who tread its soil, and breathe its air, and gaze on its floating sparks of light, are poets forevermore.' Having said this, they vanished, and with them the beautiful indefinite land, and the flashing lights, and the illumined air; and the hunchback found himself again in bed, with the moonlight quivering on the floor, and the dusty books on their shelves, grim and mouldy as ever."

"You have betrayed yourself. You called yourself Solon," cried Zonéla. "Was it a dream?"

"I do not know," answered Solon; "but since that night I have been a poet."

"A poet?" screamed the little organ girl, — "a real poet, who makes verses which every one reads and every one talks of?"

"The people call me a poet," answered Solon, with a sad smile. "They do not know me by the name of Solon, for I write under an assumed title; but they praise me, and repeat my songs. But, Zonéla, I can't sing this load off of my back, can I?"

"O, bother the hump!" said Zonéla, jumping up suddenly. "You're a poet, and that's enough, is n't it? I'm so glad you're a poet, Solon! You must repeat all your best things to me, won't you?"

Solon nodded assent.

"You don't ask me," he said, "who was the little girl that the hunchback loved."

Zonéla's face flushed crimson. She turned suddenly away, and ran into a dark corner of the room. In a moment she returned with an old hand-organ in her arms.

"Play, Solon, play!" she cried. "I am so glad that I want to dance. Furbelow, come and dance in honor of Solon the Poet."

It was her confession. Solon's eyes flamed, as if his brain had suddenly ignited. He said nothing; but a triumphant smile broke over his countenance. Zonéla, the twilight of whose cheeks was still rosy with the setting blush, caught the lazy Furbelow by his little paws; Solon turned the crank of the organ, which wheezed out as merry a polka as its asthma would allow, and the girl and the monkey commenced their fantastic dance. They had taken but a few steps when the door suddenly opened, and the tall figure of the Wondersmith appeared on the threshold. His face was convulsed with rage, and the black snake that quivered on his upper lip seemed to rear itself as if about to spring upon the hunchback.



IV.

THE MANIKINS AND THE MINOS.

THE four gypsies left Herr Hippe's house cautiously, and directed their steps towards Mr. Pippel's bird-shop.

Golosh Street was asleep. Nothing was stirring in that tenebrous slum, save a dog that savagely gnawed a bone which lay on a dust-heap, tantalizing him with the flavor of food without its substance. As the gypsies moved stealthily along in the darkness they had a sinister and murderous air that would not have failed to attract the attention of the policeman of the quarter, if that worthy had not at the moment been comfortably ensconced in the neighboring "Rainbow" bar-room, listening to the improvisations of that talented vocalist, Mr. Harrison, who was making impromptu verses on every possible subject, to the accompaniment of a cithern which was played by a sad little Italian in a large cloak, to whom the host of the "Rainbow" gave so many toddies and a dollar for his nightly performance.

Mr. Pippel's shop was but a short distance from the Wondersmith's house. A few moments, therefore, brought the gypsy party to the door, when, by the aid of a key which Herr Hippe produced, they silently slipped into the entry. Here the Wondersmith took a dark-lantern from under his cloak, removed the cap that shrouded the light, and led the way into the shop, which was separated from the entry only by a glass door, that yielded, like the outer one, to a key which Hippe took from his pocket. The four gypsies now entered the shop and closed the door behind them.

It was a little world of birds. On every side, whether in large or small cages, one beheld balls of various-colored feathers standing on one leg and breathing peacefully. Love-birds, nestling shoulder to shoulder, with their heads tucked under their wings and all their feathers puffed out, so that they looked like globes of malachite; English bullfinches, with ashen-colored backs, in which their black

heads were buried, and corselets of a rosy down; Java sparrows, fat and sleek and cleanly; troupials, so glossy and splendid in plumage that they looked as if they were dressed in the celebrated armor of the Black Prince, which was jet, richly damascened with gold; a cock of the rock, gleaming, a ball of tawny fire, like a setting sun; the campanero of Brazil, white as snow, with his dilatable tolling-tube hanging from his head, placid and silent;—these, with a humbler crowd of linnets, canaries, robins, mocking-birds, and phœbes, slumbered calmly in their little cages, that were hung so thickly on the wall as not to leave an inch of it visible.

“Splendid little morsels, all of them!” exclaimed Monsieur Kerplonne. “Ah, we are going to have a rare beating!”

“So Pippel does not sleep in his shop,” said the English gypsy, Oaksmith.

“No. The fellow lives somewhere up one of the avenues,” answered Madame Filomel. “He came, the other evening, to consult me about his fortune. I did not tell him,” she added with a laugh, “that he was going to have so distinguished a sporting party on his premises.”

“Come,” said the Wondersmith, producing the box of manikins, “get ready with souls, Madame Filomel. I am impatient to see my little men letting out lives for the first time. Just at the moment that the Wondersmith uttered this sentence, the four gypsies were startled by a hoarse voice issuing from a corner of the room, and propounding in the most guttural tones the intemperate query of “What ’ll you take?” This sottish invitation had scarce been given, when a second extremely thick voice replied from an opposite corner, in accents so rough that they seemed to issue from a throat torn and fur-

rowed by the liquid lava of many bar-rooms, "Brandy and water."

"Hollo! who's here?" muttered Herr Hippe, flashing the light of his lantern round the shop.

Oaksmith turned up his coat-cuffs, as if to be ready for a fight; Madame Filomel glided, or rather rolled, towards the door; while Kerplonne put his hand into his pocket, as if to assure himself that his supernumerary optic was all right.

"What'll you take?" croaked the voice in the corner, once more.

"Brandy and water," rapidly replied the second voice in the other corner. And then, as if by a concerted movement, a series of bibular invitations and acceptances were rolled backwards and forwards with a volubility of utterance that threw Patter *versus* Clatter into the shade.

"What the devil can it be?" muttered the Wonder-smith, flashing his lantern here and there. "Ah! it is those Minos."

So saying, he stopped under one of the wicker cages that hung high up on the wall, and raised the lantern above his head, so as to throw the light upon that particular cage. The hospitable individual who had been extending all these hoarse invitations to partake of intoxicating beverages was an inhabitant of the cage. It was a large Mino-bird, who now stood perched on his cross-bar, with his yellowish-orange bill sloped slightly over his shoulder, and his white eye cocked knowingly upon the Wondersmith. The respondent voice in the other corner came from another Mino-bird, who sat in the dusk in a similar cage, also attentively watching the Wonder-smith. These Mino-birds have a singular aptitude for acquiring phrases.

"What 'll you take!" repeated the Mino, cocking his other eye upon Herr Hippe.

"*Mon Dieu!* what a bird!" exclaimed the little Frenchman. "He is, in truth, polite."

"I don't know what I 'll take," said Hippe, as if replying to the Mino-bird; "but I know what you 'll get, old fellow! Filomel, open the cage-doors, and give me the bottle."

Filomel opened, one after another, the doors of the numberless little cages, thereby arousing from slumber their feathered occupants, who opened their beaks, and stretched their claws, and stared with great surprise at the lantern and the midnight visitors.

By this time the Wondersmith had performed the mysterious manipulations with the bottle, and the manikins were once more in full motion, swarming out of their box, sword and dagger in hand, with their little black eyes glittering fiercely, and their white teeth shining. The little creatures seemed to scent their prey. The gypsies stood in the centre of the shop, watching the proceedings eagerly, while the Liliputians made in a body towards the wall and commenced climbing from cage to cage. Then was heard a tremendous fluttering of wings, and faint, despairing "quirks" echoed on all sides. In almost every cage there was a fierce manikin thrusting his sword or dagger vigorously into the body of some unhappy bird. It recalled the antique legend of the battles of the Pygmies and the Cranes. The poor love-birds lay with their emerald feathers dabbled in their heart's blood, shoulder to shoulder in death as in life. Canaries gasped at the bottom of their cages, while the water in their little glass fountains ran red. The bullfinches wore an unnatural crimson on their breasts. The mocking-bird lay on his back, kicking spasmodically, in the last

agonies, with a tiny sword-thrust cleaving his melodious throat in twain, so that from the instrument which used to gush with wondrous music only scarlet drops of blood now trickled. The manikins were ruthless. Their faces were ten times wickeder than ever, as they roamed from cage to cage, slaughtering with a fury that seemed entirely unappeasable. Presently the feathery rustlings became fewer and fainter, and the little pipings of despair died away; and in every cage lay a poor murdered minstrel, with the song that abode within him forever quenched; — in every cage but two, and those two were high up on the wall; and in each glared a pair of wild, white eyes; and an orange beak, tough as steel, pointed threateningly down. With the needles which they grasped as swords all wet and warm with blood, and their beadlike eyes flashing in the light of the lantern, the Liliputian assassins swarmed up the cages in two separate bodies, until they reached the wickets of the habitations in which the Minos abode. Mino saw them coming, — had listened attentively to the many death-struggles of his comrades, and had, in fact, smelt a rat. Accordingly he was ready for the manikins. There he stood at the barbican of his castle, with formidable beak couched like a lance. The manikins made a gallant charge. “What’ll you take?” was rattled out by the Mino, in a deep bass, as with one plunge of his sharp bill he scattered the ranks of the enemy, and sent three of them flying to the floor, where they lay with broken limbs. But the manikins were brave automata, and again they closed and charged the gallant Mino. Again the wicked white eyes of the bird gleamed, and again the orange bill dealt destruction. Everything seemed to be going on swimmingly for Mino, when he found himself

attacked in the rear by two treacherous manikins, who had stolen upon him from behind, through the lattice-work of the cage. Quick as lightning the Mino turned to repel this assault, but all too late; two slender, quivering threads of steel crossed in his poor body, and he staggered into a corner of the cage. His white eyes closed, then opened; a shiver passed over his body, beginning at his shoulder-tips and dying off in the extreme tips of the wings; he gasped as if for air, and then, with a convulsive shudder, which ruffled all his feathers, croaked out feebly his little speech, "What 'll you take?" Instantly from the opposite corner came the old response, still feebler than the question, — a mere gurgle, as it were, of "Brandy and water." Then all was silent. The Mino-birds were dead.

"They spill blood like Christians," said the Wonder-smith, gazing fondly on the manikins. "They will be famous assassins."



V.

TIED UP.

HERR HIPPE stood in the doorway, scowling. His eyes seemed to scorch the poor hunchback, whose form, physically inferior, crouched before that baneful, blazing glance, while its head, mentally brave, reared itself as if to redeem the cowardice of the frame to which it belonged. So the attitude of the serpent: the body pliant, yielding, supple; but the crest thrown aloft, erect, and threatening. As for Zonéla, she was frozen in the attitude of motion; — a dancing nymph in colored marble; agility stunned; elasticity petrified.

Furbelow, astonished at this sudden change, and catching, with all the mysterious rapidity of instinct peculiar to the lower animals, at the enigmatical character of the situation, turned his pleading, melancholy eyes from one to another of the motionless three, as if begging that his humble intellect (pardon me, naturalists, for the use of this word "intellect" in the matter of a monkey!) should be enlightened as speedily as possible. Not receiving the desired information, he, after the manner of trained animals, returned to his mutttons; in other words, he conceived that this unusual entrance, and consequent dramatic *tableau*, meant "shop." He therefore dropped Zonéla's hand, and pattered on his velvety little feet over towards the grim figure of the Wondersmith, holding out his poor little paw for the customary copper. He had but one idea drilled into him, — soulless creature that he was, — and that was alms. But I have seen creatures that professed to have souls, and that would have been indignant if you had denied them immortality, who took to the soliciting of alms as naturally as if beggary had been the original sin, and was regularly born with them, and never baptized out of them. I will give these Bandits of the Order of Charity this credit, however, that they knew the best highways and the richest founts of benevolence, — unlike to Furbelow, who, unreasoning and indiscriminating, begged from the first person that was near. Furbelow, owing to this intellectual inferiority to the before-mentioned Alsations, frequently got more kicks than coppers, and the present supplication which he indulged in towards the Wondersmith was a terrible confirmation of the rule. The reply to the extended pleading paw was what might be called a double-barrelled kick, — a kick to be represented by the power of two when the

foot touched the object, multiplied by four when the entire leg formed an angle of 45° with the spinal column. The long, nervous leg of the Wondersmith caught the little creature in the centre of the body, doubled up his brown, hairy form, till he looked like a fur driving-glove, and sent him whizzing across the room into a far corner, where he dropped senseless and flaccid.

This vengeance which Herr Hippe executed upon Furbelow seemed to have operated as a sort of escape-valve, and he found voice. He hissed out the question, "Who are you?" to the hunchback; and in listening to that essence of sibilation it really seemed as if it proceeded from the serpent that curled upon his upper lip.

"Who are you? Deformed dog, who are you? What do you here?"

"My name is Solon," answered the fearless head of the hunchback, while the frail, cowardly body shivered and trembled inch by inch into a corner.

"So you come to visit my daughter in the night-time, when I am away?" continued the Wondersmith, with a sneering tone that dropped from his snake-wreathed mouth like poison. "You are a brave and gallant lover, are you not? Where did you win that Order of the Curse of God that decorates your shoulders? The women turn their heads and look after you in the street, when you pass, do they not? lost in admiration of that symmetrical figure, those graceful limbs, that neck pliant as the stem that moors the lotus! Elegant, conquering, Christian cripple, what do you here in my daughter's room?"

Can you imagine Jove, limitless in power and wrath, hurling from his vast grasp mountain after mountain upon the struggling Enceladus, — and picture the Titan sinking, sinking, deeper and deeper into the earth, crushed

and dying, with nothing visible through the superincumbent masses of Pelion and Ossa but a gigantic head and two flaming eyes, that, despite the death which is creeping through each vein, still flash back defiance to the divine enemy? Well, Solon and Herr Hippe presented such a picture, seen through the wrong end of a telescope, — reduced in proportion, but alike in action. Solon's feeble body seemed to sink into utter annihilation beneath the horrible taunts that his enemy hurled at him, while the large, brave brow and unconquered eyes still sent forth a magnetic resistance.

Suddenly the poor hunchback felt his arm grasped. A thrill seemed to run through his entire body. A warm atmosphere, invigorating and full of delicious odor, surrounded him. It appeared as if invisible bandages were twisted all about his limbs, giving him a strange strength. His sinking legs straightened. His powerless arms were braced. Astonished, he glanced round for an instant, and beheld Zonéla, with a world of love burning in her large lambent eyes, wreathing her round white arms about his humped shoulders. Then the poet knew the great sustaining power of love. Solon reared himself boldly.

"Sneer at my poor form," he cried, in strong vibrating tones, flinging out one long arm and one thin finger at the Wondersmith, as if he would have impaled him like a beetle. "Humiliate me if you can. I care not. You are a wretch, and I am honest and pure. This girl is not your daughter. You are like one of those demons in the fairy tales that held beauty and purity locked in infernal spells. I do not fear you, Herr Hippe. There are stories abroad about you in the neighborhood, and when you pass people say that they feel evil and blight hovering over their thresholds. You persecute this girl. You are

her tyrant. You hate her. I am a cripple. Providence has cast this lump upon my shoulders. But that is nothing. The camel, that is the salvation of the children of the desert, has been given his hump in order that he might bear his human burden better. This girl, who is homeless as the Arab, is my appointed load in life, and, please God, I will carry her on this back, hunched though it may be. I have come to see her because I love her, — because she loves me. You have no claim on her ; so I will take her from you.”

Quick as lightning the Wondersmith had stridden a few paces, and grasped the poor cripple, who was yet quivering with the departing thunder of his passion. He seized him in his bony, muscular grasp, as he would have seized a puppet, and held him at arm's length, gasping and powerless ; while Zonéla, pale, breathless, entreating, sank half-kneeling on the floor.

“Your skeleton will be interesting to science when you are dead, Mr. Solon,” hissed the Wondersmith. “But before I have the pleasure of reducing you to an anatomy, which I will assuredly do, I wish to compliment you on your power of penetration, or sources of information ; for I know not if you have derived your knowledge from your own mental research or the efforts of others. You are perfectly correct in your statement that this charming young person, who day after day parades the streets with a barrel-organ and a monkey, — the last unhappily indisposed at present, — listening to the degrading jokes of ribald boys and depraved men, — you are quite correct, sir, in stating that she is not my daughter. On the contrary, she is the daughter of an Hungarian nobleman who had the misfortune to incur my displeasure. I had a son, crooked spawn of a Christian ! — a son, not like

you, cankered, gnarled stump of life that you are, — but a youth tall and fair and noble in aspect, as became a child of one whose lineage makes Pharaoh modern, — a youth whose foot in the dance was as swift and beautiful to look at as the golden sandals of the sun when he dances upon the sea in summer. This youth was virtuous and good ; and being of good race, and dwelling in a country where his rank, gypsy as he was, was recognized, he mixed with the proudest of the land. One day he fell in with this accursed Hungarian, a fierce drinker of that devil's blood called brandy. My child until that hour had avoided this bane of our race. Generous wine he drank, because the soul of the sun, our ancestor, palpitated in its purple waves. But brandy, which is fallen and accursed wine, as devils are fallen and accursed angels, had never crossed his lips, until in an evil hour he was seduced by this Christian hog, and from that day forth his life was one fiery debauch, which set only in the black waves of death. I vowed vengeance on the destroyer of my child, and I kept my word. I have destroyed *his* child, — not compassed her death, but blighted her life, steeped her in misery and poverty, and now, thanks to the thousand devils, I have discovered a new torture for her heart. She thought to solace her life with a love-episode ! Sweet little epicure that she was ! She shall have her little crooked lover, sha'n't she ? O, yes ! she shall have him, cold and stark and livid, with that great, black, heavy hunch, which no back, however broad, can bear, Death, sitting between his shoulders !”

There was something so awful and demoniac in this entire speech and the manner in which it was delivered, that it petrified Zonéla into a mere inanimate figure,

whose eyes seemed unalterably fixed on the fierce, cruel face of the Wondersmith. As for Solon, he was paralyzed in the grasp of his foe. He heard, but could not reply. His large eyes, dilated with horror to far beyond their ordinary size, expressed unutterable agony.

The last sentence had hardly been hissed out by the gypsy when he took from his pocket a long, thin coil of whip-cord, which he entangled in a complicated mesh around the cripple's body. It was not the ordinary binding of a prisoner. The slender lash passed and repassed in a thousand intricate folds over the powerless limbs of the poor humpback. When the operation was completed, he looked as if he had been sewed from head to foot in some singularly ingenious species of network.

"Now, my pretty lop-sided little lover," laughed Herr Hippe, flinging Solon over his shoulder as a fisherman might fling a netful of fish, "we will proceed to put you into your little cage until your little coffin is quite ready. Meanwhile we will lock up your darling beggar-girl to mourn over your untimely end."

So saying, he stepped from the room with his captive, and securely locked the door behind him.

When he had disappeared, the frozen Zonéla thawed, and with a shriek of anguish flung herself on the inanimate body of Furbelow.



VI.

THE POISONING OF THE SWORDS.

It was New Year's eve, and eleven o'clock at night. All over this great land, and in every great city in the land, curly heads were lying on white pillows, dreaming

of the coming of the generous Santa Claus. Innumerable stockings hung by countless bedsides. Visions of beautiful toys, passing in splendid pageantry through myriads of dimly lit dormitories, made millions of little hearts palpitate in sleep. Ah! what heavenly toys those were that the children of this soil beheld, that mystic night, in their dreams! Painted cars with orchestral wheels, making music more delicious than the roll of planets. Agile men, of cylindrical figure, who sprang unexpectedly out of meek-looking boxes, with a supernatural fierceness in their crimson cheeks and fur-whiskers. Herds of marvellous sheep, with fleeces as impossible as the one that Jason sailed after; animals entirely indifferent to grass and water and "rot" and "ticks." Horses spotted with an astounding regularity, and furnished with the most ingenious methods of locomotion. Slender foreigners, attired in painfully short tunics, whose existence passed in continually turning heels over head down a steep flight of steps, at the bottom of which they lay in an exhausted condition with dislocated limbs, until they were restored to their former elevation, when they went at it again as if nothing had happened. Stately swans, that seemed to have a touch of the ostrich in them; for they swam continually after a piece of iron which was held before them, as if consumed with a ferruginous hunger. Whole farmyards of roosters, whose tails curled the wrong way, — a slight defect, that was, however, amply atoned for by the size and brilliancy of their scarlet combs, which, it would appear, Providence had intended for pen-wipers. Pears, that, when applied to youthful lips, gave forth sweet and inspiring sounds. Regiments of soldiers, that performed neat but limited evolutions on cross-jointed contractile battle-fields. All these things, idealized, transfigured,

and illuminated by the powers and atmosphere and colored lamps of dream-land, did the millions of dear sleeping children behold, the night of the New Year's eve of which I speak.

It was on this night, when Time was preparing to shed his skin, and come out young and golden and glossy as ever, — when, in the vast chambers of the universe, silent and infallible preparations were making for the wonderful birth of the coming year, — when mystic dews were secreted for his baptism, and mystic instruments were tuned in space to welcome him, — it was at this holy and solemn hour that the Wondersmith and his three gypsy companions sat in close conclave in the little parlor before mentioned.

There was a fire roaring in the grate. On a table, nearly in the centre of the room, stood a huge decanter of port wine, that glowed in the blaze which lit the chamber like a flask of crimson fire. On every side, piled in heaps, inanimate, but scowling with the same old wondrous scowl, lay myriads of the manikins, all clutching in their wooden hands their tiny weapons. The Wondersmith held in one hand a small silver bowl filled with a green, glutinous substance, which he was delicately applying, with the aid of a camel's-hair brush, to the tips of tiny swords and daggers. A horrible smile wandered over his sallow face, — a smile as unwholesome in appearance as the sickly light that plays above reeking graveyards.

“Let us drink great draughts, brothers,” he cried, leaving off his strange anointment for a while, to lift a great glass, filled with sparkling liquor, to his lips. “Let us drink to our approaching triumph. Let us drink to the great poison, Macousha. Subtle seed of Death, —

swift hurricane that sweeps away Life, — vast hammer that crushes brain and heart and artery with its resistless weight, — I drink to it.”

“It is a noble decoction, Duke Balthazar,” said the old fortune-teller and midwife, Madame Filomel, nodding in her chair as she swallowed her wine in great gulps. “Where did you obtain it?”

“It is made,” said the Wondersmith, swallowing another great draught of wine ere he replied, “in the wild woods of Guiana, in silence and in mystery. But one tribe of Indians, the Macoushi Indians, know the secret. It is simmered over fires built of strange woods, and the maker of it dies in the making. The place, for a mile around the spot where it is fabricated, is shunned as accursed. Devils hover over the pot in which it stews; and the birds of the air, scenting the smallest breath of its vapor from far away, drop to earth with paralyzed wings, cold and dead.”

“It kills, then, fast?” asked Kerplonne, the artificial-eye maker, — his own eyes gleaming, under the influence of the wine, with a sinister lustre, as if they had been fresh from the factory, and were yet untarnished by use.

“Kills?” echoed the Wondersmith, derisively; “it is swifter than thunderbolts, stronger than lightning. But you shall see it proved before we let forth our army on the city accursed. You shall see a wretch die, as if smitten by a falling fragment of the sun.”

“What? Do you mean Solon?” asked Oaksmith and the fortune-teller together.

“Ah! you mean the young man who makes the commerce with books?” echoed Kerplonne. “It is well. His agonies will instruct us.”

“Yes! Solon,” answered Hippe, with a savage accent.

“I hate him, and he shall die this horrid death. Ah! how the little fellows will leap upon him, when I bring him in, bound and helpless, and give their beautiful wicked souls to them! How they will pierce him in ten thousand spots with their poisoned weapons, until his skin turns blue and violet and crimson, and his form swells with the venom, — until his hump is lost in shapeless flesh! He hears what I say, every word of it. He is in the closet next door, and is listening. How comfortable he feels! How the sweat of terror rolls on his brow! How he tries to loosen his bonds, and curses all earth and heaven when he finds that he cannot! Ho! ho! Handsome lover of Zonéla, will she kiss you when you are livid and swollen? Brothers, let us drink again, — drink always. Here, Oaksmith, take these brushes, — and you, Filomel, — and finish the anointing of these swords. This wine is grand. This poison is grand. It is fine to have good wine to drink, and good poison to kill with; is it not?” — and, with flushed face and rolling eyes, the Wondersmith continued to drink and use his brush alternately.

The others hastened to follow his example. It was a horrible scene: those four wicked faces; those myriads of tiny faces, just as wicked; the certain unearthly air that pervaded the apartment; the red, unwholesome glare cast by the fire; the wild and reckless way in which the weird company drank the red-illuminated wine.

The anointing of the swords went on rapidly, and the wine went as rapidly down the throats of the four poisoners. Their faces grew more and more inflamed each instant; their eyes shone like rolling fireballs; their hair was moist and dishevelled. The old fortune-teller rocked to and fro in her chair, like those legless plaster figures

that sway upon convex loaded bottoms. All four began to mutter incoherent sentences, and babble unintelligible wickednesses. Still the anointing of the swords went on.

“ I see the faces of millions of young corpses,” babbled Herr Hippe, gazing, with swimming eyes, into the silver bowl that contained the Macousha poison, — “ all young, all Christians, — and the little fellows dancing, dancing, and stabbing, stabbing. Filomel, Filomel, I say ! ”

“ Well, Grand Duke,” snored the old woman, giving a violent lurch.

“ Where ’s the bottle of souls ? ”

“ In my right-hand pocket, Herr Hippe ” ; — and she felt, so as to assure herself that it was there. She half drew out the black bottle, before described in this narrative, and let it slide again into her pocket, — let it slide again, but it did not completely regain its former place. Caught by some accident, it hung half out, swaying over the edge of the pocket, as the fat midwife rolled backwards and forwards in her drunken efforts at equilibrium.

“ All right,” said Herr Hippe, “ perfectly right ! Let ’s drink.”

He reached out his hand for his glass, and, with a dull sigh, dropped on the table, in the instantaneous slumber of intoxication. Oaksmith soon fell back in his chair, breathing heavily. Kerplonne followed. And the heavy, stertorous breathing of Filomel told that she slumbered also ; but still her chair retained its rocking motion, and still the bottle of souls balanced itself on the edge of her pocket.

VII.

LET LOOSE.

SURE enough, Solon heard every word of the fiendish talk of the Wondersmith. For how many days he had been shut up, bound in the terrible net, in that dark closet, he did not know; but now he felt that his last hour was come. His little strength was completely worn out in efforts to disentangle himself. Once a day a door opened, and Herr Hippe placed a crust of bread and a cup of water within his reach. On this meagre fare he had subsisted. It was a hard life; but, bad as it was, it was better than the horrible death that menaced him. His brain reeled with terror at the prospect of it. Then, where was Zonéla? Why did she not come to his rescue? But she was, perhaps, dead. The darkness, too, appalled him. A faint light, when the moon was bright, came at night through a chink far up in the wall; and the only other hole in the chamber was an aperture through which, at some former time, a stove-pipe had been passed. Even if he were free, there would have been small hope of escape; but, laced as it were in a network of steel, what was to be done? He groaned and writhed upon the floor, and tore at the boards with his hands, which were free from the wrists down. All else was as solidly laced up as an Indian pappoose. Nothing but pride kept him from shrieking aloud, when, on the night of New Year's eve, he heard the fiendish Hippe recite the programme of his murder.

While he was thus wailing and gnashing his teeth in darkness and torture, he heard a faint noise above his head. Then something seemed to leap from the ceiling

and alight softly on the floor. He shuddered with terror. Was it some new torture of the Wondersmith's invention? The next moment, he felt some small animal crawling over his body, and a soft, silky paw was pushed timidly across his face. His heart leaped with joy.

"It is Furbelow!" he cried. "Zonéla has sent him. He came through the stove-pipe hole."

It was Furbelow, indeed, restored to life by Zonéla's care, and who had come down a narrow tube, that no human being could have threaded, to console the poor captive. The monkey nestled closely into the hunchback's bosom, and, as he did so, Solon felt something cold and hard hanging from his neck. He touched it. It was sharp. By the dim light that struggled through the aperture high up in the wall, he discovered a knife, suspended by a bit of cord. Ah! how the blood came rushing through the veins that crossed over and through his heart, when life and liberty came to him in this bit of rusty steel! With his manacled hands he loosened the heaven-sent weapon; a few cuts were rapidly made in the cunning network of cord that enveloped his limbs, and in a few seconds he was free! — cramped and faint with hunger, but free! — free to move, to use the limbs that God had given him for his preservation, — free to fight, — to die fighting, perhaps, — but still to die free. He ran to the door. The bolt was a weak one, for the Wondersmith had calculated more surely on his prison of cords than on any jail of stone, — and more; and with a few efforts the door opened. He went cautiously out into the darkness, with Furbelow perched on his shoulder, pressing his cold muzzle against his cheek. He had made but a few steps when a trembling hand was put into his, and in another moment Zonéla's palpitating

heart was pressed against his own. One long kiss, an embrace, a few whispered words, and the hunchback and the girl stole softly towards the door of the chamber in which the four gypsies slept. All seemed still; nothing but the hard breathing of the sleepers and the monotonous rocking of Madame Filomel's chair broke the silence. Solon stooped down and put his eye to the keyhole, through which a red bar of light streamed into the entry. As he did so, his foot crushed some brittle substance that lay just outside the door; at the same moment a howl of agony was heard to issue from the room within. Solon started; nor did he know that at that instant he had crushed into dust Monsieur Kerplonne's supernumerary eye, and the owner, though wrapt in a drunken sleep, felt the pang quiver through his brain.

While Solon peeped through the keyhole, all in the room was motionless. He had not gazed, however, for many seconds, when the chair of the fortune-teller gave a sudden lurch, and the black bottle, already hanging half out of her wide pocket, slipped entirely from its resting-place, and, falling heavily to the ground, shivered into fragments.

Then took place an astonishing spectacle. The myriads of armed dolls, that lay in piles about the room, became suddenly imbued with motion. They stood up straight, their tiny limbs moved, their black eyes flashed with wicked purposes, their thread-like swords gleamed as they waved them to and fro. The villanous souls imprisoned in the bottle began to work within them. Like the Lili-putiens, when they found the giant Gulliver asleep, they scaled in swarms the burly sides of the four sleeping gypsies. At every step they took, they drove their thin swords and quivering daggers into the flesh of the drunken

authors of their being. To stab and kill was their mission, and they stabbed and killed with incredible fury. They clustered on the Wondersmith's sallow cheeks and sinewy throat, piercing every portion with their diminutive poisoned blades. Filomel's fat carcass was alive with them. They blackened the spare body of Monsieur Kerplonne. They covered Oaksmith's huge form like a cluster of insects.

Overcome completely with the fumes of wine, these tiny wounds did not for a few moments awaken the sleeping victims. But the swift and deadly poison Macousha, with which the weapons had been so fiendishly anointed, began to work. Herr Hippe, stung into sudden life, leaped to his feet, with a dwarf army clinging to his clothes and his hands, — always stabbing, stabbing, stabbing. For an instant, a look of stupid bewilderment clouded his face; then the horrible truth burst upon him. He gave a shriek like that which a horse utters when he finds himself fettered and surrounded by fire, — a shriek that curdled the air for miles and miles.

“Oaksmith! Kerplonne! Filomel! Awake! awake! We are lost! The souls have got loose! We are dead! poisoned! O accursed ones! O demons, ye are slaying me! Ah! fiends of hell!”

Aroused by these frightful howls, the three gypsies sprang also to their feet, to find themselves stung to death by the manikins. They raved, they shrieked, they swore. They staggered round the chamber. Blinded in the eyes by the ever-stabbing weapons, — with the poison already burning in their veins like red-hot lead, — their forms swelling and discoloring visibly every moment, — their howls and attitudes and furious gestures made the scene look like a chamber in hell.

Maddened beyond endurance, the Wondersmith, half-blind and choking with the venom that had congested all the blood-vessels of his body, seized dozens of the manikins and dashed them into the fire, trampling them down with his feet.

"Ye shall die too, if I die," he cried, with a roar like that of a tiger. "Ye shall burn, if I burn. I gave ye life, — I give ye death. Down! — down! — burn! — flame! Fiends that ye are, to slay us! Help me, brothers! Before we die, let us have our revenge!"

On this, the other gypsies, themselves maddened by approaching death, began hurling manikins, by handfuls, into the fire. The little creatures, being wooden of body, quickly caught the flames, and an awful struggle for life took place in miniature in the grate. Some of them escaped from between the bars and ran about the room, blazing, writhing in agony, and igniting the curtains and other draperies that hung around. Others fought and stabbed one another in the very core of the fire, like combating salamanders. Meantime, the motions of the gypsies grew more languid and slow, and their curses were uttered in choked guttural tones. The faces of all four were spotted with red and green and violet, like so many egg-plants. Their bodies were swollen to a frightful size, and at last they dropped on the floor, like over-ripe fruit shaken from the boughs by the winds of autumn.

The chamber was now a sheet of fire. The flames roared round and round, as if seeking for escape, licking every projecting cornice and sill with greedy tongues, as the serpent licks his prey before he swallows it. A hot, putrid breath came through the keyhole, and smote Solon and Zonéla like a wind of death. They clasped

each other's hands with a moan of terror, and fled from the house.

The next morning, when the young year was just unclosing its eyes, and the happy children all over the great city were peeping from their beds into the myriads of stockings hanging near by, the blue skies of heaven shone through a black network of stone and charred rafters. These were all that remained of the habitation of Herr Hippe, the Wondersmith.

TOMMATOO.



I.

THE HOUSE BY THE STONE-YARD.

A FAIRY that had lost the power of vanishing, and was obliged to remain ever present, doing continual good ; a cricket on the hearth, chirping through heat and cold ; an animated amulet, sovereign against misfortune ; a Santa Claus, without the wrinkles, but young and beautiful, choosing the darkest moments to leap right into one's heart, and drop there the prettiest moral playthings to gladden and make gay, — such, in my humble opinion, was Tommatoo.

As yet I do not ask the reader to agree with me ; for over him I have this one great advantage, — I know who Tommatoo is. When, however, he makes her acquaintance also, hears her twitter round the house, beholds the flash of her large dusky-gray eyes, is wonder-struck at the marvellous twinkling of her ever-dancing little feet, he can take his choice of all the personifications with which I began this story, and I feel convinced that he will select the most beautiful to enrobe Tommatoo.

There is (or rather *was*, six years ago, when the incidents to be narrated took place, — but I shall narrate them in the present tense) a vast flat of land stretching along the New York shore of the North River, close to where Thirty-Second Street vanishes into a swamp, in

which unborn avenues are supposed to be slowly maturing. Although yet in embryo, they are already christened, and city engineers have imaginative ground-plans hanging on their walls, where Twelfth and Thirteenth Avenues are boldly represented, with as much minuteness as Fifth or Sixth. Should, however, any sanguine person be led by those delusive maps to seek for such mythical thoroughfares, Ponce de Leon, after his pursuit of the Fountain of Youth, would not offer a more striking example of ill-success. On reaching the spot where imagination depicted the long perspective of rails, with crowded and hurrying cars gliding smoothly to and fro, he would behold this vision of civic activity replaced by the dreary and mysterious waste I have spoken of, without even a sign-post pointing to the splendid future reserved for it by city surveyors.

This tract of land is perhaps the most melancholy and mysterious spot in the whole city. The different streets that cross the island pull up, as it were, suddenly on reaching this dreary place, seemingly afraid to trust themselves any further. The buildings that approach nearest to its confines are long, low ranges of fetid slaughter-houses, where on Sundays bloated butcher-boys lounge against the walls; and on week-days one hears through the closed doors the muffled blow, the heavy fall of the oxen within; the groan, and the hard-drawn breath; and then a red, sluggish stream trickles out from under the doorway and flows into the gutter, where hungry dogs wait impatiently to lap it up. The murderous atmosphere, these smells of blood, seem appropriate enough as one approaches this desolate locality.

A great plain of red, swampy clay is covered here and there with numberless huge, helpless beams of timber, —

some floating like dead rafts in the stream, and chained to the bank ; others high and dry, blackening in the sun, and shadowing criminal-looking dogs that skulk in and out among them all day long. One or two immature piers jut out into the river here and there, and grimy sloops that seem to have no particular trade, unless it is to rot calmly at their moorings, lie alongside, and grate and chafe lazily against the slimy logs. A few homeless boys, with smeared faces and thin, starved arms, who seem to have dressed themselves in the rags and kite-tails that flutter on telegraph-wires, lie on the sunny sides of the timber piles sleeping away hunger, or sometimes sit on the edges of the green piers languidly fishing for something which they never catch. Cinders most unaccountably prevail all over the place ; they crackle under the feet, and the dogs gather round occasional piles of them, growling over a burned bone lying in the ashes : where they come from is not to be known. There are no houses, no factories, and the rotting sloops are so damp and slimy that it would be a mockery to suppose a fire had ever been lit in any one of them. Nevertheless the cinders prevail ; and at certain hours in the day two or three crouching creatures wander slowly among the heaps, picking mysterious objects, with hands that seem themselves to have been burned into coke.

The place is also a species of morgue for dead dogs. Every cur that the Hudson drowns floats inevitably to this spot and is swept up on the swampy bank, — when the outlawed mongrels that skulk between the timber logs crowd around it, and perhaps identify the corpse. On Sundays you see a few low-browed, soap-locked loafers strolling among the piles, pitching stones into the water, and, if it is summer, stripping off their tattered shirts to have a

swim ; but on week-days the place is entirely dead. The starved boys and the shadowy rag-pickers flitting here and there give no air of life ; they seem very thin and impalpable, and haunt the place like ghosts.

Further on this dreary swamp changes somewhat its character. The great balks of timber disappear, and a few shingle huts — so loosely built that the wind whistles through their walls with a shriek of triumph — are scattered here and there. Large masses of stone lie about, hewn into square blocks for house-fronts, and in the daytime the monotonous click of the stone-cutter's chisel shrills continually from the shingle huts. This straggling stone-yard, for such it is, is perhaps less desolate than the swamp further down, but at night — when the moon streams on the huge white blocks that lie there so cold and dead, and the huts are deserted by the workmen, and nothing moves but a shadowy dog that flits by, seen for an instant against the pallid stones — the place is inexpressibly weird and lonely.

Just on the confines of this stone-yard, in a rutty, half-made road that is bounded on both sides by burned-looking building-lots, where nothing hides the scalded earth but some unhealthy boulders, and occasional remnants of old shoes that are black and pulpy with decay, stands a small house built of unpainted shingles. It is two-storied, with a basement, and a somewhat imposing flight of steps up to the door ; yet it wears a reckless and despairing aspect. I have no doubt when this house was built it had many youthful hopes of establishing a neighborhood and becoming a dwelling of respectability. It promised itself, perhaps, a coat or two of paint, and had visions of being the ancestor of a street. But year after year wore away, and it found itself still

naked as when it was born. No companion dwelling lifted its head to cheer the solitude. On all sides the bleak river-winds tousled and smote its bare walls until its windows chattered with the cold. It grew weary of waiting for the neighborhood that never was to come, and seemed to care no longer what became of it. It let beardy mosses grow all over its haggard face. Its edges were chipped and ragged ; its chimneys, no longer spruce and tapering, bulged and tottered to one side, like the crushed hat of a confirmed drunkard. It buttoned itself up no more about the chest with its snug, comfortable doors, but let them hang loose on one hinge, and flap about in the wind. It was evident to any one who saw it that the house near the stone-yard had gone to the bad.

Forlorn and seedy as it looked, this house was inhabited. The shivering, shrunken windows gleamed with lights by night, yet not cheerfully, but with a wild glare, like that which streams from the eyes of those about to die. If the skulking men that prowled in summer evenings among the sheds of the stone-yard, whistling mysteriously to each other, had any taste for music, the house would have been to them a source of great wonder. Sometimes for hours together a wild and mellow music would stream upon the air, soaring over the dreary yard, wailing sadly along the waste river-grounds and by the rotting sloops until it reached the water, when it would float triumphally along, as if it knew that it was leaving the desolate place behind it, and bury itself deep in the sleeping groves that nodded on the distant Weehawken heights. The character of these melodious sounds was entirely mystical and strange. They were not born of violin or bugle, and yet seemed to have the souls of both instruments intermingling with another distinctly their

own ;— another soul, not merely instrumental, but human, passionate, luxuriant, as if all the utterances of a great Italian love — desire, entreaty, and triumph — were translated into aerial harmonies.

To you and I, reader, there need be no mystery in either house or music. That despairing-looking chateau was inhabited but by three people, — an old man, a young girl, and a youth of about twenty-one. As age is entitled to its traditional homage of precedence, I will first introduce to you the elder of the trio. I beg to present to your notice the maestro, Baioccho.

You could not possibly conceive a man made up with less waste of material than Signor Baioccho. Nature, when she formed him, must have been terribly short of stuff. There was too little of everything in his physical composition. He was abbreviated in every limb and feature. This, nevertheless, was fortunate, for had he been on a large scale he would have been insupportably ugly ; he was too small, however, to be repulsive, and so was only queer. But how queer he was, with his withered, pinched-up face, his sparse, stiff beard, which looked like a thin growth of thorns, and his quaint, convulsed figure, that gave one the idea that all inside of him was catgut and wheels, and that something was continually breaking in his machinery ! Yet, with all this likeness to a comic toy, how inexpressibly mournful was the countenance of Signor Baioccho ! what terrible sorrow was hopelessly shut up in that wretched little frame !

Baioccho had been a musician, and was now a cook. Years ago, when opera was young in New York, Baioccho came here from Italy with a company, set up an opera-house, was instantly successful, and made a fortune. Music was his religion, the lyric stage his temple, the con-

ductor's desk his altar, the overture his mass. But he became a fanatic in his faith. He enlarged his house ; he spent thousands of dollars on the production of new operas, and, as a matter of course, he became bankrupt. For the opera is like a Parisian mistress, the most charming, fascinating, bewildering of all creations, and invariably leaves you without a shilling at last. For many years poor Baioccho struggled to keep his feet. He led orchestras at second-rate theatres ; he gave lessons on the piano and violin, always hoping, always dreaming of one day grasping again the magical baton, the sceptre of his world. It was a vain struggle, however ; other maestri came over from Italy with still more wondrous and expensive singers than those Baioccho brought, and they built opera-houses, and bought newspaper puffs, and covered the dead walls with huge announcements of colossal successes ; and the world, rushing on the heels of novelty, swept over the ancestor of American opera, and poor Baioccho found himself trampled on, bruised, and left to die.

It were too sad a task to enumerate the various steps which led Baioccho from Parnassus to the kitchen. An accomplishment of which in his palmy days he had been not a little proud, was now brought into requisition to save him from starvation ; the hand that was too weak to hold the baton found itself still able to brandish the ladle. Those gay Italian tenors, those majestic basses, little thought when, round his elegant supper-table long ago, they used to applaud his amateur cookery, delicious *mayonnaises*, harmonious salads, that the day would arrive when the poor conductor would don the white apron and cotton cap very seriously, and sweat all day in a restaurant kitchen through an eternal round of soups and roasts and *entrées* ever the same. But so it was. Those who

frequented Calcar's Restaurant would now and then behold a wizened little man stealing quietly from some mysterious passage leading to the kitchen, and sneaking up to the bar, where he would hastily swallow a potent draught of raw brandy, and shuffle back guiltily to the place whence he came. And they would see one or two old New-Yorkers looking pitifully after him, and saying to each other that they remembered poor Baioccho when he drove his carriage. He now trudged home every night on foot; and it was sad to see the old fellow, unsteady with drink, staggering down the rutty road to the house near the stone-yard, where the faithful Tommatoo kept watch until she heard his stumbling footstep, when, tripping to the door, she tenderly helped him up to bed.

So! we have come at last to Tommatoo. I have been longing to get to her for some time past, but it would have been unkind to have deserted old Baioccho now that he is so poor. Salutation to his misfortunes!

Tommatoo was Baioccho's only child. In some quaint old Italian chapel, it may be by the shores of Sorrento, a smiling babe was one sunny day christened by the stout old Padre, and the name bestowed was Tomasina. Melodious as was this pretty name, the little girl that bore it, as soon as she reached lisping age, obstinately refused to be known by any cognomen but that of Tommatoo. This sounded awfully heathenish to old Baioccho, but she was apparently determined, and in time her imperious infant will had its effect on the family. She became Tommatoo to all intents and purposes, as far as household experience went, and even when she grew up to the age of reason did not seem anxious to reclaim her original appellation.

Tommatoo was one of those lovely, fair-haired Italians

that one sees so seldom, but which once seen are never forgotten. At some antique period, when Alaric was king, some of the blood of his blonde race must have mingled with the olive-skinned Roman Baiocchi, and after centuries of rest suddenly bloomed in Tommatoo. Her eyes were a dark liquid gray, like a twilight lake. Her face was pale, yet not cold, for a southern fire seemed to smoulder beneath the skin, with a beautiful, subdued glow. Her mouth, small and moist and rosy, pouted over pearly teeth, half seen, and the curves of her smooth cheeks swept into a wickedly dimpled chin, that aided and abetted with all its might the criminal beauty of her bewildering lips. This sweet virginal face was set in a golden frame of luxuriant hair, that one of Raphael's saints might have envied.

Yet why speak of Tommatoo's beauty so rapturously? I shall have no enthusiasm left for that bright and joyous nature that burst from her as the sun bursts from a golden cloud, shedding its own lustre on everything, and infusing into all a portion of its own innate warmth. Every one has felt at times, when wandering through the fields, the intense joy experienced from the twittering of the birds amidst the branches and the glancing of their tiny forms through the leaves. Some such pure and healthy influence did Tommatoo exercise over the little household. She twittered and sung, and, as it were, fluttered lightly through the rooms, until one could swear that the sun shone wherever she went. All day, while old Baioccho was absent attending to his culinary duties, compounding wondrous soups, and moving amidst the thick steams of the kitchen like an elf in some incantation scene, Tommatoo was putting the old house in order; sweeping up the little sitting-room, displaying its scanty furniture to the

best advantage, and occasionally darting like a swallow into Mr. Gustave Beaumont's sanctum sanctorum.

It must be confessed that this was one of the household occupations that Tommatoo performed with the greatest willingness; for Mr. Gustave Beaumont was young, handsome, and played the most delightful melodies on his great instrument, invented by himself, entitled the Pancorno. The Pancorno was a singular piece of mechanism; hideously suggestive, in appearance, of some nameless instrument of torture from the dungeons of the Inquisition, yet in reality capable of soothing the most agonizing pains by the sweetness of its notes. By aid of some interior arrangement of tubes, the vibrations of the horn portion acted in turn upon what must have been a series of wires also concealed, and which seemed to give the effect of a trio between flute, violin, and French-horn. It was from the Pancorno that the seraphic strains heard at night across the stone-yard floated so harmoniously, giving to the old house an air of being one of those enchanted abodes frequent in fairy tales, in which dwelt some spell-bound prince, who thus summoned in music his faithful knights to his rescue.

Gustave was a clever young Frenchman, with an extraordinary passion for music, whom old Baioccho had known ever since he was a child. He was the son of the bassoon in one of the orchestras which the maestro had conducted in his palmy days; but one night the bassoon died in the middle of a rapid passage, and the little Gustave was left without a father, and but one friend, Baioccho. The old Italian took the bassoon's son home, brought him up as his own child along with Tommatoo; and when his fall came Gustave still shared his scanty means. To do the young fellow justice, he wanted to

work, but the old man would not have it. "You are a genius, Gustave," he would say, "and, please the Virgin, you shall do something great." So Gustave did nothing great or small save the invention of the Pancorno, out of which he expected to reap a fortune, and he continued to live at the house by the stone-yard, having first scrupulously bargained with his entertainer to pay three dollars a week, which, as he did nothing but play on the Pancorno and make love to Tommatoo, it is needless to say he never earned and never paid. It quieted his conscience, however, and he used to say to himself that when he sold his invention for one hundred thousand dollars, that being the least he would take for it, old Baioccho should live like a prince.

And this is the last of the inmates of the house by the stone-yard.



II.

A FAMILY GROUP.

"Is that you, father?"

"Ah, the little Tommatoo! So you maintain the watch for the poor old father? Bless you, little angel!"

"Take care of the step, father. Take care."

"Put yourself easy, my child. I will be remindful of the step. I am very steadfast on my feet this evening."

And, as if to falsify his testimony, poor old Baioccho staggered up the steps leading to the hall-door, and would have fallen if Tommatoo had not caught one of his thin arms and held him up.

"It is nothing; it is nothing!" he exclaimed, as he tottered through the hall into the little parlor. "I can

walk myself well enough. But it is the kitchen, — that dam kitchen ! It has got into my head, my child. Where is the cognac ? ”

“ Do you think it would do you any good, father ? ” asked Tommatoo, sorrowfully ; “ won’t it make your head bad ? ”

“ Ah, little dove ! It does not comprehend. My child, the cognac is the life to me. When I stew and form dishes and mingle soups all day long in that dam kitchen, it gets into my head ; and sometimes, *mon Dieu !* when I stand over the *ragout*, and try to forget the place where I have found myself for a moment, the old times return upon me and I become very sad and sorrowful, so that I have to walk myself out to the bar and drink the cognac ; and then, *per baccho !* I remember myself not, and I go back to my kitchen quite raised. Give me one little glass of cognac, my child ? — one glass for the poor old father ! ”

Tommatoo fluttered over to a little cupboard that stood on one side of the room, and brought out a bottle and a wine-glass, and, pouring out some brandy, handed it to the old man.

He raised it tremulously to his mouth, and quaffed it off at a single draught ; then, smacking his lips, he muttered, “ Ah ! the cognac is the soul to the old men like me ! ”

There was nothing disgusting in Baioccho’s intoxication. The inebriety of the old musician was as cleanly as the tipsiness of a toy-man — had such been possible. His little eyes only twinkled the brighter, and his nose seemed longer and sharper and thinner, and his lips moved more rapidly ; but that was all. His speech was not thick, nor were his ideas clouded. It was drunkenness idealized.

“What has my child to tell me of the day?” asked the old man, invigorated as it were by the *petit verre de cognac*.

Tommatoo drooped her eyelids, colored a little, and did not reply for a moment.

“Some one has been here,” she said, at last.

“Which was it, little one?”

“It was — it was —” And the little one faltered.

“Diable!” cried the old man, leaping like an enraged cat from his chair, as if an idea had flashed upon him suddenly. “Ten millions of devils! was it not that brute Giuseppe?”

“It was, father,” answered Tommatoo, soothingly. “Pray, don’t fly into a rage. I could not help it.”

“The wretch! the abandoned-by-God miserable fellow!” shouted old Baioccho, growing more and more excited each moment. “So he must place himself near my child, my angel, to steal her away from me! But we will see! What did he say to you?” he added, turning almost fiercely to Tommatoo.

“O, nothing more than what he has said to you. He said he loved me very much, and if I would marry him that he would take us all back to Italy, and that you should end your days in comfort.”

“O, the serpent! His mother and his grandfather were snakes! You know not that man, Tommatoo! He is capable of roasting his father on a spit!”

“But, dear father, you know I hate him. I will never marry any one but Gustave, and not that until you wish it. I laughed at Giuseppe, and told him to go away.” And Tommatoo made an ineffectual attempt to give some idea of her stern manner to Giuseppe; but if the reality was at all like the representation, I don’t think that the descendant of snakes was very much crushed.

“Ah, child! you are as innocent as the flower that grows under our feet!” and Baioccho looked down, but, finding no flowers, continued: “He will perform some mischief to us. I feel it in — in the air!” and the sharp eyes seemed to pierce into the depths of the gloomy room, and fasten on some spectral misfortune. “Now Gustave is a good boy. He will be a great man. His Pancorno shall be played in many universal cities, and the good fortune shall come to him. Thou shalt be the wife of Gustave, my small pet child!”

“But,” said Tommatoo, with a half-smile, “I think he loves his Pancorno better than he does me.”

“It is the love of the artist, *mignonne*. He loves it with his soul, but his heart — ah, that is thine!”

“Hark! there he is!” cried Tommatoo, hushing her father into silence as the liquid, delicious notes of the Pancorno stole through the house.

“Yes, let us listen. O heaven, how beautiful!” exclaimed the old musician, rapturously; then in a half-whisper added, “One little glass more of the cognac, *ma biche*.”

And there they sat in the dusk of the room, the old man warming his veins with the cognac, the young girl dreaming of her lover, and both listening to the music that bore them far away, out of the old house by the stone-yard, into a delicious land, where the sea lay like a mistress on the broad breast of the beaches, and the breath of the orange groves wandered like unheard music through the slopes and valleys.

“I think so of my home,” murmured the old maestro, and I know that a tear fell through the twilight as he spoke, — “of my dear, dear home when I hear the music. Ah! why does not my brother — the brother of my youth

—replace me in my dear Italy? He is more rich than a great many of Jews, and yet he will not spare his poor brother one scudo, Tommatoo. O, if I were the rich Pietro, and he the poor cook Giulio Baioccho, I would not count my zechins until he had what he wanted. If he would only promise to leave my little Tommatoo something when he died, I would not care for myself. Ah, the bad brother! *Mignonne*, one other little *verre de cognac* for the poor old cook.”

“Shall I go and tell Gustave that you have come home?” asked Tommatoo. “We must have supper soon, you know, father.”

“Do, my beloved. Sweet as are the notes of the Pancorno, thy voice is sweeter still. Go and gladden the good Gustave with its music.”

Tommatoo tripped to the door, perched for a moment on the threshold like a little bird hovering on the edge of its cage, then, after looking back into the dusky room with a radiant smile that seemed to illuminate the twilight, she vanished, and in a few moments the notes of the Pancorno ceased, and there were light, pattering footsteps heard in its stead.

The old musician, when she was gone, buried his head in his hands, and seemed lost in meditation;—so lost that he neither heard nor saw anything around him;—neither the footsteps that came softly toward him through the gloom, nor the tall cloaked form that stood beside him, until a hand laid on his shoulder startled him from his reverie, and he looked up.

“Who is that?” he asked, with a sort of astonished abruptness, as he in vain tried to distinguish the newcomer’s features through the darkness.

“It is I, — Giuseppe,” answered the figure in a very calm voice, and in Italian.

“What dost thou here again, outcast?” cried the old maestro, starting from his seat hurriedly and in great agitation. “I tell thee that thou shalt never wed my daughter. I know thee well. I know of thy prison life. I know of that bloody affair in Venice, when even the sacred stole of the priest could not shield his heart from thy accursed hand. Begone! or I will call for help, and have thee lodged in the jail.”

“Come, come, Baioccho, no need of all this bad language. You wrong me, I swear you wrong me. I am not the man you take me for, nor do I wish to press my suit with Tommatoo. I come for other ends. I bear great tidings to thee. I bring thee great riches.”

“Ah, boaster, you will not cajole me with your fine words!” cried the old cook, mockingly.

“If I do, may I forget my mother’s grave!” exclaimed Giuseppe, earnestly. “Walk with me for ten minutes along the road, and if I prove not my words thou shalt never see my face again.”

In spite of his detestation of his fellow-countryman Baioccho could not prevent his heart from leaping to his mouth at the mention of wealth. In a moment he saw himself emancipated from the accursed kitchen, his Tommatoo clad as became her beauty, Gustave’s Pancorno brought before the public, and all three living happily in the dear Italy, making a music out of life itself.

“Well,” said he, “I will go and walk with you. But why not tell it here?”

“Because houses are less safe to speak in than the universe,” said Giuseppe. “You forget that I was once a conspirator, and am cautious.”

“I remember it well enough,” muttered Baioccho, as both left the house, “and the police of Venice remember it better.”

They walked slowly toward the stone-yard. Neither spoke, — Baioccho disdaining to show any impatience, Giuseppe remaining silent for some motive of his own. So on through the stone-yard ; amidst the white blocks that loomed like dim ghosts through the darkness ; by the shingle huts that, with their jagged corners and irregular roofs, seemed in the darkness to crouch like strange animals, squatting upon the dreary earth ; over rough masses of unhewn stone, through deep ruts left by cart-wheels in the soft clay, until they reached the river.

“ Well,” said Baioccho, at last, “ how long am I to wait for this wondrous intelligence ? ”

“ Your brother is dead,” answered Giuseppe.

“ What ! ” almost shrieked the old cook, “ and — and — he left — ”

“ You everything.”

“ Holy Virgin be praised ! ” ejaculated the poor old fellow, clasping his hands and kneeling in the damp, oozy earth. “ My dear Tommatoo will be rich.”

“ I have just arrived from Italy,” continued Giuseppe. “ I saw your brother. I found him dying. I spoke to him about you, and induced him to will to you the fortune which he was going to leave to the Church. Do you not think I deserve some reward for all this ? ”

“ You shall have it. I swear it ! ” cried the old musician, fervently. “ You shall name your own reward.”

“ Good. I want your daughter.”

“ Ah, traitor ! that is what you demand ! ” cried the excitable old man in his shrill voice. “ Never ! never ! never ! No ; you shall have money, but no Tommatoo, — no Tommatoo.”

“ Tommatoo is your heir at law when you die,” remarked Giuseppe.

“Certainly. I know why you want to wed with her, you fellow!”

“She will inherit very soon.”

“Eh!” The old man did not exactly seem to comprehend, but peered up into Giuseppe’s face.

“She will come into possession in ten minutes,” added Giuseppe, and rapidly as lightning he passed a sort of handkerchief across Baioccho’s mouth, stifling all utterance. The old man, though thin, possessed a great tenacity of muscle, and he struggled long and vigorously against his assailant. He twined about his legs, he crawled up his huge chest, he dug his bony fingers into his throat, all the while uttering through the gag upon his mouth terrible muffled cries of agony that were more dreadful from their being so suppressed. The youth and strength of Giuseppe told at last. The old man grew faint and almost ceased to struggle. In an instant Giuseppe seized him by the waist, lifted him clear off the ground, and swung him into the river. He watched him sink. “I think that Tommatoo is mine now,” he muttered, as he turned and fled rapidly back through the stone-yard.

Baioccho sank, but speedily came to the surface. Instinctively he stretched out his hands, and suddenly one of them came in contact with some floating substance. He grasped it, and found it a drifting beam of timber that had become loosed from its moorings to the bank and was travelling with the stream. With some difficulty he got astride of it and removed his gag. His first impulse was to shout for help, for he could not swim, and he was already some distance from the bank, and he put all his strength into a furious cry. The sound of his own voice echoing over that desolate shore seemed to tell him

how little chance he had of obtaining assistance in that way, and, after shouting until his lungs were sore, he gave it up, and clung to the hope of being picked up by some boat.

The tide was running out rapidly, and a wind was blowing down stream, so that Baioccho could tell from the rippling of the waves around the beam that he was floating fast with the current. It was very dark. On either side of the bank he could see the faint lights in the houses, and now and then the black spectral hull of some sloop or schooner would suddenly appear to him as he floated past, and then vanish. All on the river seemed dead. There was not a sound of life. There did not seem a hope for the old musician.

Still he floated fast. Past the dreary black wharves, round which vessels made palisades of masts seen dimly against the dull sky. Past the shadowy groves of the Elysian Fields, that now, alas! seemed like the banks of Acheron. Past the cheerful Atlantic Gardens, where lights gleamed on the water, and people were making merry, while the poor old musician was floating to his death. Past the great hive of the city, that in the gloom seemed to lie upon the water exhausted with its day's labor. And so on out into the broad bay. Then for the first time Baioccho felt that he would be swept out to sea. He had not recoiled from his fate up to this time, for he was brave, and, after all, drowning was only death. But starvation — ah! that thought was too horrible, and for the first time a groan escaped from the poor musician. He then thought of Tommatoo, of Gustave, of their agony at his never returning, — their vague sorrow for his fate, which would never be known. Then he prayed to God that the murderer, Giuseppe, would

be baffled in his designs on his dear child, — and then —

A dull, roaring sound along the water. A hissing of the air and of the sea. A red glare from what seemed like a fierce angry eye moving over the waves. A sparkle of foam, seen white through the gloom, and Baioccho saw the ferry-boat bearing right down on him. He shouted ; he tried to stand upright on the timber log, but it slipped and turned ; he took off his coat and flung it high in the air, — all to attract attention. But in vain. Closer, closer came the fiery eye. With what seemed to the old musician ever-increasing speed the sharp prow cut through the water. The funnel gave out short puffs of triumph, the wheels beat their paddles madly on the water, as if they knew what work they had to do, then a sudden, awful shriek from Baioccho. The projecting ledge of the boat shot over him. He touched it for an instant with his hand, and then went under.



III.

THE GRANDSON OF SNAKES.

“FATHER, Gustave will be down in a few minutes, and we will have supper!” cried Tommatoo, fluttering into the dark room like some pretty little nocturnal bird. “Father! why don’t you answer? Why, where can he be? Ah, that cognac! He has perhaps taken too much while I was away, — poor father!” and Tommatoo hastily lit, with a lucifer match, a little fluid lamp, and held it high above her head while her eyes everywhere sought the expected recumbent form of the old musician.

“Why, he is not here!” she cried, in a tone half of

astonishment, half of alarm. "O, where has he gone? Not out into this dark, dark night. God forbid! I will call Gustave";—and she ran toward the door of the apartment. But ere she quite reached it she stopped and drew back, for a tall, dark figure filled the little doorway, and a pair of bright sinister eyes reflected back the lamplight.

"Ah, pretty one! you did not expect to see me again to-day, did you?" said the new-comer, in a half-mocking tone, and in Italian; "but you see how it is: I am fascinated, and haunt the spot where I will find you."

"Signor Giuseppe, my father does not wish you to come here; you know what I think, and yet you come. That I think is wrong";—and Tommatoo looked like a moralist of the Middle Ages, if one could imagine such a personage with beautiful blond hair, large dark-gray eyes, and the neatest little waist in the world.

"Ah! none of you appreciate me," answered Giuseppe, advancing into the chamber. "Your father is a good man, but full of prejudices. I am progressive, and he does not understand progress,—that is all. But I am a good fellow, Signorina,—a capital fellow for all that."

He looked at this moment, standing close to the door and unclasping his heavy cloak, with his pale, unhealthy skin shining in the lamplight, and his eyes glistening with a furtive meaning, so truly the reverse of a good fellow that I am not surprised at the faint frown that perched for a moment on Tommatoo's forehead, and then suddenly slid off her smooth temples and was lost.

"I am going, Signor Giuseppe," she said, making a movement toward the door, between which and her the Italian was standing. "I wish you good evening."

“Stay a moment!” he cried, interposing. “Where is the worthy Baioccho?”

“He is not here. I do not know where he is. Let me pass, Signor. I am going to search for him.”

“Perhaps he has taken too much of the delightful cognac of which he is so fond,” said Giuseppe, sneeringly.

“My father is a good man, Signor!” cried Tommatoo, indignantly, “and his weaknesses should be respected. Let me pass, sir!”

“Not just yet, little one. I have something to say to you. You know that I love you. I told you so three months ago, before I went to Italy. I tell you so now that I have returned.”

“I do not want to hear your confession, Signor. I wish to go and seek my father.”

“Listen to me, Tommatoo,”—and he stretched his long arm across her till it fell like a great bar between her and the door. “Listen. If you become my wife, this is what I will do for you. I will take you to Italy, and you shall have a villa that the Prince Borghese might envy. We will have much money,—I shall be very rich indeed,—and all Italy shall not contain finer horses, carriages, servants, than ours. I will be magnificent, Tommatoo, gorgeous, princely. Perhaps, too, I will purchase a patent of nobility,—it is to be done; there’s the banker Torlonia. And how would my Tommatoo like to sit in state and be called Principezza? Ah! it would be glorious, would it not?”

So excited was he with the visions he had himself conjured up that Giuseppe stretched forth his arms, and, enclosing Tommatoo between them, drew her toward him, while a devilish glitter shone in his dark eyes.

“We are alone, sweet dove,” he said, in a soft voice;

“none in this silent house to watch us. Will you not vow to be my bride, — the bride of Giuseppe that loves you so, and who will make you a little countess? Ah! the little one is not so cruel after all.”

But he mistook Tommatoo’s terrified immobility for a timid though undemonstrative assent. To his utter astonishment, after a moment’s silence, that young lady opened her mouth and shrieked, “Gustave! Hasten! Gustave, I am in danger!” with all the power of an excellent set of lungs.

“Whew! who the devil is Gustave?” muttered Giuseppe, astounded. “I thought that none lived in the house but those two. Who the devil is this Gustave?” And as he spoke he thrust his hand inside his coat as if feeling for some weapon.

There was an immediate response to Tommatoo’s call, in the shape of the descent of a pair of boots four stairs at a time. In a few seconds the boots had reached the door, and Gustave Beaumont, who stood in them, suddenly appeared on the scene of action.

“Diavolo!” ground Giuseppe between his teeth, as he beheld this new apparition. Then, taking a stride backward, he seemed like some wild animal preparing for a spring.

“*Qu’est ce que c’est? Qu’est ce que ce Monsieur la?*” rapidly demanded Monsieur Gustave, looking rather ominously at Giuseppe, who, not understanding a word of French, preserved a grim silence.

“O Gustave! this man persecutes me. Protect me from him!” cried Tommatoo, bounding toward the young Frenchman and taking shelter as it were under his wing.

“*Soyez tranquille, enfant!*” said Gustave, fondly enfold- ing her little form with his arm. “What the devil you

do here, sare," he continued, in English, seeing that Giuseppe had not replied to his previous interrogatories in French. "For why do you bring the fright to this young girl, sare? Who you are, sare? I demand to know. *Moi!* Gustave Beaumont!"

"I reply myself not, sir, to your interrogations, when they put themselves to me in a manner so insolent," answered Giuseppe, haughtily, his eyes flashing through the gloom of the half-lit chamber.

"Ask him about our dear father, Gustave," cried Tommattoo, earnestly, nestling up to the young musician's side. "I left him here a few moments since, and he has disappeared. I feel sure that this bad man knows something of him. Ask him, dear Gustave."

"One cannot know about all the world," answered Giuseppe, before Gustave had time to interrogate him. "My business is not with the old man. Look in the cellar where the strong waters are kept. He will be there."

With a mocking laugh the Italian folded his cloak around him and strode toward the door. Gustave removed his arm from Tommattoo's waist, round which it had stolen, and placed himself resolutely between Giuseppe and the door, and barred his passage.

"You shall not depart from here until we know about Signor Baioccho. You are suspected a great deal."

"Let me pass away from here," cried Giuseppe, advancing savagely, "or, by the head of the Virgin, you will meet with misfortune!" And placing his hand in his breast he half drew a small poniard.

Gustave saw the motion, and quick as thought sprang on the Italian, weaving his young, sinewy arms around his waist, and pressing his chin against his antagonist's

breast until he fairly howled with pain. Tommatoo, with one faint moan, sank on her knees on the ground, and one might see, by the clasped hands and the murmuring lips, dimly shown in the imperfect lamp-light, that the little one was offering up her prayers to heaven.

The pair now struggling were evenly matched as far as youth and size. But in point of endurance the Italian had decidedly the advantage. The sedentary life which the young Frenchman led had relaxed his naturally powerful muscular system ; and consequently, although capable of a vast momentary effort, he was entirely unable to sustain a prolonged contest. For the space of two minutes nothing was heard in the room but the hard breathing of the struggling men ; the slipping of the feet on the uncarpeted floor ; the sudden stamp, as one sought an advantage which the other as quickly frustrated. Gustave's main object seemed to be to keep the Italian from using his poniard, and this he sought to effect by pressing him so closely in his arms as to render it an impossibility to use his hands. For some time he was successful in this ; but presently his want of tenacity of muscle showed itself in the relaxation of his grip and the quick recurrence of his breaths, almost amounting to panting. Inch by inch Giuseppe loosened his arm from the Frenchman's grasp, and inch by inch his hand moved toward his breast where the poniard lay, his eyes all the while flashing with a light that seemed to announce his approaching vengeance. In vain did Gustave strain every nerve to hold his own. The large drops of sweat gathered on his forehead ; the blood flowed from between his lips, bitten in the agony of exertion ; and his knees fairly shook with the power of a will that far exceeded the strength of the frame on which it was exercised. He could not last

much longer. Giuseppe, in proportion as he beheld his adversary sinking, seemed to gain additional force. He at length extricated his arm. At length he grasped the poniard and plucked it from its sheath. Held aloft an instant over Gustave's head, it quivered in its descent; when, with a dull, heavy thud, some enormous weight fell on the back part of the Italian's head, the dagger was dashed from his hand, and he fell stunned and senseless on the floor.

"Sweet child, my life owes itself to you!" said Gustave, as he stood over the prostrate form of his antagonist, while he gazed with intense astonishment on Tommatoo, who, revealed to him by the Italian's fall, exhibited herself as the agent of that lucky event, assisted by an enormous bludgeon which she held in her hand.

"It was an inspiration of heaven, I think," said she simply. "I was praying to the Virgin, when I recollected that papa's big stick was in the corner; so I stole toward it, lifted it up, and struck that bad fellow with it, — only I did not think I could strike him so hard. I hope he is not very much hurt." And she looked pityingly down on the villain whom a moment before she would have gladly seen perish.

"*Cré nom de Dieu!* He moves himself!" cried Gustave, beholding a slight indication of returning animation in the body of the Italian. "Quick, Tommatoo! ropes to bind him up! Bring me great, strong twines, for he is very dangerous, this fellow. Ha, rascal! you are there! You lie very low now, brigand! We will trouble ourselves with your care, sir. Yes, we will have the honor to conduct you to the bureau of the Chief of the Police, and there we will demand of you that you shall let us

know all your villainies. Quick, child, — the twines! The fellow will get himself up very presently.”

And so, chattering a sort of mingled monologue of reproach, triumph, and sarcasm, Gustave passed the rope which Tommatoo brought him around Giuseppe's body in so scientific and elaborate a manner that the wretched man was as incapable of motion as an Indian pappoose strapped to its board, and lay on the floor with nothing but the winking of his large, dark, villanous eyes to tell of his being animate.

Now came the great question, who was to go for the police. If Gustave went, Tommatoo would be left alone in that terrible house, with that terrible man, who might unloose that wonderful network of bonds in which Gustave had enlaced him. If Tommatoo went, she would have to thread her way alone through that dreary, dangerous locality; and she confessed she had not the courage to make the attempt. If they both went, who was to take care of the captive? So they, perforce, came to the conclusion that they must wait until morning; and accordingly Gustave, determined not to lose sight of his prize, lifted him on his shoulder as one would a bale of goods, and, carrying him up to his own room, — the room in which the Pancorno resided, — threw him into a corner. Then he and Tommatoo sat down gloomily to speculate and wonder over Baioccho's disappearance. It was in vain that they interrogated Giuseppe. That individual glared at them from his corner like a coil of ropes with a pair of large eyes hidden somewhere in it, but would condescend to no reply. And so the hours passed, as they gloomily watched for the day.

Weary with speculation, and heart-sore enough with pondering over the fate of old Baioccho, Gustave, as the

small hours wore on, could no longer resist his inclination to invoke the genius of the Pancorno to disperse the sad thoughts that hung like black clouds around him and Tommatoo; so he sat down to that mysteriously constructed instrument, and poured forth those wild improvisations that seemed to interpret some love-passage in the history of young *Æolus*. And when the sun broke faintly over the dreary stone-yard, and its first rays fell on the livid face of the Italian lying bound in the corner, it floated upward through the sky, buoyed by those harmonies that seemed to seek their native heaven.



IV.

THE PÆAN OF THE PANCORNO.

THE ——th Ward Station-House. It was the early hour of the morning, before the over-night prisoners had departed to be judged by the immaculate justices presiding in the neighboring district police court, and the poor, sleepless-looking, blear-eyed people were emerging from the "lock-up" in the basement, still heavy with the poison of bad liquor and spotted all over the face with the bites of mosquitoes that abound in all police stations. Along the walls of the general room hung rows of glazed fire-caps and locust-wood clubs, while, stretched in rank and file on the floor beneath, one saw a quantity of India-rubber overshoes, splashed with the mud gathered in the weary night-tramp on the heels of crime. What stories of city vice spoke in those dirty, flexible shoes! One saw the burglar at work with file and centre-bit, and accomplice keeping watch with pricked-up ears. The file grates and the centre-bit cuts, and the confederate strains his

hearing as the grasshopper leaps from the wall ; but none sees the dark shadows creeping round the corner, and the pavement yields no echo to the muffled feet ; and the silent overshoes steal on until, with one quick leap and one heavy blow with the club, the burglar and confederate lie powerless on the ground.

The ——th Ward Station-House was a dreary-looking establishment. The police captain in plain clothes, with a presentation watch in his pocket, attached to a presentation chain, and a presentation diamond ring on his finger, and a presentation pin in his shirt front, which having buttons did not seem to require it, sat on a high chair behind a high counter on which he measured out justice by the yard. Two or three sly-looking men, in plain clothes also, with a furtive glance in the eyes, and an air of always seeming to be looking round a corner that bespoke the detective, or "shadow," lounging on the stout chairs, picking their teeth and watching everybody, even the police captain, as if they were ready at any moment to detect anybody in something illegal. A pleasant-looking chain of handcuffs hung on the wall, some ten or twelve pair linked together, — cold, brutal-looking loops of iron that seemed to regret it was wrists and not necks that it was their duty to clasp. Sitting on the sill of the deep window, which opened into the street, were two little children crying lustily. They had been lost or had run away, and in the face of the boy, a large-eyed French lad, some six years old, one could see the determination working that made him preserve, when questioned, a sullen silence as to his name and home. The other, a little girl, — thanks to the philoprogenitive organ of one of the police, — was munching a jam tart amidst all her grief, and slobbering the unwholesome pastry with her tears.

But chief of all the figures in that melancholy room were three persons who had, in the charge of a policeman, arrived at early dawn. Deep in one corner, the farthest from the door, sat Giuseppe, now carefully uncorded but still scowling out of his cloak, as if he might dart poisoned poniards out of his eyes; while before the high counter on which the prize police captain measured out his two-pennyworth of justice, stood Gustave and Tommatoo, who was weeping bitterly.

“You say that you left your father for but a few moments, and on your return he had disappeared?” inquired the prize captain, solemnly.

“Yes, sir!” sobbed Tommatoo. “My dear, dear father! What has become of him? O, that bad man!” — a wicked glance at Giuseppe in the corner.

“And when you returned you found the prisoner in the room where you had left your father?”

“Yes, sir; and I know that he knows where my father is, — I see it in his eyes. O, sir, make him tell, — make him tell. Pinch him until he tells, — beat him until he tells!”

The prize captain smiled, condescendingly.

“Lieutenant!” he said, “telegraph a description of this Baioccho to the chief’s office, with inquiries.”

Immediately a thin policeman commenced working the telegraph that lay in one corner of the room, but the monotonous click of the instrument was but little consolation to the aching bosom of Tommatoo.

A half-hour passed — an hour — during which Tommatoo related over and over again the details of her little story to the prize captain. The subordinates of the office began to take an interest in her, and gathered round her as she sat nestling close to Gustave, who was completely

amazed by the novelty of his situation, and each had a kind word for the little maiden.

An hour passed. Ah, how dreary! dreary to Giuseppe scowling in his cloak, carefully watched by two stalwart policemen; dreary to Gustave, who wondered how policemen could live without music; dreary to little Tommatoo, who, with swollen eyes, and heavy, sad heart, sorrowed for the old musician.

Presently there was a bustle. A carriage drove up to the door with policemen on the box, and Tommatoo's heart fluttered. The door of the vehicle opened, and out tottered Baioccho, feebly singing, crowing, dancing, with his old eyes twinkling with cognac, and a suit of gigantic clothes on, out of which he seemed to be endeavoring to scramble. In another instant Tommatoo was in his arms.

"Ah, *mon enfant, ma fille bien aimé!* the old father has brought himself back. *Per baccho!* brought himself back with the joy in his heart. The assassin failed in his work. Ha!"

This last exclamation was caused by a sudden rush for the door which Giuseppe had made the moment the old musician appeared. His attempt at escape was vain, however, for before he had made two steps he was collared, and a pair of handcuffs magically slipped over his wrists. He sat down again sullenly, but with a face white with terror.

"Ha! serpent that thou art!" cried Baioccho, placing himself before Giuseppe and shaking his withered old fist at him. "Thy time has arrived. Thou wilt hang for this. So you thought to drown the poor old maestro who never harmed you? But no! the God above is good, and when waves lifted themselves up to engulf me, and the boat of the passage came to knock me on the head, a

heaven-descended rope put itself into my hand, and a blessed sailor pulled me up to the deck. O, no! I am not dead yet, and the sweet dove that you covet will find some other nest than thine!"

Then turning to the prize captain, the old man, still with one arm round his daughter, poured forth his voluble tale;—how Giuseppe had flung him into the river; how he was floating out to sea when the ferry-boat had come down on him; and how, just in the nick of time, some one on board had discerned him in the water and flung him a rope;—all this mixed up in his extraordinary English, and interlarded with French and Italian imprecations on the head of Giuseppe, so that the prize captain was entirely bewildered, and all that he could do was to order the assassin into the lock-up, and bind over the old maestro to appear in evidence. This done, he and Gustave and Tommatoo, now chirping like a bird, went home together.

I would not like to count all the *petits verres de cognac* that the old musician took that night; but I know that Baioccho on that occasion danced the most singular dances, and sang the most eccentric songs, and told Tommatoo and Gustave at least fifty times the wondrous story of his adventures, and how his brother was, he believed, dead, and had left him all his wealth; and so the night closed on jubilation in the old house by the stone-yard.

Strange to say, Baioccho's brother was dead and had left him his heir. This, it was supposed, Giuseppe had learned in Italy, and had hastened home with the intention of profiting by an information of which he was the earliest recipient. Chance, however, frustrated his plans, and after a trial, in which Baioccho's eccentric evidence

was a feature, the gates of the state prison closed over the assassin.

In time Baioccho realized his inheritance and bade farewell to the kitchen. The Pancorno was brought before the public, and every one remembers the sensation it created that winter at the Antique Concerts given at Niblo's. Women, while listening to its wonderful strains, could not help noticing how handsome was the young Frenchman who played on it; yet none saw the lovely face that every night gazed from the front row on the performer; but I know that Gustave Beaumont played all the better because he knew that Tommatoo, otherwise Madame Beaumont, was looking at him. Madame Beaumont! Tommatoo as a madame! Can you realize it? I can't.

MOTHER OF PEARL.

I.

I MET her in India, when, during an eccentric course of travel, I visited the land of palanquins and hookahs. She was a slender, pale, spiritual-looking girl. Her figure swayed to and fro when she walked, like some delicate plant brushed by a very gentle wind. Her face betokened a rare susceptibility of nervous organization. Large, dark-gray eyes, spanned by slender arches of black eyebrows; irregular and mobile features; a mouth large and singularly expressive, and conveying vague hints of a sensual nature whenever she smiled. The paleness of her skin could hardly be called paleness; it was rather a beautiful transparency of texture, through the whiteness of which one beheld the underglow of life, as one sees the fires of a lamp hazily revealed through the white ground-glass shade that envelops it. Her motions were full of a strange and subtle grace. It positively sent a thrill of an indefinable nature through me to watch her moving across a room. It was perhaps a pleasurable sensation at beholding her perform so ordinary an act in so unusual a manner. Every wanderer in the fields has been struck with delight on beholding a tuft of thistle-down floating calmly through the still atmosphere of a summer day. She possessed in the most perfect degree this aerial serenity of motion. With all the attributes of body, she

seemed to move as if disembodied. It was a singular and paradoxical combination of the real and ideal, and therein I think lay the charm.

Then her voice. It was like no voice that I ever heard before. It was low and sweet ; but how many hundreds of voices have I heard that were as low and just as sweet ! The charm lay in something else. Each word was uttered with a sort of dovelike "coo," — pray do not laugh at the image, for I am striving to express what after all is perhaps inexpressible. However, I mean to say that the harsh gutturals and hissing dentals of our English tongue were enveloped by her in a species of vocal plumage, so that they flew from her lips, not like pebbles or snakes, as they do from mine and yours, but like humming-birds, soft and round, and imbued with a strange fascination of sound.

We fell in love, married, and Minnie agreed to share my travel for a year, after which we were to repair to my native place in Maine, and settle down into a calm, loving country life.

It was during this year that our little daughter Pearl was born. The way in which she came to be named Pearl was this.

We were cruising in the Bay of Condatchy, on the west coast of Ceylon, in a small vessel which I had hired for a month's trip, to go where I listed. I had always a singular desire to make myself acquainted with the details of the pearl fishery, and I thought this would be a good opportunity ; so with my wife and servants and little nameless child, — she was only three months old, — on whom, however, we showered daily a thousand unwritable love-titles, I set sail for the grounds of a celebrated pearl fishery.

It was a great although an idle pleasure to sit in one of the small coasting-boats in that cloudless and serene climate, floating on an unruffled sea, and watch the tawny natives, naked, with the exception of a small strip of cotton cloth wound around their loins, plunge into the marvellously clear waters, and after having shot down far beyond sight, as if they had been lead instead of flesh and blood, suddenly break above the surface after what seemed an age of immersion, holding in their hands a basket filled with long, uncouthly shaped bivalves, any of which might contain a treasure great as that which Cleopatra wasted in her goblet. The oysters being flung into the boat, a brief breathing-spell was taken, and then once more the dark-skinned diver darted down like some agile fish, to recommence his search. For the pearl oyster is by no means to be found in the prodigal profusion in which his less aristocratic brethren, the mill-ponds and blue-points and chinkopins, exist. He is rare and exclusive, and does not bestow himself liberally. He, like all high-born castes, is not prolific.

Sometimes a fearful moment of excitement would overtake us. While two or three of the pearl-divers were under water, the calm, glassy surface of the sea would be cleft by what seemed the thin blade of a sharp knife, cutting through the water with a slow, even, deadly motion. This we knew to be the dorsal fin of the man-eating shark. Nothing can give an idea of the horrible symbolism of that back fin. To a person utterly unacquainted with the habits of the monster, the silent, stealthy, resistless way in which that membranous blade divided the water would inevitably suggest a cruelty swift, unappeasable, relentless. This may seem exaggerated to any one who has not seen the spectacle I speak of. Every

seafaring man will admit its truth. When this ominous apparition became visible, all on board the fishing-boats were instantly in a state of excitement. The water was beaten with oars until it foamed. The natives shouted aloud with the most unearthly yells; missiles of all kinds were flung at this Seeva of the ocean, and a relentless attack was kept up on him until the poor fellows groping below showed their mahogany faces above the surface. We were so fortunate as not to have been the spectators of any tragedy, but we knew from hearsay that it often happened that the shark — a fish, by the way, possessed of a rare intelligence — quietly bided his time until the moment the diver broke water, when there would be a lightning-like rush, a flash of the white belly as the brute turned on his side to snap, a faint cry of agony from the victim, and then the mahogany face would sink convulsed, never to rise again, while a great crimson clot of blood would hang suspended in the calm ocean, the red memorial of a sudden and awful fatality.

One breathless day we were floating in our little boat at the pearl fishery, watching the diving. "We" means my wife, myself, and our little daughter, who was nestled in the arms of her "ayah," or colored nurse. It was one of those tropical mornings the glory of which is indescribable. The sea was so transparent that the boat in which we lay, shielded from the sun by awnings, seemed to hang suspended in air. The tufts of pink and white coral that studded the bed of the ocean beneath were as distinct as if they were growing at our feet. We seemed to be gazing upon a beautiful parterre of variegated candytuft. The shores, fringed with palms and patches of a gigantic species of cactus, which was then in bloom, were as still and serene as if they had been painted on

glass. Indeed, the whole landscape looked like a beautiful scene beheld through a glorified stereoscope ;— eminently real as far as detail went, but fixed and motionless as death. Nothing broke the silence save the occasional plunge of the divers into the water, or the noise of the large oysters falling into the bottom of the boats. In the distance, on a small, narrow point of land, a strange crowd of human beings was visible. Oriental pearl merchants, Fakirs selling amulets, Brahmins in their dirty white robes, all attracted to the spot by the prospect of gain (as fish collect round a handful of bait flung into a pond), bargaining, cheating, and strangely mingling religion and lucre. My wife and I lay back on the cushions that lined the after part of our little skiff, languidly gazing on the sea and the sky by turns. Suddenly our attention was aroused by a great shout, which was followed by a volley of shrill cries from the pearl-fishing boats. On turning in that direction, the greatest excitement was visible among the different crews. Hands were pointed, white teeth glittered in the sun, and every dusky form was gesticulating violently. Then two or three negroes seized some long poles and commenced beating the water violently. Others flung gourds and calabashes and odd pieces of wood and stones in the direction of a particular spot that lay between the nearest fishing-boat and ourselves. The only thing visible in this spot was a black, sharp blade, thin as the blade of a pen-knife, that appeared, slowly and evenly cutting through the still water. No surgical instrument ever glided through human flesh with a more silent, cruel calm. It needed not the cry of "Shark! shark!" to tell us what it was. In a moment we had a vivid picture of that unseen monster, with his small, watchful eyes, and his huge mouth with

its double row of fangs, presented to our mental vision. There were three divers under water at this moment, while directly above them hung suspended this remorseless incarnation of death. My wife clasped my hand convulsively, and became deathly pale. I stretched out the other hand instinctively, and grasped a revolver which lay beside me. I was in the act of cocking it when a shriek of unutterable agony from the ayah burst on our ears. I turned my head quick as a flash of lightning, and beheld her, with empty arms, hanging over the gunwale of the boat, while down in the calm sea I saw a tiny little face, swathed in white, sinking — sinking — sinking!

What are words to paint such a crisis? What pen, however vigorous, could depict the pallid, convulsed face of my wife, my own agonized countenance, the awful despair that settled on the dark face of the ayah, as we three beheld the love of our lives serenely receding from us forever in that impassable, transparent ocean? My pistol fell from my grasp. I, who rejoiced in a vigor of manhood such as few attain, was struck dumb and helpless. My brain whirled in its dome. Every outward object vanished from my sight, and all I saw was a vast, translucent sea and one sweet face, rosy as a sea-shell, shining in its depths, — shining with a vague smile that seemed to bid me a mute farewell as it floated away to death! I was roused from a trance of anguish by the flitting of a dark form through the clear water, cleaving its way swiftly toward that darling little shape, that grew dimmer and dimmer every second as it settled in the sea. We all saw it, and the same thought struck us all. That terrible, deadly back fin was the key of our sudden terror. The shark! A simultaneous shriek burst from our lips.

I tried to jump overboard, but was withheld by some one. Little use had I done so, for I could not swim a stroke. The dark shape glided on like a flash of light. It reached our treasure. In an instant all we loved on earth was blotted from our sight! My heart stood still. My breath ceased; life trembled on my lips. The next moment a dusky head shot out of the water close to our boat, — a dusky head whose parted lips gasped for breath, but whose eyes shone with the brightness of a superhuman joy. The second after, two tawny hands held a dripping white mass above water, and the dark head shouted to the boatmen. Another second, and the brave pearl-diver had clambered in and laid my little daughter at her mother's feet. This was the shark! This the man-eater! This hero in sun-burned hide, who, with his quick, aquatic sight, had seen our dear one sinking through the sea, and had brought her up to us again, pale and dripping, but still alive!

What tears and what laughter fell on us three by turns as we named our gem rescued from the ocean "Little Pearl"!



II.

I HAD been about a year settled at my pleasant homestead in Maine, when the great misfortune of my life fell upon me.

My existence was almost exceptional in its happiness. Independent in circumstances; master of a beautiful place, the natural charms of which were carefully seconded by art; married to a woman whose refined and cultivated mind seemed to be in perfect accord with my

own; and the father of the loveliest little maiden that ever tottered upon tiny feet, — what more could I wish for? In the summer-time we varied the pleasant monotony of our rustic life by flying visits to Newport and Nahant. In the winter, a month or six weeks spent in New York, party-going and theatre-going, surfeited us with the rapid life of a metropolis, but gave us food for conversation for months to come. The intervals were well filled up with farming, reading, and the social intercourse into which we naturally fell with the old residents around us.

I said a moment ago that I was perfectly happy at this time. I was wrong. I was happy, but not perfectly happy. A vague grief overshadowed me. My wife's health gave me at times great concern. Charming and *spirituelle* as she was on most occasions, there were times when she seemed a prey to a brooding melancholy. She would sit for hours in the twilight, in what appeared to be a state of mental apathy, and at such times it was almost impossible to rouse her into even a moderate state of conversational activity. When I addressed her, she would languidly turn her eyes on me, droop the eyelids over the eyeballs, and gaze at me with a strange expression that, I knew not why, sent a shudder through my limbs. It was in vain that I questioned her to ascertain if she suffered. She was perfectly well, she said, but weary. I consulted my old friend and neighbor, Doctor Melony, but, after a careful study of her constitution, he proclaimed her, after his own fashion, to be "Sound as a bell, sir! sound as a bell!"

To me, however, there was a funereal tone in this bell. If it did not toll of death, it at least proclaimed disaster. I cannot say why those dismal forebodings should have

possessed me. Let who will explain the many presentiments of good and bad fortune which waylay men in the road of life, as the witches used to waylay the traveller of old, and rise up in his path prognosticating or cursing.

At times, though, Minnie, as if to cheat speculation, displayed a gayety and cheerfulness beyond all expectation. She would propose little excursions to noted places in our neighborhood, and no eyes in the party would be brighter, no laugh more ringing than hers. Yet these bright spots were but checkers on a life of gloom;— days passed in moodiness and silence; nights of restless tossing on the couch; and ever and anon that strange, furtive look following me as I went to and fro!

As the year slowly sailed through the green banks of summer into the flaming scenery of the fall, I resolved to make some attempt to dissipate this melancholy under which my wife so obviously labored.

“Minnie,” I said to her, one day, “I feel rather dull. Let us go to New York for a few weeks.”

“What for?” she answered, turning her face around slowly until her eyes rested on mine, — eyes still filled with that inexplicable expression! “What for? To amuse ourselves? My dear Gerald, how can New York amuse you? We live in a hotel, each room of which is a stereotyped copy of the other. We get the same bill of fare — with a fresh date — every day for dinner. We go to parties that are a repetition of the parties we went to last year. The same thin-legged young man leads ‘the German,’ and one could almost imagine that the stewed terrapin which you got for supper had been kept over since the previous winter. There is no novelty, — no nothing.”

“There is a novelty, my dear,” I said, although I could not help smiling at her languid dissection of a New York season. “You love the stage, and a new, and, as I am told, a great actress, has appeared there. I, for my part, want to see her.”

“Who is she? But, before you answer, I know perfectly well what a great American dramatic novelty is. She has been gifted by nature with fine eyes, a good figure, and a voice which has a tolerable scale of notes. Some one, or something, puts it into her head that she was born into this world for the special purpose of interpreting Shakespeare. She begins by reciting to her friends in a little village, and, owing to their encouragement, determines to take lessons from some broken-down actor, who ekes out an insufficient salary by giving lessons in elocution. Under his tuition — as she would under the instruction of any professor of that abominable art known as ‘elocution’ — she learns how to display her voice at the expense of the sense of the author. She thinks of nothing but rising and falling inflections, swimming entrances and graceful exits. Her idea of great emotion is hysterics, and her acme of by-play is to roll her eyes at the audience. You listen in vain for a natural intonation of the voice. You look in vain on the painted — over-painted — face for a single reflex of the emotions depicted by the dramatist; — emotions that, I am sure, when he was registering them on paper, flitted over his countenance, and thrilled his whole being as the auroral lights shimmer over the heavens, and send a vibration through all nature! My dear husband, I am tired of your great American actress. Please go and buy me half a dozen dolls.”

I laughed. She was in her cynical mood, and none

could be more sarcastic than she. But I was determined to gain my point.

"But," I resumed, "the actress I am anxious to see is the very reverse of the too truthful picture you have painted. I want to see Matilda Heron."

"And who is Matilda Heron?"

"Well, I can't very well answer your question definitely, Minnie; but this I know, that she has come from somewhere, and fallen like a bomb-shell in New York. The metaphor is not too pronounced. Her appearance has been an explosion. Now, you *blasé* critic of actresses, here is a chance for a sensation! Will you go?"

"Of course I will, dear Gerald. But if I am disappointed, call on the gods to help you. I will punish you, if you mislead me, in some awful manner. I'll — write a play, or — go on the stage myself."

"Minnie," said I, kissing her smooth white forehead, "if you go on the stage, you will make a most miserable failure."



III.

WE went to New York. Matilda Heron was then playing her first engagement at Wallack's Theatre. The day after I arrived I secured a couple of orchestra seats, and before the curtain rose Minnie and I were installed in our places, — I full of anticipation, she, as all prejudging critics are, determined to be terribly severe if she got a chance.

We were too well bred, too well brought up, too well educated, and too cosmopolitan, to feel any qualms about the morality of the play. We had read it in the

French under the title of *La Dame aux Camélias*, and it was now produced in dramatic form under the title of "Camille."

If my wife did not get a chance for criticism, she at least got a sensation. Miss Heron's first entrance was wonderfully unconventional. The woman dared to come in upon that painted scene as if it really was the home apartment it was represented to be. She did not slide in with her face to the audience, and wait for the mockery that is called "a reception." She walked in easily, naturally, unwitting of any outside eyes. The petulant manner in which she took off her shawl, the commonplace conversational tone in which she spoke to her servant, were revelations to Minnie and myself. Here was a daring reality. Here was a woman who, sacrificing for the moment all conventional prejudices, dared to play the lorette as the lorette herself plays her dramatic life, with all her whims, her passion, her fearlessness of consequences, her occasional vulgarities, her impertinence, her tenderness and self-sacrifice!

It was not that we did not see faults. Occasionally Miss Heron's accent was bad, and had a savor of Celtic origin. But what mattered accent, or what mattered elocution, when we felt ourselves in the presence of an inspired woman!

Miss Heron's *Camille* electrified both Minnie and myself. My wife was particularly *bouleversée*. The artist we were beholding had not in a very marked manner any of those physical advantages which Minnie had predicated in her onslaught on the dramatic stars. It is true that Miss Heron's figure was commanding, and there was a certain powerful light in her eyes that startled and thrilled; but there was not the beauty of the "favorite

actress." The conquest that she achieved was purely intellectual and magnetic.

Of course we were present at the next performance. It was "Medea." We then beheld the great actress under a new phase. In Camille she died for love; in Medea she killed for love. I never saw a human being so *rocked* by emotion as was my wife during the progress of this tragedy. Her countenance was a mirror of every incident and passion. She swayed to and fro under those gusts of indignant love that the actress sent forth from time to time, and which swept the house like a storm. When the curtain fell she sat trembling, — vibrating still with those thunders of passion that the swift lightnings of genius had awakened. She seemed almost in a dream, as I took her to the carriage, and during the drive to our hotel she was moody and silent. It was in vain that I tried to get her to converse about the play. That the actress was great, she acknowledged in the briefest possible sentence. Then she leaned back and seemed to fall into a reverie from which nothing would arouse her.

I ordered supper into our sitting-room, and made Minnie drink a couple of glasses of champagne in the hope that it would rouse her into some state of mental activity. All my efforts, however, were without avail. She was silent and strange, and occasionally shivered as if penetrated with a sudden chill. Shortly after, she pleaded weariness and retired for the night, leaving me puzzled more than ever by the strangeness of her case.

An hour or two afterward, when I went to bed, I found Minnie apparently asleep. Never had she seemed more beautiful. Her lips were like a bursting rosebud about to blow under the influence of a perfumed wind, just

parted as they were by the gentle breath that came and went. The long, dark lashes that swept over her cheek gave a pensive charm to her countenance, which was heightened by a rich stray of nutty hair that swept loosely across her bosom, tossed in the restlessness of slumber. I printed a light kiss upon her forehead, and, with an unuttered prayer for her welfare, lay down to rest.

I know not how long I had been asleep when I was awakened from a profound slumber by one of those indescribable sensations of mortal peril which seem to sweep over the soul, and with as it were the thrill of its passage call louder than a trumpet, Awake! arouse! your life hangs by a hair! That this strange physical warning is in all cases the result of a magnetic phenomenon I have not the slightest doubt. To prove it, steal softly, ever so softly, to the bedside of a sleeper, and, although no noise betrays your presence, the slumberer will almost invariably awaken, aroused by a magnetic perception of your proximity. How much more powerfully must the stealthy approach of one who harbors sinister designs affect the slumbering victim! An antagonistic magnetism hovers near; the whole of the subtile currents that course through the electrical machine known as man are shocked with a powerful repulsion, and the sentinel mind whose guard has just been relieved, and which is slumbering in its quarters, suddenly hears the rappel beaten and leaps to arms.

In the midst of my deep sleep I sprang with a sudden bound upright, with every faculty alert. By one of those unaccountable mysteries of our being, I realized, before my eyes could be by any possibility alive to external objects, the presence of a great horror. Simultaneously

with this conviction, or following it so quickly as to be almost twin with it, I beheld the vivid flash of a knife, and felt an acute pain in my shoulder. The next instant all was plain, as if the scene, instead of passing in a half-illuminated bedroom, had occurred in the full sunlight of the orient. My wife was standing by my bedside, her hands firmly pinioned in mine, while on the white coverlet lay a sharp table-knife red with the blood which was pouring from a deep wound in my shoulder. I had escaped death by a miracle. Another instant and the long blade would have been driven through my heart.

I never was so perfectly self-possessed as on that terrible occasion. I forced Minnie to sit on the bed, while I looked calmly into her face. She returned my gaze with a sort of serene defiance.

"Minnie," I said, "I loved you dearly. Why did you do this?"

"I was weary of you," she answered, in a cold, even voice, — a voice so level that it seemed to be spoken on ruled lines, — "that is my reason."

Great heavens! I was not prepared for this sanguinary calm. I had looked for perhaps some indication of somnambulism; I had vaguely hoped even for the incoherence or vehemence of speech which would have betokened a sudden insanity, — anything, everything but this awful avowal of a deliberate design to murder a man who loved her better than the life she sought! Still I clung to hope. I could not believe that this gentle, refined creature could deliberately quit my side at midnight, possess herself of the very knife which had been used at the table, across which I lavished a thousand fond attentions, and remorselessly endeavor to stab me to the heart. It

must be the act of one insane, or laboring under some momentary hallucination. I determined to test her further. I adopted a tone of vehement reproach, hoping, if insanity was smouldering in her brain, to fan the embers to such a flame as would leave no doubt on my mind. I would rather she should be mad than feel that she hated me.

“Woman!” I thundered fiercely, “you must have the mind of a fiend to repay my love in this manner. Beware of my vengeance. Your punishment shall be terrible.”

“Punish me,” she answered; and oh! how serene and distant her voice sounded! — “punish me how and when you will. It will not matter much.” The tones were calm, assured, and fearless. The manner perfectly coherent. A terrible suspicion shot across my mind.

“Have I a rival?” I asked; “is it a guilty love that has prompted you to plan my death? If so, I am sorry you did not kill me.”

“I do not know any other man whom I love. I cannot tell why it is that I do not love you. You are very kind and considerate, but your presence wearies me. I sometimes see vaguely, as in a dream, my ideal of a husband, but he has no existence save in my soul, and I suppose I shall never meet him.”

“Minnie, you are mad!” I cried, despairingly.

“Am I?” she answered, with a faint, sad smile slowly overspreading her pale face, like the dawn breaking imperceptibly over a cold gray lake. “Well, you can think so if you will. It is all one to me.”

I never beheld such apathy, — such stoical indifference. Had she exhibited fierce rage, disappointment at her failure, a mad thirst for my life-blood, I should have preferred it to this awful stagnation of sensibility, this frozen still-

ness of the heart. I felt all my nature harden suddenly toward her. It seemed to me as if my face became fixed and stern as a bronze head.

“You are an inexplicable monster,” I said, in tones that startled myself, they were so cold and metallic; “and I shall not try to decipher you. I will use every endeavor to ascertain, however, whether it is some species of insanity that has thus afflicted you, or whether you are ruled by the most vicious soul that ever inhabited a human body. You shall return to my house tomorrow, when I will place you under the charge of Doctor Melony. You will live in the strictest seclusion. I need not tell you that, after what has happened, you must henceforth be a stranger to your daughter. Hands crimsoned with her father’s blood are not those that I would see caressing her.”

“Very well. It is all one to me where I am, or how I live.”

“Go to bed.”

She went, calmly as a well-taught child, coolly turning over the pillow on which was sprinkled the blood from the wound in my shoulder, so as to present the under side for her beautiful, guilty head to repose on; gently removed the murderous knife, which was still lying on the coverlet, and placed it on a little table by the side of the bed, and then without a word calmly composed herself to sleep.

It was inexplicable. I stanchd my wound and sat down to think.

What was the meaning of it all? I had visited many lunatic asylums, and had, as one of the various items in my course of study, read much on the phenomena of insanity, which had always been exceedingly interest-

ing to me for this reason: I thought it might be that only through the aberrated intellect can we approach the secrets of the normal mind. The castle, fortified and garrisoned at every angle and loophole, guards its interior mysteries; it is only when the fortress crumbles that we can force our way inside, and detect the secret of its masonry, its form, and the theory of its construction.

But in all my researches I had never met with any symptoms of a diseased mind similar to these my wife exhibited. There was a uniform coherence that completely puzzled me. Her answers to my questions were complete and determinate, — that is, they left no room for what is called “cross-examination.” No man ever spent such a night of utter despair as I did, watching in that dimly lit chamber until dawn, while she, my would-be murderess, lay plunged in so profound and calm a slumber that she might have been a wearied angel rather than a self-possessed demon. The mystery of her guilt was maddening; and I sat hour after hour in my easy-chair, seeking in vain for a clew, until the dawn, spectral and gray, arose over the city. Then I packed up all our luggage, and wandered restlessly over the house until the usual hour for rising had struck.

On returning to my room I found my wife just completing her toilet. To my consternation and horror she flung herself into my arms as I entered.

“O Gerald!” she cried, “I have been so frightened. What has brought all this blood on the pillow and the sheets? Where have you been? When I awoke and missed you and discovered these stains, I knew not what to think. Are you hurt? What is the matter?”

I stared at her. There was not a trace of conscious

guilt in her countenance. It was the most consummate acting. Its very perfection made me the more relentless.

"There is no necessity for this hypocrisy," I said; "it will not alter my resolve. We depart for home to-day. Our luggage is packed, the bills are all paid. Speak to me, I pray you, as little as possible."

"What is it? Am I dreaming? O Gerald, my darling! what have I done, or what has come over you?" She almost shrieked these queries.

"You know as well as I do, you fair-faced monster. You tried to murder me last night, when I was asleep. There's your mark on my shoulder. A loving signature, is it not?"

I bared my shoulder as I spoke, and exposed the wound. She gazed wildly in my face for a moment, then tottered and fell. I lifted her up and placed her on the bed. She did not faint, and had strength enough left to ask me to leave her alone for a few moments. I quitted her with a glance of contempt, and went down stairs to make arrangements for our journey. After an absence of about an hour I returned to our apartments. I found her sitting placidly in an easy-chair, looking out of the window. She scarcely noticed my entrance, and the same old, distant look was on her face.

"We start at three o'clock. Are you ready?" I said to her.

"Yes. I need no preparation." Evenly, calmly uttered, without even turning her head to look at me.

"You have recovered your memory, it seems," I said. "You wasted your histrionic talents this morning."

"Did I?" She smiled with the most perfect serenity, arranged herself more easily in her chair, and leaned back as if in a revery. I was enraged beyond endurance, and left the room abruptly.

That evening saw us on our way home. Throughout the journey she maintained the same apathetic air. We scarcely exchanged a word. The instant we reached our house I assigned apartments to her, strictly forbidding her to move from them, and despatched a messenger for Doctor Melony. Minnie, on her part, took possession of her prison without a word. She did not even ask to see our darling little Pearl, who was a thousand times more beautiful and engaging than ever.

Melony arrived, and I laid the awful facts before him. The poor man was terribly shocked.

“Depend on it, it’s opium,” he said. “Let me see her.”

An hour afterward he came to me.

“It’s not opium, and it’s not insanity,” he said; “it must be somnambulism. I find symptoms, however, that puzzle me beyond all calculation. That she is not in her normal condition of mind is evident; but I cannot discover the cause of this unnatural excitement. She is coherent, logical, but perfectly apathetic to all outward influences. At first I was certain that she was a victim of opium. Now I feel convinced that I was entirely wrong. It must be somnambulism. I will reside for a time in the house, and trust me to discover this mystery. Meanwhile she must be carefully watched.”

Melony was as good as his word. He watched her incessantly, and reported to me her condition. The poor man was dreadfully puzzled. The strictest surveillance failed to elicit the slightest evidence of her taking any stimulants, although she remained almost all the time in the apathetic state which was so terrible to behold. The Doctor endeavored to arouse her by reproaches for her attempt on my life. She, in return, only smiled, and replied that

it was a matter in which she had no further interest. Not a trace of any somnambulistic habit could be discovered. I was thoroughly wretched. I secluded myself from all society but that of Melony ; and had it not been for him and my darling little Pearl I am certain that I should have gone mad. The most of my days I spent wandering in the great woods which lay in the neighborhood of my farm, and my evenings I endeavored to divert with reading or a chat with the good Doctor. Yet, talk of what we might, the conversation would always return to the same melancholy topic. It was a maze of sorrow in which we invariably, no matter in what direction we wandered, brought up at the same spot.



IV.

THE Doctor and myself were sitting one evening, late, in my library, talking gloomily enough over my domestic tragedy. He was endeavoring to persuade me to look more brightly on the future ; to dismiss as far as possible from my mind the accursed horror that dwelt in my home, and to remember that I had still a dear object left on which to centre my affections. This allusion to little Pearl, in such a mood as I was then in, only served to heighten my agony. I began immediately to revolve the chances that, were my wife's disease really insanity, it would be perpetuated in my dear child. Melony, of course, pooh-poohed the idea ; but with the obstinacy of grief I clung to it. Suddenly a pause took place in the argument, and the dreary sounds that fill the air in the last nights of autumn swept around the house. The wind souged through the tree-tops, which were now almost bare, as

if moaning at being deprived of its leafy playmates. Inexplicable noises passed to and fro without the windows. Dead leaves rustled along the piazza, like the rustle of the garments of ghosts. Chilly draughts came from unseen crevices, blowing on back and cheek till one felt as if some invisible lips were close behind, pouring malignant breaths on face and shoulder. Suddenly the pause in our conversation was filled by a noise that we knew came neither from air nor dry leaf. We heard sounding through the night the muffled tread of footsteps. I knew that, except ourselves, the household had long since retired to bed. By a simultaneous action we both sprang to our feet and rushed to a door which opened into a long corridor leading to the nursery, and which communicated, by a series of rambling passages, with the main body of the house. As we flung back the door a light appeared at the further end advancing slowly toward us. It was borne by a tall, white figure. It was my wife! Calm and stately, and with her wonderful serene step, she approached. My heart was frozen when I saw spots of blood on her hands and night-robe. I gave a wild cry, and rushed past her. In another instant I was in baby's room. The night light was burning dimly; the colored nurse was sleeping calmly in her bed; while, in a little cot in another part of the room, I saw— Ah! how tell it?— I cannot! Well, little Pearl was murdered, — murdered! My darling lay —

It was I now who was insane. I rushed back into the corridor to slay the fiend who had done this horrible deed. I had no mercy for her then. I would have killed her a thousand times over. Great Heaven! She was leaning against the wall conversing as calmly with the Doctor as if nothing had happened; smoothing

her hair with her reddened fingers, nonchalant as if at an evening party. I ran at her to crush her. Melony leaped between us.

"Stop," he cried. — "The secret is out"; — and as he spoke he held up a little silver box containing what seemed to be a greenish paste. "It is hasheesh, and she is confessing!"

Her statement was the most awful thing I ever listened to. It was as deliberate as a lawyer's brief. She had contracted this habit in the East, she said, long before I knew her, and could not break it off. It wound her nature in chains of steel; by degrees it grew upon her, until it became her very life. Her existence lay as it were in a nut-shell, but that shell was to her a universe. One night, she continued, when she was under the influence of the drug, she went with me to see a play in which the wife abhors her husband and murders her children. It was "Medea." From that instant murder became glorified in her sight, through the medium of the spell-working drug. Her soul became rapt in the contemplation of the spilling of blood. I was to have been her first victim, Pearl her second. She ended by saying, with an ineffable smile, that the delight of the taking away of life was beyond imagination.

I suppose I must have fainted, for when I awoke from what seemed oblivion I found myself in bed, with Dr. Melony by my side. He laid his finger on his lip, and whispered to me that I had been very ill, and must not talk. But I could not restrain myself.

"Where is she?" I muttered.

"Where she ought to be," he answered; and then I caught faintly the words, "Private madhouse."

O hasheesh ! demon of a new paradise, spiritual whirlwind, I know you now ! You blackened my life, you robbed me of all I held dear ; but you have since consoled me. You thought, wicked enchanter, that you had destroyed my peace forever. But I have won, through you yourself, the bliss you once blotted out. Vanish past ! Hence present ! Out upon actuality ! Hand in hand, I walk with the conqueror of time, and space, and suffering. Bend, all who hear me, to his worship !

THE BOHEMIAN.



I WAS launched into the world when I reached twenty-one, at which epoch I found myself in possession of health, strength, physical beauty, and boundless ambition. I was poor. My father had been an unsuccessful operator in Wall Street ; — had passed through the various vicissitudes of fortune common to his profession, and ended by being left a widower, with barely enough to live upon and to give me a collegiate education. As I was aware of the strenuous exertions he had made to accomplish this last, how he had pinched himself in a thousand ways to endow me with intellectual capital, I immediately felt, on leaving college, the necessity of burdening him no longer. The desire for riches entirely possessed me. I had no dream but wealth. Like those poor wretches so lately starving on the Darien Isthmus, who used to beguile their hunger with imaginary banquets, I consoled my pangs of present poverty with visions of boundless treasure.

A friend of mine, who was paying-teller in one of our New York banks, once took me into the vaults when he was engaged in depositing his specie, and as I beheld the golden coins falling in yellow streams from his hands, a strange madness seemed to possess me. I became from that moment a prey to a morbid disorder, which, if we

had a psychological pathology, might be classed as the *mania aurabilis*. I literally saw gold,—nothing but gold. Walking in the country my eyes involuntarily sought the ground, as if hoping to pierce the sod and discover some hidden treasure. Coming home late at night, through the silent New York streets, every stray piece of mud or loose fragment of paper that lay upon the sidewalk was carefully scanned; for, in spite of my better reason, I cherished the vague hope that some time or other I should light upon a splendid treasure, which, for want of a better claimant, would remain mine. It seemed, in short, as if one of those gold gnomes of the Hartz Mountains had taken possession of me and ruled me like a master. I dreamed such dreams as would cast Sinbad's valley of diamonds into the shade. The very sunlight itself never shone upon me but the wish crossed my brain that I could solidify its splendid beams and coin them into "eagles."

I was by profession a lawyer. Like the rest of my fraternity I had my little office, a small room on the fourth story in Nassau Street, with magnificent painted tin labels announcing my rank and title all the way up the stairs. Despite the fact that I had many of these labels fixed to the walls, and in every available corner, my legal threshold was virgin. No client gladdened my sight. Many and many a time my heart beat as I heard heavy footsteps ascending the stairs, but the half-dawning hope of employment was speedily crushed. They always stopped on the floor below, where a disgusting conveyancer, with a large practice, had put up his shingle. So I passed day after day alone with my Code and Blackstone, and my Chitty, writing articles for the magazines on legal-looking paper,—so that in case a client

entered he might imagine I was engaged at my profession, — by which I earned a scanty and precarious subsistence.

I was, of course, at this period in love. That a young man should be very ambitious, very poor, and very unhappy, and not in love, would be too glaring a contradiction of the usual course of worldly destinies. I was, therefore, entirely and hopelessly in love. My life was divided between two passions, — the desire of becoming wealthy, and my love for Annie Deane.

Annie was an author's daughter. Need I add, after this statement, that she was as poor as myself? This was the only point in my theory of the conquest of wealth on which I contradicted myself. To be consistent, I should have devoted myself to some of those young ladies, about whom it is whispered, before you are introduced, that "she will have a hundred and fifty thousand dollars." But though I had made up my mind to devote my life to the acquisition of wealth, and though I verily believe I might have parted with my soul for the same end, I had yet too much of the natural man in my composition to sacrifice my heart.

Annie Deane was, however, such a girl as to make this infraction of my theory of life less remarkable. She was, indeed, marvellously beautiful. Not of that insipid style of beauty which one sees in Greek statues and London annuals. Her nose did *not* form a grand line with her forehead. Her mouth would scarcely have been claimed by Cupid as his bow; but then, her upper lip was so short, and the teeth within so pearly, the brow was so white and full, and the throat so round, slender, and pliant! and when, above all this, a pair of wondrous dark-gray eyes reigned in supreme and tender beauty,

I felt that a portion of the wealth of my life had already been acquired, in gaining the love of Annie Deane.

Our love affair ran as smoothly as if the old adage never existed ; — probably for the reason that there was no goal in sight, for we were altogether too poor to dream of marriage as yet, and there did not seem very much probability of my achieving the success necessary to the fulfilment of our schemes. Annie's constitutional delicacy, however, was a source of some uneasiness to me. She evidently possessed a very highly strung nervous organization, and was to the extremest degree what might be termed impressionable. The slightest change in the weather affected her strangely. Certain atmospheres appeared to possess an influence over her for better or for worse ; but it was in connection with social instincts, so to speak, that the peculiarities of her organism were so strikingly developed. These instincts, for I cannot call them anything else, guided her altogether in her choice of acquaintance. She was accustomed to declare that, by merely touching a person's hand, she became conscious of liking or aversion. Upon the entrance of certain persons into a room where she was, even if she had never seen them before, her frame would shrink and shiver like a dying flower, and she would not recover until they had left the apartment. For these strange affections she could not herself account, and they on more than one occasion were the source of very bitter annoyances to herself and her parents.

Well, things were in this state when one day, in the early part of June, I was sitting alone in my little office. The beginning of a story which I was writing lay upon the table. The title was elaborately written at the top of the page, but it seemed as if I had stuck in the middle of the second paragraph. In the first, — for it was

an historical tale after the most approved model, — I had described the month, the time of day, and the setting sun. In the second, I introduced my three horsemen, who were riding slowly down a hill. The nose of the first and elder horseman, however, upset me. I could not for the life of me determine whether it was to be aquiline or Roman.

While I was debating this important point, and swaying between a multitude of suggestions, there came a sharp, decisive knock at my door. I think, if the knock had come upon the nose about which I was thinking, or on my own, I should scarcely have been more surprised. “A client!” I cried to myself. “Huzza! the gods have at last laid on a pipe from Pactolus for my especial benefit.” In reality, between ourselves, I did not say anything half so good; but the exclamation, as I have written it, will convey some idea of the vague exultation that filled my soul when I heard that knock.

“Come in!” I cried, when I had reached down a Chitty and concealed my story under a second-hand brief which I had borrowed from a friend in the profession. “Come in!” and I arranged myself in a studious and absorbed attitude.

The door opened and my visitor entered. I had a sort of instinct that he was no client, from the first moment. Rich men — and who but a rich man goes to law — may sometimes be seedy in their attire, but it is always a peculiar and respectable seediness. The air of wealth is visible, I know not by what magic, beneath the most threadbare coat. You see at a glance that the man who wears it might, if he chose, be clad in fine linen. The seediness of the poor man is, on the other hand, equally unmistakable. You seem to discern instantly that his

coat is poor from necessity. My visitor, it was easy to perceive, was of this latter class. My hopes of profit sank at the sight of his pale, unshaven face, his old, shapeless boots, his shabby Kossuth hat, his over-coat shining with long wear, which, though buttoned, I could see no longer merited its name, for it was plain that no other coat lurked beneath it. Withal, this man had an air of conscious power as he entered. You could see that he had nothing in his pockets, but then he looked as if he had much in his brain.

He saluted me with a sort of careless respect as he entered. I bowed in return, and offered him the other chair. I had but two.

“Can I do anything for you, sir?” I inquired blandly, still clinging to the hope of clientage.

“Yes,” said he, shortly; “I never make purposeless visits.”

“Hem! If you will be so kind as to state your case,” — for his rudeness rather shook my faith in his poverty, — “I will give it my best attention.”

“I’ve no doubt of that, Mr. Cranstoun,” he replied, “for you are as much interested in it as I am.”

“Indeed!” I exclaimed, not without some surprise and much interest at this sudden disclosure. “To whom have I the honor of speaking, then?”

“My name is Philip Brann.”

“Brann? — Brann? A resident of this city?”

“No. I am by birth an Englishman, but I never reside anywhere.”

“O, you are a commercial agent, then, perhaps?”

“I am a Bohemian.”

“A what?”

“A Bohemian,” he repeated, coolly removing the pa-

pers with which I had concealed my magazine story, and glancing over the commencement. "You see my habits are easy."

"I see it perfectly, sir," I answered.

"When I say that I am a Bohemian, I do not wish you to understand that I am a Zingaro. I don't steal chickens, tell fortunes, or live in a camp. I am a social Bohemian, and fly at higher game."

"But what has all this got to do with me?" I asked, sharply; for I was not a little provoked at the disappointment I experienced in the fellow's not having turned out to be a client.

"Much. It is necessary that you should know something about me before you do that which you will do."

"O, I am to do something, then?"

"Certainly. Have you read Henri Murger's *Scènes de la Vie de Bohème*?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, you can comprehend my life. I am clever, learned, witty, and tolerably good-looking. I can write brilliant magazine articles,"—here his eye rested contemptuously on my historical tale,— "I can paint pictures, and, what is more, sell the pictures I paint. I can compose songs, make comedies, and captivate women."

"On my word, sir, you have a choice of professions," I said, sarcastically; for the scorn with which the Bohemian had eyed my story offended me.

"That's it," he answered; "I don't want a profession. I could make plenty of money if I chose to work, but I don't choose to work. I will never work. I have a contempt for labor."

"Probably you despise money equally," I replied, with a sneer.

"No, I don't. To acquire money without trouble is the great object of my life, as to acquire it in any way or by any means is the great object of yours."

"And pray, sir, how do you know that I have any such object?" I asked, in a haughty tone.

"O, I know it. You dream only of wealth. You intend to try and obtain it by industry. You will never succeed."

"Your prophecies, sir, are more dogmatical than pleasant."

"Don't be angry," he replied, smiling at my frowns. "You shall be wealthy. I can show you the road to wealth. We will follow it together!"

The sublime assurance of this man astounded me. His glance, penetrating and vivid, seemed to pierce into my very heart. A strange and uncontrollable interest in him and his plans filled my breast. I burned to know more.

"What is your proposal?" I asked, severely; for a thought at the moment flashed across me that some unlawful scheme might be the aim of this singular being.

"You need not be alarmed," he answered, as if reading my thoughts. "The road I wish to lead you is an honest one. I am too wise a man ever to become a criminal.

"Then, Mr. Philip Brann, if you will explain your plans I shall feel more assured on that point."

"Well, in the first place," he began, crossing his legs and taking a cigar out of a bundle that lay in one of the pigeon-holes of my desk, "in the first place, you must introduce me to the young lady to whom you are engaged, Miss Annie Deane."

"Sir!" I exclaimed, starting to my feet, and quivering with indignation at such a proposal; "what do you

mean? Do you think it likely that I would introduce to a young lady in whom I am interested a man whom I never saw before to-day, and who has voluntarily confessed to being a vagabond? Sir, in spite of your universal acquirements, I think Providence forgot to endow you with sense."

"I'll trouble you for one of those matches. Thank you. So you refuse to introduce me! I knew you would. But I also know that ten minutes from this time you will be very glad to do it. Look at my eyes!"

The oddity of this request, and the calm assurance with which it was made, were too much for me. In spite of my anger, I burst into a fit of loud laughter. He waited patiently until my mirth had subsided.

"You need not laugh," he resumed; "I am perfectly serious. Look at my eyes attentively, and tell me if you see anything strange in them."

At such a proposition from any other man, I should have taken for granted that he was mocking me, and kicked him down stairs. This Bohemian, however, had an earnestness of manner that staggered me. I became serious, and I did look at his eyes.

They were certainly very singular eyes, — the most singular eyes that I had ever beheld. They were long, gray, and of a very deep hue. Their steadiness was wonderful. They never moved. One might fancy that they were gazing into the depths of one of those Italian lakes, on an evening when the waters are so calm as to seem solid. But it was the interior of these organs — if I may so speak — that was so marvellous. As I gazed, I seemed to behold strange things passing in the deep gray distance which seemed to stretch infinitely away. I could have sworn that I saw figures moving, and landscapes wonder-

fully real. My gaze seemed to be fastened to his by some inscrutable power; and the outer world, gradually passing off like a cloud, left me literally living in that phantom region which I beheld in those mysterious eyes.

I was aroused from this curious lethargy by the Bohemian's voice. It seemed to me at first as if muffled by distance, and sounded drowsily in my ear. I made a powerful effort and recalled my senses, which seemed to be wandering in some far-off place.

"You are more easily affected than I imagined," remarked Brann, as I stared heavily at him with a half-stupefied air.

"What have you done? What is this lethargy that I feel upon me?" I stammered out.

"Ah! you believe now," replied Brann, coldly; "I thought you would. Did you observe nothing strange in my eyes?"

"Yes. I saw landscapes, and figures, and many strange things. I almost thought I could distinguish Miss — Miss — Deane!"

"Well, it is not improbable. People can behold whatever they wish in my eyes."

"But will you not explain? I no longer doubt the fact that you are possessed of extraordinary powers, but I must know more of you. Why do you wish to be introduced to Miss Deane?"

"Listen to me, Cranstoun," answered the Bohemian, placing his hand on my shoulder; "I do not wish you to enter into any blindfold compact. I will explain all my views to you; for, though I have learned to trust no man, I know you cannot avail yourself of any information I may give you without my assistance."

“So much the better,” said I; “for then you will not suspect me.”

“As you have seen,” continued the Bohemian, “I possess some remarkable powers. The origin, the causes of these endowments, I do not care to investigate. The scientific men of France and Germany have wearied themselves in reducing the psychological phenomena of which I am a practical illustration to a system. They have failed. An arbitrary nomenclature, and a few interesting and suggestive experiments made by Reichenbach, are all the results of years of the intellectual toil of our greatest minds. As you will have guessed by this time, I am what is vulgarly called ‘a mesmerist.’ I can throw people into trances, deaden the nervous susceptibilities, and do a thousand things by which, if I chose to turn exhibitor, I could realize a fortune. But, while possessing those qualities which exhibit merely a commonplace superiority of psychical force, and which are generally to be found in men of a highly sympathetic organization, I yet can boast of unique powers such as I have never known to be granted to another being besides myself. What these powers are I have now no need to inform you. You will very soon behold them practically illustrated.

“Now, to come to my object. Like you, I am ambitious; but I have, unlike you, a constitutional objection to labor. It is sacrilege to expect men with minds like yours and mine to work. Why should we, — who are expressly and evidently created by nature to enjoy, — why should we, with our delicate tastes, our refined susceptibilities, our highly wrought organizations, spend our lives in ministering to the enjoyment of others? In short, my friend, I do not wish to row the boat in the great voyage of life. I prefer sitting at the stern, with purple

awnings and ivory couches around me, and my hand upon the golden helm. I wish to achieve fortune at a single stroke. With your assistance I can do it. You will join me !”

“Under certain conditions.”

I was not yet entirely carried away by the earnest eloquence of this strange being.

“I will grant what conditions you like,” he continued, fervently. “Above all, I will set your mind at rest by swearing to you, whatever may be my power, never in any way to interfere between you and the young girl whom you love. I will respect her as I would a sister.”

This last promise cleared away many of my doubts. The history which this man gave of himself, and the calm manner with which he asserted his wondrous power over women, I confess, rendered me somewhat cautious about introducing him to Annie. His air was, however, now so frank and manly, he seemed to be so entirely absorbed by his one idea of wealth, that I had no hesitation in declaring to him that I accepted his strange proposals.

“Good !” he exclaimed. “You are, I see, a man of resolution. We shall succeed. I will now let you into my plans. Your *fiancée*, Miss Annie Deane, is a *clairvoyante* of the first water. I saw her the other day at the Academy of Design. I stood near her as she examined a picture, and my physiognomical and psychological knowledge enabled me to ascertain beyond a doubt that her organization was the most nervous and sympathetic I had ever met. It is to her pure and piercing instincts that we shall owe our success.”

Without regarding my gestures of astonishment and alarm, he continued :—

“You must know that this so-called science of mesmerism is in its infancy. Its professors are, for the most part, incapables; its pupils, credulous fools. As a proof of this, endeavor to recall, if you can, any authentic instance in which this science has been put to any practical use. Have these mesmeric professors and their instruments ever been able to predict or foresee the rise of stocks, the course of political events, the approaches of disaster? Never, my friend, save in the novels of Alexandre Dumas and Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton. The reason of this is very simple. The professors were limited in their power, and the *somnambules* limited in their susceptibilities. When two such people as Miss Deane and myself labor together, everything is possible!”

“O, I see! You propose to operate in the stocks. My dear sir, you are mad. Where is the money?”

“Bah! who said anything about operating in stocks? That involves labor and an office. I can afford neither. No, Cranstoun, we will take a shorter road to wealth than that. A few hours’ exertion is all we need to make us *millionnaires*.”

“For heaven’s sake explain! I am wearied with curiosity deferred.”

“It is thus. This island and its vicinity abound in concealed treasure. Much was deposited by the early Dutch settlers during their wars with the Indians. Captain Kidd and other buccaneers have made numberless *cachés* containing their splendid spoils, which a violent death prevented their ever reclaiming. Poor Poe, you know, who was a Bohemian, like myself, made a story on the tradition, but, poor fellow! *he* only dug up his treasure on paper. There was also a considerable quantity of plate, jewels, and coin concealed by the inhabitants of New

York and the neighborhood during the war with England. You may wonder at my asserting this so confidently. Let it suffice for you that I know it to be so. It is my intention to discover some of this treasure."

Having calmly made this announcement, he folded his arms and gazed at me with the air of a god prepared to receive the ovations of his worshippers.

"How is this to be accomplished?" I inquired, earnestly, for I had begun to put implicit faith in this man, who seemed equally gifted and audacious.

"There are two ways by which we can arrive at our desires. The first is by the command of that power common to *somnambules*, who, having their faculties concentrated on a certain object during the magnetic trance, become possessed of the power of inwardly beholding and verbally describing it, as well as the locality where it is situated. The other is peculiar to myself, and, as you have seen, consists in rendering my eyes a species of camera-obscura to the *clairvoyante*, in which she vividly perceives all that we would desire. This mode I have greater faith in than in any other, and I believe that our success will be found there."

"How is it," I inquired, "that you have not before put this wondrous power to a like use? Why did you not enrich yourself long since through this means?"

"Because I have never been able to find a *somnambule* sufficiently impressionable to be reliable in her evidence. I have tried many, but they have all deceived me. You confess to having beheld certain shadowy forms in my eyes, but you could not define them distinctly. The reason is simply that your magnetic organization is not perfect. This faculty of mine, which has so much astonished you, is nothing new. It is employed by the Egyp-

tians, who use a small glass mirror where I use my eyes. The testimony of M. Leon Laborde, who practised the art himself, Lord Prudhoe, and a host of other witnesses, have recorded their experience of the truth of the science which I preach. However, I need discourse no further on it. I will prove to you its verity. Now that you have questioned me sufficiently, will you introduce me to your lady-love, Mr. Henry Cranstoun?"

"And will you promise me, Mr. Philip Brann, on your honor as a man, that you will respect my relations with that lady?"

"I promise, upon my honor."

"Then I yield. When shall it be?"

"To-night. I hate delays."

"This evening, then, I will meet you at the Astor House, and we will go together to Mr. Deane's house."

That night, accompanied by my new friend, the Bohemian, I knocked at the door of Mr. Deane's house, in Amity Place. A modest neighborhood, fit for a man who earned his living by writing novels for cheap publishers, and correspondence for Sunday newspapers. Annie was, as usual, in the sitting-room on the first floor, and the lamps had not yet been lighted, so that the apartment seemed filled with a dull gloom as we entered.

"Annie dear," said I, as she ran to meet me, "let me present to you my particular friend, Mr. Philip Brann, whom I have brought with me for a special purpose, which I will presently explain."

She did not reply.

Piqued by this strange silence, and feeling distressed about the Bohemian, who stood calmly upright, with a faint smile on his lips, I repeated my introduction rather sharply.

"Annie," I reiterated, "you could not have heard me. I am anxious to introduce to you my friend, Mr. Brann."

"I heard you," she answered, in a low voice, catching at my coat as if to support herself, "but I feel very ill."

"Good heavens! what's the matter, darling? Let me get you a glass of wine, or water."

"Do not be alarmed," said the Bohemian, arresting my meditated rush to the door, "I understand Miss Deane's indisposition thoroughly. If she will permit me, I will relieve her at once."

A low murmur of assent seemed to break involuntarily from Annie's lips. The Bohemian led her calmly to an arm-chair near the window, held her hands in his for a few moments, and spoke a few words to her in a low tone. In less than a minute she declared herself quite recovered.

"It was you who caused my illness," she said to him, in a tone whose vivacity contrasted strangely with her previous languor. "I felt your presence in the room like a terrible electrical shock."

"And I have cured what I caused," answered the Bohemian; "you are very sensitive to magnetic impressions. So much the better."

"Why so much the better?" she asked anxiously.

"Mr. Cranstoun will explain," replied Brann, carelessly; and, with a slight bow, he moved to another part of the dusky room, leaving Annie and myself together.

"Who is this Mr. Brann, Henry?" asked Annie, as soon as the Bohemian was out of ear-shot. "His presence affects me strangely."

"He is a strange person, who possesses wonderful powers," I answered; "he is going to be of great service to us, Annie."

“Indeed! how so?”

I then related to her what had passed between the Bohemian and myself at my office, and explained his object in coming hither on this evening. I painted in glowing colors the magnificent future that opened for her and myself, if his scheme should prove successful, and ended by entreating her, for my sake, to afford the Bohemian every facility for arriving at the goal of his desires.

As I finished, I discovered that Annie was trembling violently. I caught her hand in mine. It was icy cold, and quivered with a sort of agitated and intermittent tremor.

“O Henry!” she exclaimed, “I feel a singular presentiment that seems to warn me against this thing. Let us rest content in our poverty. Have a true heart, and learn to labor and to wait. You will be rich in time; and then we will live happily together, secure in the consciousness that our means have been acquired by honest industry. I fear those secret treasure-seekings.”

“What nonsense!” I cried; “these are a timid girl’s fears. It would be folly to pine patiently for years in poverty, when we can achieve wealth at a stroke. The sooner we are rich, the sooner we shall be united, and to postpone that moment would be to make me almost doubt your love. Let us try this man’s power. There will be nothing lost if he fails.”

“Do with me as you will, Henry,” she answered, “I will obey you in all things; only I cannot help feeling a vague terror that seems to forebode misfortune.”

I laughed and bade her be of good cheer, and rang for lights in order that the experiment might be commenced at once. We three were alone. Mrs. Deane was on a

visit at Philadelphia ; Mr. Deane was occupied with his literary labors in another room, so that we had everything necessary to insure the quiet which the Bohemian insisted should reign during his experiments.

The Bohemian did not magnetize in the common way, with passes and manipulations. He sat a little in the shade, with his back to the strong glare of the chandeliers, while Annie sat opposite to him, looking full in his face. I sat at a little distance, at a small table, with a pencil and note-book, with which I was preparing to register such revelations as our *clairvoyante* should make.

The Bohemian commenced operations by engaging Miss Deane in a light and desultory conversation. He seemed conversant with all the topics of the town, and talked of the opera, and the annual exhibition at the Academy of Design, as glibly as if he had never done anything but cultivate small talk. Imperceptibly but rapidly, however, he gradually led the conversation to money matters. From these he glided into a dissertation on the advantages of wealth, touched on the topic of celebrated misers, thence slid smoothly into a discourse on concealed treasures, about which he spoke in so eloquent and impressive a manner as to completely fascinate both his hearers.

Then it was that I observed a singular change take place in Annie Deane's countenance. Hitherto pale and somewhat listless, as if suffering from mental depression, she suddenly became illumined as if by an inward fire. A rosy flush mounted to her white cheeks ; her lips, eagerly parted as if drinking in some intoxicating atmosphere, were ruddy with a supernatural health, and her eyes dilated as they gazed upon the Bohemian with a piercing intensity.

The latter ceased to speak, and after a moment's silence he said, gently, "Miss Deane, do you see?"

"I see!" she murmured, without altering the fixity of her gaze for an instant.

"Mark well what you observe," continued the Bohemian; "describe it with all possible accuracy." Then, turning to me, he said rapidly, "Take care and note everything."

"I see," pursued Annie, speaking in a measured monotone and gazing into the Bohemian's eyes while she waved her hand gently as if keeping time to the rhythm of her words, — "I see a sad and mournful island on which the ocean beats forever. The sandy ridges are crowned with manes of bitter grass that wave and wave sorrowfully in the wind. No trees or shrubs are rooted in that salt and sterile soil. The burning breath of the Atlantic has seared the surface and made it always barren. The surf, that whitens on the shore, drifts like a shower of snow across its bleak and storm-blown plains. It is the home of the sea-gull and the crane."

"It is called Coney Island?" the Bohemian half inquired, half asserted.

"It is the name," pursued the seeress, but in so even a tone that one would scarce imagine she had heard the question. She then continued to speak as before, still keeping up that gentle oscillation of her hand, which, in spite of my reason, seemed to me to have something terrible in its monotony.

"I see the spot," she continued, "where what you love lies buried. My gaze pierces through the shifting soil until it finds the gold that burns in the gloom. And there are jewels, too, of regal size and priceless value,

hidden so deeply in the barren sand! No sunlight has reached them for many years, but they burn for me as if they were set in the glory of an eternal day!"

"Describe the spot accurately!" cried the Bohemian, in a commanding tone, making for the first time a supremely imperative gesture.

"There is a spot upon that lonely island," the seeress continued, in the unimpassioned monotone that seemed more awful than the thunder of an army, "where three huge, sandy ridges meet. At the junction of these three ridges a stake of locust-wood is driven deeply down. When by the sun it is six o'clock, a shadow falls westward on the sand. Where this shadow ends, the treasure lies."

"Can you draw?" asked the Bohemian.

"She cannot," I answered hastily. The Bohemian raised his hand to enjoin silence.

"I can draw *now*," the seeress replied firmly, never for an instant removing her eyes from the Bohemian's.

"Will you draw the locality you describe, if I give you the materials?" pursued the magnetizer.

"I will."

Brann drew a sheet of Bristol-board and a pencil from his pocket, and presented them to her in silence. She took them, and, still keeping her eyes immovably fixed on those of the magnetizer, began sketching rapidly. I was thunderstruck. Annie, I knew, had never made even the rudest sketch before.

"It is done!" she said, after a few minutes' silence, handing the Bristol-board back to the Bohemian. Moved by an inexpressible curiosity, I rose and looked over his shoulder. It was wonderful! There was a masterly sketch of such a locality as she described executed on the

paper. But its vividness, its desolation, its evident truth, were so singularly given that I could scarcely believe my senses. I could almost hear the storms of the Atlantic howling over the barren sands.

"There is something wanting yet," said the Bohemian, handing the sketch back to her, and smiling at my amazement.

"I know it," she remarked, calmly. Then, giving a few rapid strokes with her pencil, she handed it to him once more.

The points of the compass had been added in the upper right-hand corner of the drawing. Nothing more was needed to establish the perfect accuracy of the sketch.

"This is truly wonderful!" I could not help exclaiming.

"It is finished," cried the Bohemian, exultingly, and dashing his handkerchief two or three times across Annie's face. Under this new influence her countenance underwent a rapid change. Her eyes, a moment before dilated to their utmost capabilities, now suddenly became dull, and the eyelids drooped heavily over them. Her form, that during the previous scene had been rigidly erect and strung to its highest point of tension, seemed to collapse like one of those strips of gold-leaf that electricians experiment with, when the subtle fluid has ceased to course through its pores. Without uttering a word, and before the Bohemian or myself could stir, she sank like a corpse on the floor.

"Wretch!" I cried, rushing forward, "what have you done?"

"Secured the object of our joint ambition," replied the fellow, with that imperturbable calmness that so distinguished him. "Do not be alarmed at this fainting-

fit, my friend. Exhaustion is always the consequence of such violent psychological phenomena. Miss Deane will be perfectly recovered by to-morrow evening, and by that time we shall have returned, *millionnaires*."

"I will not leave her until she is recovered," I answered sullenly, while I tried to restore the dear girl to consciousness.

"Yes, but you will," asserted Brann, lighting his cigar as coolly as if nothing very particular had happened. "By dawn to-morrow, you and I will have embarked for Coney Island."

"You cold-blooded savage!" I cried passionately, "will you assist me to restore your victim to consciousness? If you do not, by heaven, I will blow your brains out!"

"What with? The fire-shovel?" he answered with a laugh. Then, carelessly approaching, he took Annie's hands in his, and blew with his mouth gently upon her forehead. The effect was almost instantaneous. Her eyes gradually unclosed, and she made a feeble effort to sustain herself.

"Call the housekeeper," said the Bohemian, "have Miss Deane conducted to bed, and by to-morrow evening all will be tranquil."

I obeyed his directions almost mechanically, little dreaming how bitterly his words would be realized. Yes, truly! All *would* be tranquil by to-morrow evening!

I sat up all night with Brann. I did not leave Mr. Deane's until a late hour, when I saw Annie apparently wrapped in a peaceful slumber, and betook myself to a low tavern that remained open all night, where the Bohemian awaited me. There we arranged our plan. We were to take a boat at the Battery, at the earliest glimpse of dawn; then, provided with a spade and shovel, a

pocket compass, and a valise in which to transport our treasure, we were to row down to our destination. I was feverish and troubled. The strange scene I had witnessed, and the singular adventure that awaited, seemed in combination to have set my brain on fire. My temples throbbed; the cold perspiration stood upon my forehead, and it was in vain that I allowed myself to join the Bohemian in the huge draughts of brandy which he continually gulped down, and which seemed to produce little or no effect on his iron frame. How madly, how terribly, I longed for the dawn!

At last the hour came. We took our implements in a carriage down to the Battery, hired a boat, and in a short time were out in the stream pulling lustily down the foggy harbor. The exercise of rowing seemed to afford me some relief. I pulled madly at my oar, until the sweat rolled in huge drops from my brow, and hung in trembling beads on the curls of my hair. After a long and wearisome pull, we landed on the island at the most secluded spot we could find, taking particular care that it was completely sheltered from the view of the solitary hotel, where doubtless inquisitive idlers would be found. After beaching our boat carefully, we struck toward the centre of the island, Brann seeming to possess some wonderful instinct for the discovery of localities, for almost without any trouble he walked nearly straight to the spot we were in search of.

“This is the place,” said he, dropping the valise which he carried. “Here are the three ridges, and the locust stake, lying exactly due north. Let us see what the true time is.”

So saying, he unlocked the valise and drew forth a small sextant, with which he proceeded to take an ob-

servation. I could not help admiring the genius of this man, who seemed to think of and foresee everything. After a few moments engaged in making calculations on the back of a letter, he informed me that exactly twenty-one minutes would elapse before the shadow of the locust-stake would fall on the precise spot indicated by the seeress. "Just time enough," said he, "to enjoy a cigar."

Never did twenty-one minutes appear so long to a human being as these did to me. There was nothing in the landscape to arrest my attention. All was a wild waste of sand, on which a few patches of salt grass waved mournfully. My heart beat until I could hear its pulsations. A thousand times I thought that my strength must give way beneath the weight of my emotions, and that death would overtake me ere I had realized my dreams. I was obliged at length to dip my handkerchief in a marshy pool that was near me, and bind it about my burning temples.

At length the shadow from the locust log fell upon the enchanted spot. Brann and myself seized the spades wildly, and dug with the fury of ghouls who were rooting up their loathsome repast. The light sand flew in heaps on all sides. The sweat rolled from our bodies. The hole grew deeper and deeper!

At last — O heavens! — a metallic sound! My spade struck some hollow, sonorous substance. My limbs fairly shook as I flung myself into the pit, and scraped the sand away with my nails. I laughed like a madman, and burrowed like a mole. The Bohemian, always calm, with a few strokes of his shovel laid bare an old iron pot with a loose lid. In an instant this was smashed with a frantic blow of my fist, and my hands were buried in a heap of

shining gold! Red, glittering coins, — bracelets that seemed to glow like the stars in heaven, — goblets, rings, jewels, in countless profusion, — flashed before my eyes for an instant like the sparkles of an aurora. Then came a sudden darkness — and I remember no more!

How long I lay in this unconscious state I know not. It seemed to me that I was aroused by a sensation similar to that of having water poured upon me, and it was some moments before I could summon up sufficient strength to raise myself on one elbow. I looked bewilderedly around: I was alone! I then strove to remember something that I seemed to have forgotten, when my eye fell on the hole in the sand, on the edge of which I found I was lying. A dull-red gleam as of gold seemed to glimmer from out the bottom. This talismanic sight restored to me everything, — my memory and my strength. I sprang to my feet: I gazed around. The Bohemian was nowhere visible. Had he fled with the treasure? My heart failed me for a moment at the thought; but no! there lay the treasure gleaming still in the depths of the hole, with a dull-red light, like the distant glare of hell. I looked at the sun; he had sunk low in the horizon, and the dews already falling had, with the damp sea-air, chilled me to the bone. While I was brushing the moisture from my coat, wondering at this strange conduct of the Bohemian, my eye caught sight of a slip of paper pinned upon my sleeve. I tore it off eagerly. It contained these words:—

“I leave you. I am honest though I am selfish, and have divided with you the treasure which you have helped me to gain. You are now rich, but it may be that you will not be happy. Return to the city, but return in doubt.

“THE BOHEMIAN.”

What terrible enigma was this that the last sentence of this note enshrouded? what veiled mystery was it that rose before my inward vision in shapeless horror? I knew not. I could not guess, but a foreboding of some unknown and overwhelming disaster rushed instantly upon me, and seemed to crush my soul. Was it Annie, or was it my father? One thing was certain, there was no time to be lost in penetrating the riddle. I seized the valise, which the Bohemian had charitably left me, — how he bore away his own share of the treasure I know not, — and poured the gold and jewels into it with trembling hands. Then, scarce able to travel with the weight of the treasure, I staggered toward the beach, where we had left the boat. She was gone. Without wasting an instant, I made my way as rapidly as I could to the distant pier, where a thin stream of white smoke informed me that the steamer for New York was waiting for the bathers. I reached her just as she was about to start, and, staggering to an obscure corner, sorrowfully sat down upon my treasure.

With what different feelings from those which I anticipated was I returning to the city. My dream of wealth had been realized beyond my wildest hopes. All that I had thought necessary to yield me the purest happiness was mine, and yet there was not a more miserable wretch in existence. Those fatal words, "Return to the city, but return in doubt!" were ever before me. O, how I counted every stroke of the engine that impelled me to the city!

There was a poor, blind, humpbacked fiddler on board, who played all along the way. He played execrably, and his music made my flesh creep. As we neared the city he came round with his hat soliciting alms. In my reck-

lessness, I tumbled all the money I had in my pockets into his hands. I never shall forget the look of joy that flashed over his poor old seared and sightless face at the touch of these few dollars. "Good heavens!" I groaned, "here am I, sitting on the wealth of a kingdom, which is all mine, and dying of despair; while this old wretch has extracted from five dollars enough of happiness to make a saint envious!" Then my thoughts wandered back to Annie and the Bohemian, and there always floated before me in the air the agonizing words, "Return to the city, but return in doubt!"

The instant I reached the pier, I dashed through the crowd with my valise, and, jumping into the first carriage I met, promised a liberal bounty to the driver if he would drive me to Amity Place in the shortest possible space of time. Stimulated by this, we flew through the streets, and in a few moments I was standing at Mr. Deane's door. Even then it seemed to me as if a dark cloud hung over that house, above all others in the city. I rang; but my hand had scarcely left the bell-handle when the door opened, and Doctor Lott, the family physician, appeared on the threshold. He looked grave and sad.

"We were expecting you, Mr. Cranstoun," he said, very mournfully.

"Has — has anything — happened?" I stammered, catching at the railings for support.

"Hush! come in." And the kind Doctor took me by the arm and led me like a child into the parlor.

"Doctor, for heaven's sake, tell me what is the matter. I know something has happened. Is Annie dead? O, my brain will burst unless you end this suspense!"

"No, — not dead. But tell me, Mr. Cranstoun, has Miss Deane experienced any uncommon excitement lately?"

“Yes — yes — last night!” I groaned wildly, “she was mesmerized by a wretch. O, fool that I was to suffer it!”

“Ah! that explains all,” answered the Doctor. Then he took my hand gently in his. “Prepare yourself, Mr. Cranstoun,” he continued, with deep pity in his voice, “prepare yourself for a terrible shock.”

“She *is* dead, then!” I murmured. “Is she not?”

“She is. She died this morning, of over-excitement, of the cause of which I was ignorant until now. Calm yourself, my dear sir. She expired blessing you.”

I tore myself from his grasp, and rushed up stairs. The door of her room was open, and, in spite of myself, my agitated tramp softened to a stealthy footfall as I entered. There were two figures in the room. One was an old man, who knelt by the bedside of my lost love, sobbing bitterly. It was her father. The other lay upon the bed, with marble face, crossed hands, and sealed eyelids. All was tranquil and serene in the chamber of death. Even the sobbings of the father, though bitter, were muffled and subdued. And she lay on the couch, with closed eyes, the calmest of all! O, the seeress now saw more than earthly science could show her!

I felt, as I knelt by her father and kissed her cold hand in the agony of my heart, that I was justly punished.

Below stairs, in the valise, lay the treasure I had gained. Here, in her grave-clothes, lay the treasure I had lost.

THE LOST ROOM.



It was oppressively warm. The sun had long disappeared, but seemed to have left its vital spirit of heat behind it. The air rested; the leaves of the acacia-trees that shrouded my windows hung plumb-like on their delicate stalks. The smoke of my cigar scarce rose above my head, but hung about me in a pale blue cloud, which I had to dissipate with languid waves of my hand. My shirt was open at the throat, and my chest heaved laboriously in the effort to catch some breaths of fresher air. The noises of the city seemed to be wrapped in slumber, and the shrilling of the mosquitoes was the only sound that broke the stillness.

As I lay with my feet elevated on the back of a chair, wrapped in that peculiar frame of mind in which thought assumes a species of lifeless motion, the strange fancy seized me of making a languid inventory of the principal articles of furniture in my room. It was a task well suited to the mood in which I found myself. Their forms were duskily defined in the dim twilight that floated shadowily through the chamber; it was no labor to note and particularize each, and from the place where I sat I could command a view of all my possessions without even turning my head.

There was, *imprimis*, that ghostly lithograph by Ca-

lame. It was a mere black spot on the white wall, but my inner vision scrutinized every detail of the picture. A wild, desolate, midnight heath, with a spectral oak-tree in the centre of the foreground. The wind blows fiercely, and the jagged branches, clothed scantily with ill-grown leaves, are swept to the left continually by its giant force. A formless wrack of clouds streams across the awful sky, and the rain sweeps almost parallel with the horizon. Beyond, the heath stretches off into endless blackness, in the extreme of which either fancy or art has conjured up some undefinable shapes that seem riding into space. At the base of the huge oak stands a shrouded figure. His mantle is wound by the blast in tight folds around his form, and the long cock's feather in his hat is blown upright, till it seems as if it stood on end with fear. His features are not visible, for he has grasped his cloak with both hands, and drawn it from either side across his face. The picture is seemingly objectless. It tells no tale, but there is a weird power about it that haunts one, and it was for that I bought it.

Next to the picture comes the round blot that hangs below it, which I know to be a smoking-cap. It has my coat of arms embroidered on the front, and for that reason I never wear it; though, when properly arranged on my head, with its long blue silken tassel hanging down by my cheek, I believe it becomes me well. I remember the time when it was in the course of manufacture. I remember the tiny little hands that pushed the colored silks so nimbly through the cloth that was stretched on the embroidery-frame, — the vast trouble I was put to “to get a colored copy of my armorial bearings for the heraldic work which was to decorate the front of the band, — the pursings up of the little mouth, and the contractions

of the young forehead, as their possessor plunged into a profound sea of cogitation touching the way in which the cloud should be represented from which the armed hand, that is my crest, issues, — the heavenly moment when the tiny hands placed it on my head, in a position that I could not bear for more than a few seconds, and I, king-like, immediately assumed my royal prerogative after the coronation, and instantly levied a tax on my only subject, which was, however, not paid unwillingly. Ah! the cap is there, but the embroiderer has fled; for Atropos was severing the web of life above her head while she was weaving that silken shelter for mine!

How uncouthly the huge piano that occupies the corner at the left of the door looms out in the uncertain twilight! I neither play nor sing, yet I own a piano. It is a comfort to me to look at it, and to feel that the music is there, although I am not able to break the spell that binds it. It is pleasant to know that Bellini and Mozart, Cimarosa, Porpora, Glück, and all such, — or at least their souls, — sleep in that unwieldy case. There lie embalmed, as it were, all operas, sonatas, oratorios, nocturnos, marches, songs, and dances, that ever climbed into existence through the four bars that wall in melody. Once I was entirely repaid for the investment of my funds in that instrument which I never use. Blokeeta, the composer, came to see me. Of course his instincts urged him as irresistibly to my piano as if some magnetic power lay within it compelling him to approach. He tuned it, he played on it. All night long, until the gray and spectral dawn rose out of the depths of the midnight, he sat and played, and I lay smoking by the window listening. Wild, unearthly, and sometimes insufferably painful, were the improvisations of Blokeeta. The chords of the instru-

ment seemed breaking with anguish. Lost souls shrieked in his dismal preludes; the half-heard utterances of spirits in pain, that groped at inconceivable distances from anything lovely or harmonious, seemed to rise dimly up out of the waves of sound that gathered under his hands. Melancholy human love wandered out on distant heaths, or beneath dank and gloomy cypresses, murmuring its unanswered sorrow, or hateful gnomes sported and sang in the stagnant swamps, triumphing in unearthly tones over the knight whom they had lured to his death. Such was Blokeeta's night's entertainment; and when he at length closed the piano, and hurried away through the cold morning, he left a memory about the instrument from which I could never escape.

Those snow-shoes that hang in the space between the mirror and the door recall Canadian wanderings, — a long race through the dense forests, over the frozen snow, through whose brittle crust the slender hoofs of the caribou that we were pursuing sank at every step, until the poor creature despairingly turned at bay in a small juniper coppice, and we heartlessly shot him down. And I remember how Gabriel, the *habitant*, and François, the half-breed, cut his throat, and how the hot blood rushed out in a torrent over the snowy soil; and I recall the snow *cabane* that Gabriel built, where we all three slept so warmly; and the great fire that glowed at our feet, painting all kinds of demoniac shapes on the black screen of forest that lay without; and the deer-steaks that we roasted for our breakfast; and the savage drunkenness of Gabriel in the morning, he having been privately drinking out of my brandy-flask all the night long.

That long, haftless dagger that dangles over the mantel-piece makes my heart swell. I found it, when a boy, in

a hoary old castle in which one of my maternal ancestors once lived. That same ancestor — who, by the way, yet lives in history — was a strange old sea-king, who dwelt on the extremest point of the southwestern coast of Ireland. He owned the whole of that fertile island called Inniskeiran, which directly faces Cape Clear, where between them the Atlantic rolls furiously, forming what the fishermen of the place call “the Sound.” An awful place in winter is that same Sound. On certain days no boat can live there for a moment, and Cape Clear is frequently cut off for days from any communication with the main land.

This old sea-king — Sir Florence O’Driscoll by name — passed a stormy life. From the summit of his castle he watched the ocean, and when any richly laden vessels, bound from the south to the industrious Galway merchants, hove in sight, Sir Florence hoisted the sails of his galley, and it went hard with him if he did not tow into harbor ship and crew. In this way he lived ; not a very honest mode of livelihood, certainly, according to our modern ideas, but quite reconcilable with the morals of the time. As may be supposed, Sir Florence got into trouble. Complaints were laid against him at the English court by the plundered merchants, and the Irish viking set out for London, to plead his own cause before good Queen Bess, as she was called. He had one powerful recommendation : he was a marvellously handsome man. Not Celtic by descent, but half Spanish, half Danish in blood, he had the great northern stature with the regular features, flashing eyes, and dark hair of the Iberian race. This may account for the fact that his stay at the English court was much longer than was necessary, as also for the tradition, which a local historian mentions, that the

English Queen evinced a preference for the Irish chieftain, of other nature than that usually shown by monarch to subject.

Previous to his departure, Sir Florence had intrusted the care of his property to an Englishman named Hull. During the long absence of the knight, this person managed to ingratiate himself with the local authorities, and gain their favor so far that they were willing to support him in almost any scheme. After a protracted stay, Sir Florence, pardoned of all his misdeeds, returned to his home. Home no longer. Hull was in possession, and refused to yield an acre of the lands he had so nefariously acquired. It was no use appealing to the law, for its officers were in the opposite interest. It was no use appealing to the Queen, for she had another lover, and had forgotten the poor Irish knight by this time; and so the viking passed the best portion of his life in unsuccessful attempts to reclaim his vast estates, and was eventually, in his old age, obliged to content himself with his castle by the sea and the island of Inniskeiran, the only spot of which the usurper was unable to deprive him. So this old story of my kinsman's fate looms up out of the darkness that enshrouds that haftless dagger hanging on the wall.

It was somewhat after the foregoing fashion that I dreamily made the inventory of my personal property. As I turned my eyes on each object, one after the other, — or the places where they lay, for the room was now so dark that it was almost impossible to see with any distinctness, — a crowd of memories connected with each rose up before me, and, perforce, I had to indulge them. So I proceeded but slowly, and at last my cigar shortened to a hot and bitter morsel that I could barely hold be-

tween my lips, while it seemed to me that the night grew each moment more insufferably oppressive. While I was revolving some impossible means of cooling my wretched body, the cigar stump began to burn my lips. I flung it angrily through the open window, and stooped out to watch it falling. It first lighted on the leaves of the acacia, sending out a spray of red sparkles, then, rolling off, it fell plump on the dark walk in the garden, faintly illuminating for a moment the dusky trees and breathless flowers. Whether it was the contrast between the red flash of the cigar-stump and the silent darkness of the garden, or whether it was that I detected by the sudden light a faint waving of the leaves, I know not; but something suggested to me that the garden was cool. I will take a turn there, thought I, just as I am; it cannot be warmer than this room, and however still the atmosphere, there is always a feeling of liberty and spaciousness in the open air, that partially supplies one's wants. With this idea running through my head, I arose, lit another cigar, and passed out into the long, intricate corridors that led to the main staircase. As I crossed the threshold of my room, with what a different feeling I should have passed it had I known that I was never to set foot in it again!

I lived in a very large house, in which I occupied two rooms on the second floor. The house was old-fashioned, and all the floors communicated by a huge circular staircase that wound up through the centre of the building, while at every landing long, rambling corridors stretched off into mysterious nooks and corners. This palace of mine was very high, and its resources, in the way of crannies and windings, seemed to be interminable. Nothing seemed to stop anywhere. Cul-de-sacs were unknown

on the premises. The corridors and passages, like mathematical lines, seemed capable of indefinite extension, and the object of the architect must have been to erect an edifice in which people might go ahead forever. The whole place was gloomy, not so much because it was large, but because an unearthly nakedness seemed to pervade the structure. The staircases, corridors, halls, and vestibules all partook of a desert-like desolation. There was nothing on the walls to break the sombre monotony of those long vistas of shade. No carvings on the wainscoting, no moulded masks peering down from the simply severe cornices, no marble vases on the landings. There was an eminent dreariness and want of life — so rare in an American establishment — all over the abode. It was Hood's haunted house put in order and newly painted. The servants, too, were shadowy, and chary of their visits. Bells rang three times before the gloomy chambermaid could be induced to present herself; and the negro waiter, a ghoulish-looking creature from Congo, obeyed the summons only when one's patience was exhausted or one's want satisfied in some other way. When he did come, one felt sorry that he had not stayed away altogether, so sullen and savage did he appear. He moved along the echoless floors with a slow, noiseless shambling, until his dusky figure, advancing from the gloom, seemed like some reluctant afreet, compelled by the superior power of his master to disclose himself. When the doors of all the chambers were closed, and no light illuminated the long corridor save the red, unwholesome glare of a small oil lamp on a table at the end, where late lodgers lit their candles, one could not by any possibility conjure up a sadder or more desolate prospect.

Yet the house suited me. Of meditative and sedentary

habits, I enjoyed the extreme quiet. There were but few lodgers, from which I infer that the landlord did not drive a very thriving trade ; and these, probably oppressed by the sombre spirit of the place, were quiet and ghost-like in their movements. The proprietor I scarcely ever saw. My bills were deposited by unseen hands every month on my table, while I was out walking or riding, and my pecuniary response was intrusted to the attendant afreet. On the whole, when the bustling, wide-awake spirit of New York is taken into consideration, the sombre, half-vivified character of the house in which I lived was an anomaly that no one appreciated better than I who lived there.

I felt my way down the wide, dark staircase in my pursuit of zephyrs. The garden, as I entered it, did feel somewhat cooler than my own room, and I puffed my cigar along the dim, cypress-shrouded walks with a sensation of comparative relief. It was very dark. The tall-growing flowers that bordered the path were so wrapped in gloom as to present the aspect of solid pyramidal masses, all the details of leaves and blossoms being buried in an embracing darkness, while the trees had lost all form, and seemed like masses of overhanging cloud. It was a place and time to excite the imagination ; for in the impenetrable cavities of endless gloom there was room for the most riotous fancies to play at will. I walked and walked, and the echoes of my footsteps on the ungravelled and mossy path suggested a double feeling. I felt alone and yet in company at the same time. The solitariness of the place made itself distinct enough in the stillness, broken alone by the hollow reverberations of my step, while those very reverberations seemed to imbue me with an undefined feeling that I was not alone. I was not,

therefore, much startled when I was suddenly accosted from beneath the solid darkness of an immense cypress by a voice saying, "Will you give me a light, sir?"

"Certainly," I replied, trying in vain to distinguish the speaker amidst the impenetrable dark.

Somebody advanced, and I held out my cigar. All I could gather definitively about the individual who thus accosted me was that he must have been of extremely small stature; for I, who am by no means an overgrown man, had to stoop considerably in handing him my cigar. The vigorous puff that he gave his own lighted up my Havana for a moment, and I fancied that I caught a glimpse of a pale, weird countenance, immersed in a background of long, wild hair. The flash was, however, so momentary that I could not even say certainly whether this was an actual impression or the mere effort of imagination to embody that which the senses had failed to distinguish.

"Sir, you are out late," said this unknown to me, as he, with half-uttered thanks, handed me back my cigar, for which I had to grope in the gloom.

"Not later than usual," I replied, dryly.

"Hum! you are fond of late wanderings, then?"

"That is just as the fancy seizes me."

"Do you live here?"

"Yes."

"Queer house, is n't it?"

"I have only found it quiet."

"Hum! But you *will* find it queer, take my word for it." This was earnestly uttered; and I felt at the same time a bony finger laid on my arm, that cut it sharply like a blunted knife.

"I cannot take your word for any such assertion," I

replied, rudely, shaking off the bony finger with an irrepressible motion of disgust.

“No offence, no offence,” muttered my unseen companion rapidly, in a strange, subdued voice, that would have been shrill had it been louder; “your being angry does not alter the matter. You will find it a queer house. Everybody finds it a queer house. Do you know who live there?”

“I never busy myself, sir, about other people’s affairs,” I answered sharply, for the individual’s manner, combined with my utter uncertainty as to his appearance, oppressed me with an irksome longing to be rid of him.

“O, you don’t? Well, I do. I know what they are, — well, well, well!” and as he pronounced the three last words his voice rose with each, until, with the last, it reached a shrill shriek that echoed horribly among the lonely walks. “Do you know what they eat?” he continued.

“No, sir, — nor care.”

“O, but you will care. You must care. You shall care. I’ll tell you what they are. They are enchanters. They are ghouls. They are cannibals. Did you never remark their eyes, and how they gloated on you when you passed? Did you never remark the food that they served up at your table? Did you never in the dead of night hear muffled and unearthly footsteps gliding along the corridors, and stealthy hands turning the handle of your door? Does not some magnetic influence fold itself continually around you when they pass, and send a thrill through spirit and body, and a cold shiver that no sunshine will chase away? O, you have! You have felt all these things! I know it!”

The earnest rapidity, the subdued tones, the eagerness

of accent, with which all this was uttered, impressed me most uncomfortably. It really seemed as if I could recall all those weird occurrences and influences of which he spoke; and I shuddered in spite of myself in the midst of the impenetrable darkness that surrounded me.

“Hum!” said I, assuming, without knowing it, a confidential tone, “may I ask how you know these things?”

“How I know them? Because I am their enemy; because they tremble at my whisper; because I hang upon their track with the perseverance of a bloodhound and the stealthiness of a tiger; because — because — I was of them once!”

“Wretch!” I cried excitedly, for involuntarily his eager tones had wrought me up to a high pitch of spasmodic nervousness, “then you mean to say that you — ”

As I uttered this word, obeying an uncontrollable impulse, I stretched forth my hand in the direction of the speaker and made a blind clutch. The tips of my fingers seemed to touch a surface as smooth as glass, that glided suddenly from under them. A sharp, angry hiss sounded through the gloom, followed by a whirring noise, as if some projectile passed rapidly by, and the next moment I felt instinctively that I was alone.

A most disagreeable feeling instantly assailed me; — a prophetic instinct that some terrible misfortune menaced me; an eager and overpowering anxiety to get back to my own room without loss of time. I turned and ran blindly along the dark cypress alley, every dusky clump of flowers that rose blackly in the borders making my heart each moment cease to beat. The echoes of my own footsteps seemed to redouble and assume the sounds of unknown pursuers following fast upon my track. The boughs of lilac-bushes and syringas, that here and there

stretched partly across the walk, seemed to have been furnished suddenly with hooked hands that sought to grasp me as I flew by, and each moment I expected to behold some awful and impassable barrier fall across my track and wall me up forever.

At length I reached the wide entrance. With a single leap I sprang up the four or five steps that formed the stoop, and dashed along the hall, up the wide, echoing stairs, and again along the dim, funereal corridors until I paused, breathless and panting, at the door of my room. Once so far, I stopped for an instant and leaned heavily against one of the panels, panting lustily after my late run. I had, however, scarcely rested my whole weight against the door, when it suddenly gave way, and I staggered in head-foremost. To my utter astonishment the room I had left in profound darkness was now a blaze of light. So intense was the illumination that, for a few seconds while the pupils of my eyes were contracting under the sudden change, I saw absolutely nothing save the dazzling glare. This fact in itself, coming on me with such utter suddenness, was sufficient to prolong my confusion, and it was not until after several minutes had elapsed that I perceived the room was not only illuminated, but occupied. And such occupants! Amazement at the scene took such possession of me that I was incapable of either moving or uttering a word. All that I could do was to lean against the wall, and stare blankly at the strange picture.

It might have been a scene out of Faublas, or Grammont's Memoirs, or happened in some palace of Minister Fouque.

Round a large table in the centre of the room, where I had left a student-like litter of books and papers, were

seated half a dozen persons. Three were men and three were women. The table was heaped with a prodigality of luxuries. Luscious eastern fruits were piled up in silver filigree vases, through whose meshes their glowing rinds shone in the contrasts of a thousand hues. Small silver dishes that Benvenuto might have designed, filled with succulent and aromatic meats, were distributed upon a cloth of snowy damask. Bottles of every shape, slender ones from the Rhine, stout fellows from Holland, sturdy ones from Spain, and quaint basket-woven flasks from Italy, absolutely littered the board. Drinking-glasses of every size and hue filled up the interstices, and the thirsty German flagon stood side by side with the aerial bubbles of Venetian glass that rest so lightly on their threadlike stems. An odor of luxury and sensuality floated through the apartment. The lamps that burned in every direction seemed to diffuse a subtle incense on the air, and in a large vase that stood on the floor I saw a mass of magnolias, tuberoses, and jasmynes grouped together, stifling each other with their honeyed and heavy fragrance.

The inhabitants of my room seemed beings well suited to so sensual an atmosphere. The women were strangely beautiful, and all were attired in dresses of the most fantastic devices and brilliant hues. Their figures were round, supple, and elastic; their eyes dark and languishing; their lips full, ripe, and of the richest bloom. The three men wore half-masks, so that all I could distinguish were heavy jaws, pointed beards, and brawny throats that rose like massive pillars out of their doublets. All six lay reclining on Roman couches about the table, drinking down the purple wines in large draughts, and tossing back their heads and laughing wildly.

I stood, I suppose, for some three minutes, with my back against the wall staring vacantly at the bacchanal vision, before any of the revellers appeared to notice my presence. At length, without any expression to indicate whether I had been observed from the beginning or not, two of the women arose from their couches, and, approaching, took each a hand and led me to the table. I obeyed their motions mechanically. I sat on a couch between them as they indicated. I unresistingly permitted them to wind their arms about my neck.

“You must drink,” said one, pouring out a large glass of red wine, “here is Clos Vougeot of a rare vintage; and here,” pushing a flask of amber-hued wine before me, “is Lachryma Christi.”

“You must eat,” said the other, drawing the silver dishes toward her. “Here are cutlets stewed with olives, and here are slices of a *filet* stuffed with bruised sweet chestnuts”;—and as she spoke, she, without waiting for a reply, proceeded to help me.

The sight of the food recalled to me the warnings I had received in the garden. This sudden effort of memory restored to me my other faculties at the same instant. I sprang to my feet, thrusting the women from me with each hand.

“Demons!” I almost shouted, “I will have none of your accursed food. I know you. You are cannibals, you are ghouls, you are enchanters. Begone, I tell you! Leave my room in peace!”

A shout of laughter from all six was the only effect that my passionate speech produced. The men rolled on their couches, and their half-masks quivered with the convulsions of their mirth. The women shrieked, and tossed the slender wine-glasses wildly aloft, and turned

to me and flung themselves on my bosom fairly sobbing with laughter.

“Yes,” I continued, as soon as the noisy mirth had subsided, “yes, I say, leave my room instantly! I will have none of your unnatural orgies here!”

“His room!” shrieked the woman on my right.

“His room!” echoed she on my left.

“His room! He calls it his room!” shouted the whole party, as they rolled once more into jocular convulsions.

“How know you that it is your room?” said one of the men who sat opposite to me, at length, after the laughter had once more somewhat subsided.

“How do I know?” I replied, indignantly. “How do I know my own room? How could I mistake it, pray? There’s my furniture — my piano —”

“He calls that a piano!” shouted my neighbors, again in convulsions as I pointed to the corner where my huge piano, sacred to the memory of Blokeeta, used to stand. “O, yes! It is his room. There — there is his piano!”

The peculiar emphasis they laid on the word “piano” caused me to scrutinize the article I was indicating more thoroughly. Up to this time, though utterly amazed at the entrance of these people into my chamber, and connecting them somewhat with the wild stories I had heard in the garden, I still had a sort of indefinite idea that the whole thing was a masquerading freak got up in my absence, and that the bacchanalian orgie I was witnessing was nothing more than a portion of some elaborate hoax of which I was to be the victim. But when my eyes turned to the corner where I had left a huge and cumbersome piano, and beheld a vast and sombre organ lifting its fluted front to the very ceiling, and convinced myself, by a hurried process of memory, that it occupied the

very spot in which I had left my own instrument, the little self-possession that I had left forsook me. I gazed around me bewildered.

In like manner everything was changed. In the place of that old haftless dagger, connected with so many historic associations personal to myself, I beheld a Turkish yataghan dangling by its belt of crimson silk, while the jewels in the hilt blazed as the lamplight played upon them. In the spot where hung my cherished smoking-cap, memorial of a buried love, a knightly casque was suspended, on the crest of which a golden dragon stood in the act of springing. That strange lithograph by Calame was no longer a lithograph, but it seemed to me that the portion of the wall which it had covered, of the exact shape and size, had been cut out, and, in place of the picture, a *real* scene on the same scale, and with real actors, was distinctly visible. The old oak was there, and the stormy sky was there; but I saw the branches of the oak sway with the tempest, and the clouds drive before the wind. The wanderer in his cloak was gone; but in his place I beheld a circle of wild figures, men and women, dancing with linked hands around the bole of the great tree, chanting some wild fragment of a song, to which the winds roared an unearthly chorus. The snow-shoes, too, on whose sinewy woof I had sped for many days amidst Canadian wastes, had vanished, and in their place lay a pair of strange up-curved Turkish slippers, that had, perhaps, been many a time shuffled off at the doors of mosques, beneath the steady blaze of an orient sun.

All was changed. Wherever my eyes turned they missed familiar objects, yet encountered strange representatives. Still, in all the substitutes there seemed to me a reminiscence of what they replaced. They seemed

only for a time transmuted into other shapes, and there lingered around them the atmosphere of what they once had been. Thus I could have sworn the room to have been mine, yet there was nothing in it that I could rightly claim. Everything reminded me of some former possession that it was not. I looked for the acacia at the window, and, lo! long, silken palm-leaves swayed in through the open lattice; yet they had the same motion and the same air of my favorite tree, and seemed to murmur to me, "Though we seem to be palm-leaves, yet are we acacia-leaves; yea, those very ones on which you used to watch the butterflies alight and the rain patter while you smoked and dreamed!" So in all things; the room was, yet was not, mine; and a sickening consciousness of my utter inability to reconcile its identity with its appearance overwhelmed me, and choked my reason.

"Well, have you determined whether or not this is your room?" asked the girl on my left, proffering me a huge tumbler creaming over with champagne, and laughing wickedly as she spoke.

"It is mine," I answered, doggedly, striking the glass rudely with my hand, and dashing the aromatic wine over the white cloth. "I know that it is mine; and ye are jugglers and enchanters who want to drive me mad."

"Hush! hush!" she said, gently, not in the least angered at my rough treatment. "You are excited. Alf shall play something to soothe you."

At her signal, one of the men sat down at the organ. After a short, wild, spasmodic prelude, he began what seemed to me to be a symphony of recollections. Dark and sombre, and all through full of quivering and intense agony, it appeared to recall a dark and dismal

night, on a cold reef, around which an unseen but terribly audible ocean broke with eternal fury. It seemed as if a lonely pair were on the reef, one living, the other dead; one clasping his arms around the tender neck and naked bosom of the other, striving to warm her into life, when his own vitality was being each moment sucked from him by the icy breath of the storm. Here and there a terrible wailing minor key would tremble through the chords like the shriek of sea-birds, or the warning of advancing death. While the man played I could scarce restrain myself. It seemed to be Blokeeta whom I listened to, and on whom I gazed. That wondrous night of pleasure and pain that I had once passed listening to him seemed to have been taken up again at the spot where it had broken off, and the same hand was continuing it. I stared at the man called Alf. There he sat with his cloak and doublet, and long rapier and mask of black velvet. But there was something in the air of the peaked beard, a familiar mystery in the wild mass of raven hair that fell as if wind-blown over his shoulders, which riveted my memory.

“Blokeeta! Blokeeta!” I shouted, starting up furiously from the couch on which I was lying, and bursting the fair arms that were linked around my neck as if they had been hateful chains, — “Blokeeta! my friend! speak to me, I entreat you! Tell these horrid enchanters to leave me. Say that I hate them. Say that I command them to leave my room.”

The man at the organ stirred not in answer to my appeal. He ceased playing, and the dying sound of the last note he had touched faded off into a melancholy moan. The other men and the women burst once more into peals of mocking laughter.

“Why will you persist in calling this your room?” said the woman next me, with a smile meant to be kind, but to me inexpressibly loathsome. “Have we not shown you by the furniture, by the general appearance of the place, that you are mistaken, and that this cannot be your apartment? Rest content, then, with us. You are welcome here, and need no longer trouble yourself about your room.”

“Rest content!” I answered, madly; “live with ghosts! eat of awful meats, and see awful sights! Never, never! You have cast some enchantment over the place that has disguised it; but for all that I know it to be my room. You shall leave it!”

“Softly, softly!” said another of the sirens. “Let us settle this amicably. This poor gentleman seems obstinate and inclined to make an uproar. Now we do not want an uproar. We love the night and its quiet; and there is no night that we love so well as that on which the moon is confined in clouds. Is it not so, my brothers?”

An awful and sinister smile gleamed on the countenances of her unearthly audience, and seemed to glide visibly from underneath their masks.

“Now,” she continued, “I have a proposition to make. It would be ridiculous for us to surrender this room simply because this gentleman states that it is his; and yet I feel anxious to gratify, as far as may be fair, his wild assertion of ownership. A room, after all, is not much to us; we can get one easily enough, but still we should be loath to give this apartment up to so imperious a demand. We are willing, however, to *risk* its loss. That is to say,”—turning to me,—“I propose that we play for the room. If you win, we will immediately surrender it to you just as it stands; if, on the contrary, you

lose, you shall bind yourself to depart and never molest us again."

Agonized at the ever-darkening mysteries that seemed to thicken around me, and despairing of being able to dissipate them by the mere exercise of my own will, I caught almost gladly at the chance thus presented to me. The idea of my loss or my gain scarce entered into my calculations. All I felt was an indefinite knowledge that I might, in the way proposed, regain, in an instant, that quiet chamber and that peace of mind of which I had so strangely been deprived.

"I agree!" I cried, eagerly; "I agree. Anything to rid myself of such unearthly company!"

The woman touched a small golden bell that stood near her on the table, and it had scarce ceased to tinkle when a negro dwarf entered with a silver tray on which were dice-boxes and dice. A shudder passed over me as I thought in this stunted African I could trace a resemblance to the ghoul-like black servant to whose attendance I had been accustomed.

"Now," said my neighbor, seizing one of the dice-boxes and giving me the other, "the highest wins. Shall I throw first?"

I nodded assent. She rattled the dice, and I felt an inexpressible load lifted from my heart as she threw fifteen.

"It is your turn," she said, with a mocking smile; "but before you throw, I repeat the offer I made you before. Live with us. Be one of us. We will initiate you into our mysteries and enjoyments, — enjoyments of which you can form no idea unless you experience them. Come; it is not too late yet to change your mind. Be with us!"

My reply was a fierce oath, as I rattled the dice with spasmodic nervousness and flung them on the board. They rolled over and over again, and during that brief instant I felt a suspense, the intensity of which I have never known before or since. At last they lay before me. A shout of the same horrible, maddening laughter rang in my ears. I peered in vain at the dice, but my sight was so confused that I could not distinguish the amount of the cast. This lasted for a few moments. Then my sight grew clear, and I sank back almost lifeless with despair as I saw that I had thrown but *twelve!*

“Lost! lost!” screamed my neighbor, with a wild laugh. “Lost! lost!” shouted the deep voices of the masked men. “Leave us, coward!” they all cried; “you are not fit to be one of us. Remember your promise; leave us!”

Then it seemed as if some unseen power caught me by the shoulders and thrust me toward the door. In vain I resisted. In vain I screamed and shouted for help. In vain I implored them for pity. All the reply I had was those mocking peals of merriment, while, under the invisible influence, I staggered like a drunken man toward the door. As I reached the threshold the organ pealed out a wild, triumphal strain. The power that impelled me concentrated itself into one vigorous impulse that sent me blindly staggering out into the echoing corridor, and, as the door closed swiftly behind me, I caught one glimpse of the apartment I had left forever. A change passed like a shadow over it. The lamps died out, the siren women and masked men vanished, the flowers, the fruits, the bright silver and bizarre furniture faded swiftly, and I saw again, for the tenth of a second, my own old chamber restored. There was the acacia waving darkly;

there was the table littered with books; there was the ghostly lithograph, the dearly beloved smoking-cap, the Canadian snow-shoes, the ancestral dagger. And there, at the piano, organ no longer, sat Blokeeta playing.

The next instant the door closed violently, and I was left standing in the corridor stunned and despairing.

As soon as I had partially recovered my comprehension I rushed madly to the door, with the dim idea of beating it in. My fingers touched a cold and solid wall. There was no door! I felt all along the corridor for many yards on both sides. There was not even a crevice to give me hope. I rushed down stairs shouting madly. No one answered. In the vestibule I met the negro; I seized him by the collar, and demanded my room. The demon showed his white and awful teeth, which were filed into a saw-like shape, and, extricating himself from my grasp with a sudden jerk, fled down the passage with a gibbering laugh. Nothing but echo answered to my despairing shrieks. The lonely garden resounded with my cries as I strode madly through the dark walks, and the tall funereal cypresses seemed to bury me beneath their heavy shadows. I met no one, — could find no one. I had to bear my sorrow and despair alone.

Since that awful hour I have never found my room. Everywhere I look for it, yet never see it. Shall I ever find it?

THE POT OF TULIPS.



TWENTY-EIGHT years ago I went to spend the summer at an old Dutch villa which then lifted its head from the wild country that, in present days, has been tamed down into a site for a Crystal Palace. Madison Square was then a wilderness of fields and scrub oak, here and there diversified with tall and stately elms. Worthy citizens who could afford two establishments rusticated in the groves that then flourished where ranks of brown-stone porticos now form the landscape; and the locality of Fortieth Street, where my summer palace stood, was justly looked upon as at an enterprising distance from the city.

I had an imperious desire to live in this house ever since I can remember. I had often seen it when a boy, and its cool verandas and quaint garden seemed, whenever I passed, to attract me irresistibly. In after years, when I grew up to man's estate, I was not sorry, therefore, when one summer, fatigued with the labors of my business, I beheld a notice in the papers intimating that it was to be let furnished. I hastened to my dear friend, Jaspar Joye, painted the delights of this rural retreat in the most glowing colors, easily obtained his assent to share the enjoyments and the expense with me, and a month afterward we were taking our ease in this new paradise.

Independent of early associations, other interests attached me to this house. It was somewhat historical, and had given shelter to George Washington on the occasion of one of his visits to the city. Furthermore, I knew the descendants of the family to whom it had originally belonged. Their history was strange and mournful, and it seemed to me as if their individuality was somehow shared by the edifice. It had been built by a Mr. Van Koeren, a gentleman of Holland, the younger son of a rich mercantile firm at the Hague, who had emigrated to this country in order to establish a branch of his father's business in New York, which even then gave indications of the prosperity it has since reached with such marvellous rapidity. He had brought with him a fair young Belgian wife; a loving girl, if I may believe her portrait, with soft brown eyes, chestnut hair, and a deep, placid contentment spreading over her fresh and innocent features. Her son, Alain Van Koeren, had her picture — an old miniature in a red gold frame — as well as that of his father; and in truth, when looking on the two, one could not conceive a greater contrast than must have existed between husband and wife. Mr. Van Koeren must have been a man of terrible will and gloomy temperament. His face — in the picture — is dark and austere, his eyes deep-sunken, and burning as if with a slow, inward fire. The lips are thin and compressed, with much determination of purpose; and his chin, boldly salient, is brimful of power and resolution. When first I saw those two pictures I sighed inwardly and thought, "Poor child! you must often have sighed for the sunny meadows of Brussels, in the long, gloomy nights spent in the company of that terrible man!"

I was not far wrong, as I afterward discovered. Mr.

and Mrs. Van Koeren were very unhappy. Jealousy was his monomania, and he had scarcely been married before his girl-wife began to feel the oppression of a gloomy and ceaseless tyranny. Every man under fifty, whose hair was not white and whose form was erect, was an object of suspicion to this Dutch Bluebeard. Not that he was vulgarly jealous. He did not frown at his wife before strangers, or attack her with reproaches in the midst of her festivities. He was too well-bred a man to bare his private woes to the world. But at night, when the guests had departed and the dull light of the quaint old Flemish lamps but half illuminated the nuptial chamber, then it was that with monotonous invective Mr. Van Koeren crushed his wife. And Marie, weeping and silent, would sit on the edge of the bed listening to the cold, trenchant irony of her husband, who, pacing up and down the room, would now and then stop in his walk to gaze with his burning eyes upon the pallid face of his victim. Even the evidences that Marie gave of becoming a mother did not check him. He saw in that coming event, which most husbands anticipate with mingled joy and fear, only an approaching incarnation of his dishonor. He watched with a horrible refinement of suspicion for the arrival of that being in whose features he madly believed he should but too surely trace the evidences of his wife's crime.

Whether it was that these ceaseless attacks wore out her strength, or that Providence wished to add another chastening misery to her burden of woe, I dare not speculate; but it is certain that one luckless night Mr. Van Koeren learned with fury that he had become a father two months before the allotted time. During his first paroxysm of rage, on the receipt of intelligence which seemed to confirm all his previous suspicions, it was, I

believe, with difficulty that he was prevented from slaying both the innocent causes of his resentment. The caution of his race and the presence of the physicians induced him, however, to put a curb upon his furious will until reflection suggested quite as criminal, if not as dangerous, a vengeance. As soon as his poor wife had recovered from her illness, unnaturally prolonged by the delicacy of constitution induced by previous mental suffering, she was astonished to find, instead of increasing his persecutions, that her husband had changed his tactics and treated her with studied neglect. He rarely spoke to her except on occasions when the decencies of society demanded that he should address her. He avoided her presence, and no longer inhabited the same apartments. He seemed, in short, to strive as much as possible to forget her existence. But if she did not suffer from personal ill-treatment it was because a punishment more acute was in store for her. If Mr. Van Koeren had chosen to affect to consider her beneath his vengeance, it was because his hate had taken another direction, and seemed to have derived increased intensity from the alteration. It was upon the unhappy boy, the cause of all this misery, that the father lavished a terrible hatred. Mr. Van Koeren seemed determined, that, if this child sprang from other loins than his, the mournful destiny which he forced upon him should amply avenge his own existence and the infidelity of his mother. While the child was an infant his plan seemed to have been formed. Ignorance and neglect were the two deadly influences with which he sought to assassinate the moral nature of this boy; and his terrible campaign against the virtue of his own son was, as he grew up, carried into execution with the most consummate generalship. He gave him money, but debarred him from education.

He allowed him liberty of action, but withheld advice. It was in vain that his mother, who foresaw the frightful consequences of such a training, sought in secret by every means in her power to nullify her husband's attempts. She strove in vain to seduce her son into an ambition to be educated. She beheld with horror all her agonized efforts frustrated, and saw her son and only child becoming, even in his youth, a drunkard and a libertine. In the end it proved too much for her strength; she sickened, and went home to her sunny Belgian plains. There she lingered for a few months in a calm but rapid decay, whose calmness was broken but by the one grief; until one autumn day, when the leaves were falling from the limes, she made a little prayer for her son to the good God, and died. Vain orison! Spendthrift, gamester, libertine, and drunkard by turns, Alain Van Koeren's earthly destiny was unchangeable. The father, who should have been his guide, looked on each fresh depravity of his son's with a species of grim delight. Even the death of his wronged wife had no effect upon his fatal purpose. He still permitted the young man to run blindly to destruction by the course into which he himself had led him.

As years rolled by, and Mr. Van Koeren himself approached to that time of life when he might soon expect to follow his persecuted wife, he relieved himself of the hateful presence of his son altogether. Even the link of a systematic vengeance, which had hitherto united them, was severed, and Alain was cast adrift without either money or principle. The occasion of this final separation between father and son was the marriage of the latter with a girl of humble, though honest extraction. This was a good excuse for the remorseless Van Koeren, so he availed himself of it by turning his son out of doors.

From that time forth they never met. Alain lived a life of meagre dissipation, and soon died, leaving behind him one child, a daughter. By a coincidence natural enough, Mr. Van Koeren's death followed his son's almost immediately. He died as he had lived, sternly. But those who were around his couch in his last moments mentioned some singular facts connected with the manner of his death. A few moments before he expired, he raised himself in the bed, and seemed as if conversing with some person invisible to the spectators. His lips moved as if in speech, and immediately afterward he sank back, bathed in a flood of tears. "Wrong! wrong!" he was heard to mutter, feebly; then he implored passionately the forgiveness of some one who, he said, was present. The death struggle ensued almost immediately, and in the midst of his agony he seemed wrestling for speech. All that could be heard, however, were a few broken words. "I was wrong. My — unfounded — For God's sake look in — You will find —" Having uttered these fragmentary sentences, he seemed to feel that the power of speech had passed away forever. He fixed his eyes piteously on those around him, and, with a great sigh of grief, expired. I gathered these facts from his granddaughter and Alain's daughter, Alice Van Koeren, who had been summoned by some friend to her grandfather's dying couch when it was too late. It was the first time she had seen him, and then she saw him die.

The results of Mr. Van Koeren's death were a nine days' wonder to all the merchants in New York. Beyond a small sum in the bank, and the house in which he lived, which was mortgaged for its full value, Mr. Van Koeren had died a pauper! To those who knew him and knew his affairs, this seemed inexplicable. Five or six years

before his death he had retired from business with a fortune of several hundred thousand dollars. He had lived quietly since then, — was known not to have speculated, and could not have gambled. The question then was, where had his wealth vanished to. Search was made in every secretary, in every bureau, for some document which might throw a light on the mysterious disposition that he had made of his property. None was found. Neither will, nor certificates of stock, nor title deeds, nor bank accounts, were anywhere discernible. Inquiries were made at the offices of companies in which Mr. Van Koeren was known to be largely interested; he had sold out his stock years ago. Real estate that had been believed to be his was found on investigation to have passed into other hands. There could be no doubt that for some years past Mr. Van Koeren had been steadily converting all his property into money, and what he had done with that money no one knew. Alice Van Koeren and her mother, who at the old gentleman's death were at first looked on as millionnaires, discovered, when all was over, that they were no better off than before. It was evident that the old man, determined that one whom, though bearing his name, he believed not to be of his blood, should never inherit his wealth or any share of it, had made away with his fortune before his death, — a posthumous vengeance which was the only one by which the laws of the State of New York relative to inheritance could be successfully evaded.

I took a peculiar interest in the case, and even helped to make some researches for the lost property, not so much, I confess, from a spirit of general philanthropy, as from certain feelings which I experienced toward Alice Van Koeren, the heir to this invisible estate. I had long

known both her and her mother, when they were living in honest poverty and earning a scanty subsistence by their own labor; Mrs. Van Koeren working as an embroideress, and Alice turning to account, as a preparatory governess, the education which her good mother, spite of her limited means, had bestowed on her.

In a few words, then, I loved Alice Van Koeren, and was determined to make her my wife as soon as my means would allow me to support a fitting establishment. My passion had never been declared. I was content for the time with the secret consciousness of my own love, and the no less grateful certainty that Alice returned it, all unuttered as it was. I had, therefore, a double interest in passing the summer at the old Dutch villa, for I felt it to be connected somehow with Alice, and I could not forget the singular desire to inhabit it which I had so often experienced as a boy.

It was a lovely day in June when Jasper Joye and myself took up our abode in our new residence; and as we smoked our cigars on the piazza in the evening we felt for the first time the unalloyed pleasure with which a townsman breathes the pure air of the country.

The house and grounds had a quaint sort of beauty that to me was eminently pleasing. Landscape gardening, in the modern acceptation of the term, was then almost unknown in this country, and the "laying out" of the garden that surrounded our new home would doubtless have shocked Mr. Loudon, the late Mr. Downing, or Sir Thomas Dick Lauder. It was formal and artificial to the last degree. The beds were cut into long parallelograms, rigid and severe of aspect, and edged with prim rows of stiff dwarf box. The walks, of course, crossed always at right angles, and the laurel and cypress trees that

grew here and there were clipped into cones, and spheres, and rhomboids. It is true that, at the time my friend and I hired the house, years of neglect had restored to this formal garden somewhat of the raggedness of nature. The box edgings were rank and wild. The clipped trees, forgetful of geometric propriety, flourished into unauthorized boughs and rebel offshoots. The walks were green with moss, and the beds of Dutch tulips, which had been planted in the shape of certain gorgeous birds, whose colors were represented by masses of blossoms, each of a single hue, had transgressed their limits, and the purple of a parrot's wings might have been seen running recklessly into the crimson of his head ; while, as bulbs, however well-bred, will create other bulbs, the flower-birds of this queer old Dutch garden became in time abominably distorted in shape ; — flamingoes with humps, golden pheasants with legs preternaturally elongated, macaws afflicted with hydrocephalus, — each species of deformity being proportioned to the rapidity with which the roots had spread in some particular direction. Still, this strange mixture of raggedness and formality, this conglomerate of nature and art, had its charms. It was pleasant to watch the struggle, as it were, between the opposing elements, and to see nature triumphing by degrees in every direction.

The house itself was pleasant and commodious. Rooms that, though not lofty, were spacious ; wide windows, and cool piazzas extending over the four sides of the building ; and a collection of antique carved furniture, some of which, from its elaborateness, might well have come from the chisel of Master Grinling Gibbons. There was a mantel-piece in the dining-room, with which I remember being very much struck when first I came to take

possession. It was a singular and fantastical piece of carving. It was a perfect tropical garden, menagerie, and aviary, in one. Birds, beasts, and flowers were sculptured on the wood with exquisite correctness of detail, and painted with the hues of nature. The Dutch taste for color was here fully gratified. Parrots, love-birds, scarlet lories, blue-faced baboons, crocodiles, passion-flowers, tigers, Egyptian lilies, and Brazilian butterflies, were all mixed in gorgeous confusion. The artist, whoever he was, must have been an admirable naturalist, for the ease and freedom of his carving were only equalled by the wonderful accuracy with which the different animals were represented. Altogether it was one of those oddities of Dutch conception, whose strangeness was in this instance redeemed by the excellence of the execution.

Such was the establishment that Jasper Joye and myself were to inhabit for the summer months.

"What a strange thing it was," said Jasper, as we lounged on the piazza together the night of our arrival, "that old Van Koeren's property should never have turned up!"

"It is a question with some people whether he had any at his death," I answered.

"Pshaw! every one knows that he did not or could not have lost that with which he retired from business."

"It is strange," said I, thoughtfully; "yet every possible search has been made for documents that might throw light on the mystery. I have myself sought in every quarter for traces of this lost wealth, but in vain."

"Perhaps he buried it," suggested Jasper, laughing; "if so, we may find it here in a hole one fine morning."

"I think it much more likely that he destroyed it," I replied. "You know he never could be got to believe

that Alain Van Koeren was his son, and I believe him quite capable of having flung all his money into the sea in order to prevent those whom he considered not of his blood inheriting it, which they must have done under our laws."

"I am sorry that Alice did not become an heiress, both for your sake and hers. She is a charming girl."

Jasper, from whom I concealed nothing, knew of my love.

"As to that," I answered, "it is little matter. I shall in a year or two be independent enough to marry, and can afford to let Mr. Van Koeren's cherished gold sleep wherever he has concealed it."

"Well, I'm off to bed," said Jasper, yawning. "This country air makes one sleepy early. Be on the lookout for trap-doors and all that sort of thing, old fellow. Who knows but the old chap's dollars will turn up. Good night!"

"Good night, Jasper!"

So we parted for the night. He to his room, which lay on the west side of the building; I to mine on the east, situated at the end of a long corridor and exactly opposite to Jasper's.

The night was very still and warm. The clearness with which I heard the song of the katydid and the croak of the bull-frog seemed to make the silence more distinct. The air was dense and breathless, and, although longing to throw wide my windows, I dared not; for, outside, the ominous trumpeting of an army of mosquitoes sounded threateningly.

I tossed on my bed oppressed with the heat; kicked the sheets into every spot where they ought not to be; turned my pillow every two minutes in the hope of find-

ing a cool side ;—in short, did everything that a man does when he lies awake on a very hot night and cannot open his window.

Suddenly, in the midst of my miseries, and when I had made up my mind to fling open the casement in spite of the legion of mosquitoes that I knew were hungrily waiting outside, I felt a continuous stream of cold air blowing upon my face. Luxurious as the sensation was, I could not help starting as I felt it. Where could this draught come from? The door was closed ; so were the windows. It did not come from the direction of the fireplace, and, even if it did, the air without was too still to produce so strong a current. I rose in my bed and gazed round the room, the whole of which, though only lit by a dim twilight, was still sufficiently visible. I thought at first it was a trick of Jasper's, who might have provided himself with a bellows or a long tube ; but a careful investigation of the apartment convinced me that no one was present. Besides, I had locked the door, and it was not likely that any one had been concealed in the room before I entered it. It was exceedingly strange ; but still the draught of cool wind blew on my face and chest, every now and then changing its direction, — sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other. I am not constitutionally nervous, and had been too long accustomed to reflect on philosophical subjects to become the prey of fear in the presence of mysterious phenomena. I had devoted much time to the investigation of what are popularly called supernatural matters, by those who have not reflected or examined sufficiently to discover that none of these apparent miracles are *super-natural*, but all, however singular, directly dependent on certain natural laws. I became speedily convinced, therefore, as I sat up in my

bed peering into the dim recesses of my chamber, that this mysterious wind was the effect or forerunner of a supernatural visitation, and I mentally determined to investigate it, as it developed itself, with a philosophical calmness.

“Is any one in this room?” I asked, as distinctly as I could. No reply; while the cool wind still swept over my cheek. I knew, in the case of Elizabeth Eslinger, who was visited by an apparition while in the Weinsberg jail, and whose singular and apparently authentic experiences were made the subject of a book by Dr. Kerner, that the manifestation of the spirit was invariably accompanied by such a breezy sensation as I now experienced. I therefore gathered my will, as it were, into a focus, and endeavored, as much as lay in my power, to put myself in accord with the disembodied spirit, if such there were, knowing that on such conditions alone would it be enabled to manifest itself to me.

Presently it seemed as if a luminous cloud was gathering in one corner of the room, — a sort of dim phosphoric vapor, shadowy and ill-defined. It changed its position frequently, sometimes coming nearer and at others retreating to the furthest end of the room. As it grew intenser and more radiant, I observed a sickening and corpse-like odor diffuse itself through the chamber, and, despite my anxiety to witness this phenomenon undisturbed, I could with difficulty conquer a feeling of faintness which oppressed me.

The luminous cloud now began to grow brighter and brighter as I gazed. The horrible odor of which I have spoken did not cease to oppress me, and gradually I could discover certain lines making themselves visible in the midst of this lambent radiance. These lines took the

form of a human figure, — a tall man, clothed in a long dressing-robe, with a pale countenance, burning eyes, and a very bold and prominent chin. At a glance I recognized the original of the picture of old Van Koeren that I had seen with Alice. My interest was now aroused to the highest point ; I felt that I stood face to face with a spirit, and doubted not that I should learn the fate of the old man's mysteriously concealed wealth.

The spirit presented a very strange appearance. He himself was not luminous, except some tongues of fire that seemed to proceed from the tips of his fingers, but was completely surrounded by a thin gauze of light, so to speak, through which his outlines were visible. His head was bare, and his white hair fell in huge masses around his stern, saturnine face. As he moved on the floor, I distinctly heard a strange crackling sound, such as one hears when a substance has been overcharged with electricity. But the circumstance that seemed to me most incomprehensible connected with the apparition was that Van Koeren held in both hands a curiously painted flower-pot, out of which sprang a number of the most beautiful tulips in full blossom. He seemed very uneasy and agitated, and moved about the room as if in pain, frequently bending over the pot of tulips as if to inhale their odor, then holding it out to me, seemingly in the hope of attracting my attention to it. I was, I confess, very much puzzled. I knew that Mr. Van Koeren had in his lifetime devoted much of his leisure to the cultivation of flowers, importing from Holland the most expensive and rarest bulbs ; but how this innocent fancy could trouble him after death I could not imagine. I felt assured, however, that some important reason lay at the bottom of this spectral eccentricity, and determined to fathom it if I could.

“What brings you here?” I asked audibly; directing mentally, however, at the same time, the question to the spirit with all the power of my will. He did not seem to hear me, but still kept moving uneasily about, with the crackling noise I have mentioned, and holding the pot of tulips toward me.

“It is evident,” I said to myself, “that I am not sufficiently in accord with this spirit for him to make himself understood by speech. He has, therefore, recourse to symbols. The pot of tulips is a symbol. But of what?”

Thus reflecting on these things I continued to gaze upon the spirit. While observing him attentively, he approached my bedside by a rapid movement, and laid one hand on my arm. The touch was icy cold, and pained me at the moment. Next morning my arm was swollen, and marked with a round blue spot. Then, passing to my bedroom-door, the spirit opened it and went out, shutting it behind him. Catching for a moment at the idea that I was the dupe of a trick, I jumped out of bed and ran to the door. It was locked with the key on the inside, and a brass safety-bolt, which lay above the lock, shot safely home. All was as I had left it on going to bed. Yet I declare most solemnly, that, as the ghost made his exit, I not only saw the door open, but *I saw the corridor outside, and distinctly observed a large picture of William of Orange that hung just opposite to my room.* This to me was the most curious portion of the phenomena I had witnessed. Either the door had been opened by the ghost, and the resistance of physical obstacles overcome in some amazing manner,—because in this case the bolts must have been replaced when the ghost was *outside* the door,—or he must have had a sufficient magnetic accord with my mind to impress upon it the belief

that the door was opened, and also to conjure up in my brain the vision of the corridor and the picture, features that I should have seen if the door had been opened by any ordinary physical agency.

The next morning at breakfast I suppose my manner must have betrayed me, for Jasper said to me, after staring at me for some time, "Why, Harry Escott, what's the matter with you? You look as if you had seen a ghost!"

"So I have, Jasper."

Jasper, of course, burst into laughter, and said he'd shave my head and give me a shower-bath.

"Well, you may laugh," I answered; "but you shall see it to-night, Jasper."

He became serious in a moment, — I suppose there was something earnest in my manner that convinced him that my words were not idle, — and asked me to explain. I described my interview as accurately as I could.

"How did you know that it was old Van Koeren?" he asked.

"Because I have seen his picture a hundred times with Alice," I answered, "and this apparition was as like it as it was possible for a ghost to be like a miniature."

"You must not think I'm laughing at you, Harry, he continued, "but I wish you would answer this. We have all heard of ghosts, — ghosts of men, women, children, dogs, horses, in fact every living animal; but hang me if ever I heard of the ghost of a flower-pot before."

"My dear Jasper, you would have heard of such things if you had studied such branches of learning. All the phenomena I witnessed last night are supportable by well-authenticated facts. The cool wind has attended the appearance of more than one ghost, and Baron Reichenbach asserts that his patients, who you know are for the

most part sensitive to apparitions, invariably feel this wind when a magnet is brought close to their bodies. With regard to the flower-pot about which you make so merry, it is to me the least wonderful portion of the apparition. When a ghost is unable to find a person of sufficient receptivity, in order to communicate with him by speech it is obliged to have recourse to symbols to express its wishes. These it either creates by some mysterious power out of the surrounding atmosphere, or it impresses, by magnetic force on the mind of the person it visits, the form of the symbol it is anxious to have represented. There is an instance mentioned by Jung Stilling of a student at Brunswick, who appeared to a professor of his college, with a picture in his hands, which picture had a hole in it that the ghost thrust his head through. For a long time this symbol was a mystery; but the student was persevering, and appeared every night with his head through the picture, until at last it was discovered that, before he died, he had got some painted slides for a magic lantern from a shopkeeper in the town, which had not been paid for at his death; and when the debt had been discharged, he and his picture vanished forevermore. Now here was a symbol distinctly bearing on the question at issue. This poor student could find no better way of expressing his uneasiness at the debt for the painted slides than by thrusting his head through a picture. How he conjured up the picture I cannot pretend to explain, but that it was used as a symbol is evident."

"Then you think the flower-pot of old Van Koeren is a symbol?"

"Most assuredly, the pot of tulips he held was intended to express that which he could not speak. I think it

must have had some reference to his missing property, and it is our business to discover in what manner."

"Let us go and dig up all the tulip beds," said Jasper, "who knows but he may have buried his money in one of them?"

I grieve to say that I assented to Jasper's proposition, and on that eventful day every tulip in that quaint old garden was ruthlessly uprooted. The gorgeous macaws, and ragged parrots, and long-legged pheasants, so cunningly formed by those brilliant flowers, were that day exterminated. Jasper and I had a regular *battue* amidst this floral preserve, and many a splendid bird fell before our unerring spades. We, however, dug in vain. No secret coffer turned up out of the deep mould of the flower-beds. We evidently were not on the right scent. Our researches for that day terminated, and Jasper and myself waited impatiently for the night.

It was arranged that Jasper should sleep in my room. I had a bed rigged up for him near my own, and I was to have the additional assistance of his senses in the investigation of the phenomena that we so confidently expected to appear.

The night came. We retired to our respective couches, after carefully bolting the doors, and subjecting the entire apartment to the strictest scrutiny, rendering it totally impossible that a secret entrance should exist unknown to us. We then put out the lights, and awaited the apparition.

We did not remain in suspense long. About twenty minutes after we retired to bed, Jasper called out, "Harry, I feel the cool wind!"

"So do I," I answered, for at that moment a light breeze seemed to play across my temples.

“Look, look, Harry!” continued Jasper in a tone of painful eagerness, “I see a light — there in the corner!”

It was the phantom. As before, the luminous cloud appeared to gather in the room, growing more and more intense each minute. Presently the dark lines mapped themselves out, as it were, in the midst of this pale, radiant vapor, and there stood Mr. Van Koeren, ghastly and mournful as ever, with the pot of tulips in his hands.

“Do you see it?” I asked Jasper.

“My God! yes,” said Jasper, in a low voice. “How terrible he looks!”

“Can you speak to me, to-night?” I said, addressing the apparition, and again concentrating my will upon my question. “If so, unburden yourself. We will assist you, if we can.”

There was no reply. The ghost preserved the same sad, impassive countenance; he had heard me not. He seemed in great distress on this occasion, moving up and down, and holding out the pot of tulips imploringly toward me, each motion of his being accompanied by the crackling noise and the corpse-like odor. I felt sorely troubled myself to see this poor spirit torn by an endless grief,—so anxious to communicate to me what lay on his soul, and yet debarred by some occult power from the privilege.

“Why, Harry,” cried Jasper after a silence, during which we both watched the motions of the ghost intently, “why, Harry, my boy, there are *two* of them!”

Astonished by his words, I looked around, and became immediately aware of the presence of a second luminous cloud, in the midst of which I could distinctly trace the figure of a pale but lovely woman. I needed no second glance to assure me that it was the unfortunate wife of Van Koeren.

“It is his wife, Jasper,” I replied; “I recognize her, as I have recognized her husband, by the portrait.”

“How sad she looks!” exclaimed Jasper in a low voice.

She did indeed look sad. Her face, pale and mournful, did not, however, seem convulsed with sorrow, as was her husband’s. She seemed to be oppressed with a calm grief, and gazed with a look of interest that was painful in its intensity, on Van Koeren. It struck me, from his air, that, though she saw him, he did not see her. His whole attention was concentrated on the pot of tulips, while Mrs. Van Koeren, who floated at an elevation of about three feet from the floor, and thus overtopped her husband, seemed equally absorbed in the contemplation of his slightest movement. Occasionally she would turn her eyes on me, as if to call my attention to her companion, and then, returning, gaze on him with a sad, womanly, half-eager smile, that to me was inexpressibly mournful.

There was something exceedingly touching in this strange sight;—these two spirits so near, yet so distant. The sinful husband torn with grief and weighed down with some terrible secret, and so blinded by the grossness of his being as to be unable to see the wife-angel who was watching over him; while she, forgetting all her wrongs, and attracted to earth by perhaps the same human sympathies, watched from a greater spiritual height, and with a tender interest, the struggles of her suffering spouse.

“By Jove!” exclaimed Jasper, jumping from his bed, “I know what it means now.”

“What does it mean?” I asked, as eager to know as he was to communicate.

“Well, that flower-pot that the old chap is holding—” Jasper, I grieve to say, was rather profane.

“Well, what of that flower-pot?”

“Observe the pattern. It has two handles made of red snakes, whose tails twist round the top and form a rim. It contains tulips of three colors, yellow, red, and purple.”

“I see all that as well as you do. Let us have the solution.”

“Well, Harry, my boy! don’t you remember that there is just such a flower-pot, tulips, snakes and all, carved on the queer old painted mantel-piece in the dining-room?”

“So there is!” and a gleam of hope shot across my brain, and my heart beat quicker.

“Now as sure as you are alive, Harry, the old fellow has concealed something important behind that mantel-piece.”

“Jasper, if ever I am Emperor of France, I will make you chief of police; your inductive reasoning is magnificent.”

Actuated by the same impulse, and without another word, we both sprang out of bed and lit a candle. The apparitions, if they remained, were no longer visible in the light. Hastily throwing on some clothes, we rushed down stairs to the dining-room, determined to have the old mantel-piece down without loss of time. We had scarce entered the room when we felt the cool wind blowing on our faces.

“Jasper,” said I, “they are here!”

“Well,” answered Jasper, “that only confirms my suspicions that we are on the right track this time. Let us go to work. See! here’s the pot of tulips.”

This pot of tulips occupied the centre of the mantel-piece, and served as a nucleus round which all the fantastic animals sculptured elsewhere might be said to gather. It was carved on a species of raised shield, or boss, of wood, that projected some inches beyond the plane of the

remainder of the mantel-piece. The pot itself was painted a brick color. The snakes were of bronze color, gilt, and the tulips — yellow, red, and purple — were painted after nature with the most exquisite accuracy.

For some time Jasper and myself tugged away at this projection without any avail. We were convinced that it was a movable panel of some kind, but yet were totally unable to move it. Suddenly it struck me that we had not yet twisted it. I immediately proceeded to apply all my strength, and after a few seconds of vigorous exertion I had the satisfaction of finding it move slowly round. After giving it half a dozen turns, to my astonishment the long upper panel of the mantel-piece fell out toward us, apparently on concealed hinges, after the manner of the portion of escritaires that is used as a writing-table. Within were several square cavities sunk in the wall, and lined with wood. In one of these was a bundle of papers.

We seized these papers with avidity, and hastily glanced over them. They proved to be documents vouching for property to the amount of several hundred thousand dollars, invested in the name of Mr. Van Koeren in a certain firm at Bremen, who, no doubt, thought by this time that the money would remain unclaimed forever. The desires of these poor troubled spirits were accomplished. Justice to the child had been given through the instrumentality of the erring father.

The formulas necessary to prove Alice and her mother sole heirs to Mr. Van Koeren's estate were briefly gone through, and the poor governess passed suddenly from the task of teaching stupid children to the envied position of a great heiress. I had ample reason afterward for thinking that her heart did not change with her fortunes.

That Mr. Van Koeren became aware of his wife's innocence, just before he died, I have no doubt. How this was manifested I cannot of course say, but I think it highly probably that his poor wife herself was enabled at the critical moment of dissolution, when the link that binds body and soul together is attenuated to the last thread, to put herself in accord with her unhappy husband. Hence his sudden starting up in his bed, his apparent conversation with some invisible being, and his fragmentary disclosures, too broken, however, to be comprehended.

The question of apparitions has been so often discussed that I feel no inclination to enter here upon the truth or fallacy of the ghostly theory. I myself believe in ghosts. Alice — my wife — believes in them firmly; and if it suited me to do so I could overwhelm you with a scientific theory of my own on the subject, reconciling ghosts and natural phenomena.

THE GOLDEN INGOT.



I HAD just retired to rest, with my eyes almost blind with the study of a new work on physiology by M. Brown-Sequard, when the night-bell was pulled violently.

It was winter, and I confess I grumbled as I rose and went down stairs to open the door. Twice that week I had been aroused long after midnight for the most trivial causes. Once, to attend upon the son and heir of a wealthy family, who had cut his thumb with a penknife, which, it seems, he insisted on taking to bed with him; and once, to restore a young gentleman to consciousness, who had been found by his horrified parent stretched insensible on the staircase. Diachylon in the one case and ammonia in the other, were all that my patients required; and I had a faint suspicion that the present summons was perhaps occasioned by no case more necessitous than those I have quoted. I was too young in my profession, however, to neglect opportunities. It is only when a physician rises to a very large practice that he can afford to be inconsiderate. I was on the first step of the ladder, so I humbly opened my door.

A woman was standing ankle-deep in the snow that lay upon the stoop. I caught but a dim glimpse of her form, for the night was cloudy; but I could hear her teeth rattling like castanets, and, as the sharp wind blew her

clothes close to her form, I could discern from the sharpness of the outlines that she was very scantily supplied with raiment.

“Come in, come in, my good woman,” I said hastily, for the wind seemed to catch eagerly at the opportunity of making itself at home in my hall, and was rapidly forcing an entrance through the half-open door. “Come in, you can tell me all you have to communicate inside.”

She slipped in like a ghost, and I closed the door. While I was striking a light in my office, I could hear her teeth still clicking, out in the dark hall, till it seemed as if some skeleton was chattering. As soon as I obtained a light I begged her to enter the room, and, without occupying myself particularly about her appearance, asked her abruptly what her business was.

“My father has met with a severe accident,” she said, “and requires instant surgical aid. I entreat you to come to him immediately.”

The freshness and the melody of her voice startled me. Such voices rarely if ever issue from any but beautiful forms. I looked at her attentively, but, owing to a nondescript species of shawl in which her head was wrapped, I could discern nothing beyond what seemed to be a pale, thin face, and large eyes. Her dress was lamentable. An old silk, of a color now unrecognizable, clung to her figure in those limp folds which are so eloquent of misery. The creases where it had been folded were worn nearly through, and the edges of the skirt had decayed into a species of irregular fringe, which was clotted and discolored with mud. Her shoes — which were but half concealed by this scanty garment — were shapeless and soft with moisture. Her hands were hidden under the ends of the shawl which covered her head and hung down

over a bust, the outlines of which, although angular, seemed to possess grace. Poverty, when partially shrouded, seldom fails to interest: witness the statue of the Veiled Beggar, by Monti.

“In what manner was your father hurt?” I asked, in a tone considerably softened from the one in which I put my first question.

“He blew himself up, sir, and is terribly wounded.”

“Ah! He is in some factory then?”

“No, sir, he is a chemist.”

“A chemist? Why, he is a brother professional. Wait an instant and I will slip on my coat and go with you. Do you live far from here?”

“In the Seventh Avenue, not more than two blocks from the end of this street.”

“So much the better. We will be with him in a few minutes. Did you leave any one in attendance on him?”

“No, sir. He will allow no one but myself to enter his laboratory. And, injured as he is, I could not induce him to quit it.”

“Indeed! He is engaged in some great research, perhaps? I have known such cases.”

We were passing under a lamp-post, and the woman suddenly turned and glared at me with a look of such wild terror that for an instant I involuntarily glanced round me under the impression that some terrible peril, unseen by me, was menacing us both.

“Don't — don't ask me any questions,” she said breathlessly. “He will tell you all. But do, O, do hasten! Good God! he may be dead by this time!”

I made no reply, but allowed her to grasp my hand, which she did with a bony, nervous clutch, and endeavored with some difficulty to keep pace with the long strides

— I might well call them bounds, for they seemed the springs of a wild animal rather than the paces of a young girl — with which she covered the ground. Not a word more was uttered until we stopped before a shabby, old-fashioned tenement-house in the Seventh Avenue, not far above Twenty-Third Street. She pushed the door open with a convulsive pressure, and, still retaining hold of my hand, literally dragged me up-stairs to what seemed to be a back off-shoot from the main building, as high, perhaps, as the fourth story. In a moment more I found myself in a moderate-sized chamber, lit by a single lamp. In one corner, stretched motionless on a wretched pallet-bed, I beheld what I supposed to be the figure of my patient.

“He is there,” said the girl; “go to him. See if he is dead, — I dare not look.”

I made my way as well as I could through the numberless dilapidated chemical instruments with which the room was littered. A French chafing-dish supported on an iron tripod had been overturned, and was lying across the floor, while the charcoal, still warm, was scattered around in various directions. Crucibles, alembics, and retorts were confusedly piled in various corners, and on a small table I saw distributed in separate bottles a number of mineral and metallic substances, which I recognized as antimony, mercury, plumbago, arsenic, borax, etc. It was veritably the apartment of a poor chemist. All the apparatus had the air of being second-hand. There was no lustre of exquisitely annealed glass and highly polished metals, such as dazzles one in the laboratory of the prosperous analyst. The make-shifts of poverty were everywhere visible. The crucibles were broken, or gallipots were used instead of crucibles. The colored tests were not in the usual transparent vials, but were placed in

ordinary black bottles. There is nothing more melancholy than to behold science or art in distress. A threadbare scholar, a tattered book, or a battered violin is a mute appeal to our sympathy.

I approached the wretched pallet-bed on which the victim of chemistry was lying. He breathed heavily, and had his head turned toward the wall. I lifted his arm gently to arouse his attention. "How goes it, my poor friend?" I asked him. "Where are you hurt?"

In a moment, as if startled by the sound of my voice, he sprang up in his bed, and cowered against the wall like a wild animal driven to bay. "Who are you? I don't know you. Who brought you here? You are a stranger. How dare you come into my private rooms to spy upon me?"

And as he uttered this rapidly, with a frightful nervous energy, I beheld a pale distorted face, draped with long gray hair, glaring at me with a mingled expression of fury and terror.

"I am no spy," I answered mildly. "I heard that you had met with an accident, and have come to cure you. I am Doctor Luxor, and here is my card."

The old man took the card, and scanned it eagerly. "You are a physician?" he inquired distrustfully.

"And surgeon also."

"You are bound by oath not to reveal the secrets of your patients."

"Undoubtedly."

"I am afraid that I am hurt," he continued faintly, half sinking back in the bed.

I seized the opportunity to make a brief examination of his body. I found that the arms, a part of the chest, and a part of the face were terribly scorched; but it

seemed to me that there was nothing to be apprehended but pain.

“You will not reveal anything that you may learn here?” said the old man, feebly fixing his eyes on my face while I was applying a soothing ointment to the burns. “You will promise me?”

I nodded assent.

“Then I will trust you. Cure me, — I will pay you well.”

I could scarce help smiling. If Lorenzo de’ Medici, conscious of millions of ducats in his coffers, had been addressing some leech of the period, he could not have spoken with a loftier air than this inhabitant of the fourth story of a tenement-house in the Seventh Avenue.

“You must keep quiet,” I answered. “Let nothing irritate you. I will leave a composing draught with your daughter, which she will give you immediately. I will see you in the morning. You will be well in a week.”

“Thank God!” came in a murmur from a dusk corner near the door. I turned, and beheld the dim outline of the girl, standing with clasped hands in the gloom of the dim chamber.

“My daughter!” screamed the old man, once more leaping up in the bed with renewed vitality. “You have seen her, then? When? where? O, may a thousand cur—”

“Father! father! Anything, — anything but that. Don’t, don’t curse me!” And the poor girl, rushing in, flung herself sobbing on her knees beside his pallet.

“Ah, brigand! you are there, are you? Sir,” said he, turning to me, “I am the most unhappy man in the world. Talk of Sisyphus rolling the ever-recoiling stone, — of Prometheus gnawed by the vulture since the birth

of time. The fables yet live. There is my rock, forever crushing me back! there is my eternal vulture, feeding upon my heart! There! there! there!" And, with an awful gesture of malediction and hatred, he pointed with his wounded hand, swathed and shapeless with bandages, at the cowering, sobbing, wordless woman by his side.

I was too much horror-stricken to attempt even to soothe him. The anger of blood against blood has an electric power which paralyzes bystanders.

"Listen to me, sir," he continued, "while I skin this painted viper. I have your oath; you will not reveal. I am an alchemist, sir. Since I was twenty-two years old, I have pursued the wonderful and subtle secret. Yes, to unfold the mysterious Rose guarded with such terrible thorns; to decipher the wondrous Table of Emerald; to accomplish the mystic nuptials of the Red King and the White Queen; to marry them soul to soul and body to body for ever and ever, in the exact proportions of land and water,—such has been my sublime aim, such has been the splendid feat that I have accomplished."

I recognized at a glance, in this incomprehensible farrago, the *argot* of the true alchemist. Ripley, Flamel, and others have supplied the world, in their works, with the melancholy spectacle of a scientific Bedlam.

"Two years since," continued the poor man, growing more and more excited with every word that he uttered,— "two years since, I succeeded in solving the great problem,— in transmuting the baser metals into gold. None but myself, that girl, and God knows the privations I had suffered up to that time. Food, clothing, air, exercise, everything but shelter, was sacrificed toward the one great end. Success at last crowned my labors. That which Nicholas Flamel did in 1382, that which George

Ripley did at Rhodes in 1460, that which Alexander Sethon and Michael Scudivogius did in the seventeenth century, I did in 1856. I made gold! I said to myself, 'I will astonish New York more than Flamel did Paris.' He was a poor copyist, and suddenly launched into magnificence. I had scarce a rag to my back: I would rival the Medicis. I made gold every day. I toiled night and morning; for I must tell you that I never was able to make more than a certain quantity at a time, and that by a process almost entirely dissimilar to those hinted at in those books of alchemy I had hitherto consulted. But I had no doubt that facility would come with experience, and that ere long I should be able to eclipse in wealth the richest sovereigns of the earth.

"So I toiled on. Day after day I gave to this girl here what gold I succeeded in fabricating, telling her to store it away after supplying our necessities. I was astonished to perceive that we lived as poorly as ever. I reflected, however, that it was perhaps a commendable piece of prudence on the part of my daughter. Doubtless, I said, she argues that the less we spend the sooner we shall accumulate a capital wherewith to live at ease; so, thinking her course a wise one, I did not reproach her with her niggardliness, but toiled on amid want, with closed lips.

"The gold which I fabricated was, as I said before, of an invariable size, namely, a little ingot worth perhaps thirty or forty-five dollars. In two years I calculated that I had made five hundred of these ingots, which, rated at an average of thirty dollars a piece, would amount to the gross sum of fifteen thousand dollars. After deducting our slight expenses for two years, we ought to have nearly fourteen thousand dollars left. It was time, I thought, to indemnify myself for my years of suffering,

and surround my child and myself with such moderate comforts as our means allowed. I went to my daughter and explained to her that I desired to make an encroachment upon our little hoard. To my utter amazement, she burst into tears, and told me that she had not got a dollar, — that all of our wealth had been stolen from her. Almost overwhelmed by this new misfortune, I in vain endeavored to discover from her in what manner our savings had been plundered. She could afford me no explanation beyond what I might gather from an abundance of sobs and a copious flow of tears.

“It was a bitter blow, Doctor, but *nil desperandum* was my motto, so I went to work at my crucible again, with redoubled energy, and made an ingot nearly every second day. I determined this time to put them in some secure place myself; but the very first day I set my apparatus in order for the projection, the girl Marian — that is my daughter’s name — came weeping to me and implored me to allow her to take care of our treasure. I refused, decisively, saying that, having found her already incapable of filling the trust, I could place no faith in her again. But she persisted, clung to my neck, threatened to abandon me, in short used so many of the bad but irresistible arguments known to women, that I had not the heart to refuse her. She has since that time continued to take the ingots.

“Yet you behold,” continued the old alchemist, casting an inexpressibly mournful glance around the wretched apartment, “the way we live. Our food is insufficient and of bad quality; we never buy clothes; the rent of this hole is a mere nothing. What am I to think of the wretched girl who plunges me into this misery? Is she a miser, think you? or a female gamester? or — or —

does she squander it riotously in places I know not of? O Doctor, Doctor! do not blame me if I heap imprecations on her head, for I have suffered bitterly!" The poor man here closed his eyes and sank back groaning on his bed.

This singular narrative excited in me the strangest emotions. I glanced at the girl Marian, who had been a patient listener to these horrible accusations of cupidity, and never did I behold a more angelic air of resignation than beamed over her countenance. It was impossible that any one with those pure, limpid eyes, that calm, broad forehead, that childlike mouth, could be such a monster of avarice or deceit as the old man represented. The truth was plain enough: the alchemist was mad, — what alchemist was there ever who was not? — and his insanity had taken this terrible shape. I felt an inexpressible pity move my heart for this poor girl, whose youth was burdened with such an awful sorrow.

"What is your name?" I asked the old man, taking his tremulous, fevered hand in mine.

"William Blakelock," he answered. "I come of an old Saxon stock, sir, that bred true men and women in former days. God! how did it ever come to pass that such a one as that girl ever sprung from our line?" The glance of loathing and contempt that he cast at her made me shudder.

"May you not be mistaken in your daughter?" I said, very mildly. "Delusions with regard to alchemy are, or have been, very common —"

"What, sir?" cried the old man, bounding in his bed. "What? Do you doubt that gold can be made? Do you know, sir, that M. C. Théodore Tiffereau made gold at Paris, in the year 1854, in the presence of M. Levot,

the assayer of the Imperial Mint, and the result of the experiments was read before the Academy of Sciences on the sixteenth of October of the same year? But stay; you shall have better proof yet. I will pay you with one of my ingots, and you shall attend me until I am well. Get me an ingot!"

This last command was addressed to Marian, who was still kneeling close to her father's bedside. I observed her with some curiosity as this mandate was issued. She became very pale, clasped her hands convulsively, but neither moved nor made any reply.

"Get me an ingot, I say!" reiterated the alchemist, passionately.

She fixed her large eyes imploringly upon him. Her lips quivered, and two huge tears rolled slowly down her white cheeks.

"Obey me, wretched girl," cried the old man in an agitated voice, "or I swear, by all that I reverence in heaven and earth, that I will lay my curse upon you forever!"

I felt for an instant that I ought perhaps to interfere, and spare the girl the anguish that she was so evidently suffering; but a powerful curiosity to see how this strange scene would terminate withheld me.

The last threat of her father, uttered as it was with a terrible vehemence, seemed to appall Marian. She rose with a sudden leap, as if a serpent had stung her, and, rushing into an inner apartment, returned with a small object in her hand, which she placed in mine, and then flung herself in a chair in a distant corner of the room, weeping bitterly.

"You see — you see," said the old man sarcastically, "how reluctantly she parts with it. Take it, sir; it is yours."

It was a small bar of metal. I examined it carefully, poised it in my hand, — the color, weight, everything, announced that it really was gold.

“You doubt its genuineness, perhaps,” continued the alchemist. “There are acids on yonder table, — test it.”

I confess that I *did* doubt its genuineness; but after I had acted upon the old man’s suggestion, all further suspicion was rendered impossible. It was gold of the highest purity. I was astounded. Was then, after all, this man’s tale a truth? Was his daughter, that fair, angelic-looking creature, a demon of avarice, or a slave to worse passions? I felt bewildered. I had never met with anything so incomprehensible. I looked from father to daughter in the blankest amazement. I suppose that my countenance betrayed my astonishment, for the old man said, “I perceive that you are surprised. Well, that is natural. You had a right to think me mad until I proved myself sane.”

“But, Mr. Blakelock,” I said, “I really cannot take this gold. I have no right to it. I cannot in justice charge so large a fee.”

“Take it, — take it,” he answered impatiently; “your fee will amount to that before I am well. Beside,” he added mysteriously, “I wish to secure your friendship. I wish that you should protect me from her,” — and he pointed his poor, bandaged hand at Marian.

My eye followed his gesture, and I caught the glance that replied, — a glance of horror, distrust, despair. The beautiful face was distorted into positive ugliness.

“It’s all true,” I thought; “she is the demon that her father represents her.”

I now rose to go. This domestic tragedy sickened me. This treachery of blood against blood was too horrible to

witness. I wrote a prescription for the old man, left directions as to the renewal of the dressings upon his burns, and, bidding him good night, hastened towards the door.

While I was fumbling on the dark, crazy landing for the staircase, I felt a hand laid on my arm.

"Doctor," whispered a voice that I recognized as Marian Blakelock's, "Doctor, have you any compassion in your heart?"

"I hope so," I answered, shortly, shaking off her hand, — her touch filled me with loathing.

"Hush! don't talk so loud. If you have any pity in your nature, give me back, I entreat of you, that gold ingot which my father gave you this evening."

"Great heaven!" said I, "can it be possible that so fair a woman can be such a mercenary, shameless wretch?"

"Ah! you know not, — I cannot tell you! Do not judge me harshly. I call God to witness that I am not what you deem me. Some day or other you will know. But," she added, interrupting herself, "the ingot, — where is it? I must have it. My life depends on your giving it to me."

"Take it, impostor!" I cried, placing it in her hand, that closed on it with a horrible eagerness. "I never intended to keep it. Gold made under the same roof that covers such as you must be accursed."

So saying, heedless of the nervous effort she made to detain me, I stumbled down the stairs and walked hastily home.

The next morning, while I was in my office, smoking my matutinal cigar, and speculating over the singular character of my acquaintances of last night, the door opened, and Marian Blakelock entered. She had the

same look of terror that I had observed the evening before, and she panted as if she had been running fast.

"Father has got out of bed," she gasped out, "and insists on going on with his alchemy. Will it kill him?"

"Not exactly," I answered, coldly. "It were better that he kept quiet, so as to avoid the chance of inflammation. However, you need not be alarmed; his burns are not at all dangerous, although painful."

"Thank God! thank God!" she cried, in the most impassioned accents; and, before I was aware of what she was doing, she seized my hand and kissed it.

"There, that will do," I said, withdrawing my hand; "you are under no obligations to me. You had better go back to your father."

"I can't go," she answered. "You despise me, — is it not so?"

I made no reply.

"You think me a monster, — a criminal. When you went home last night, you were wonder-struck that so vile a creature as I should have so fair a face."

"You embarrass me, madam," I said, in a most chilling tone. "Pray relieve me from this unpleasant position."

"Wait! I cannot bear that you should think ill of me. You are good and kind, and I desire to possess your esteem. You little know how I love my father."

I could not restrain a bitter smile.

"You do not believe that? Well, I will convince you. I have had a hard struggle all last night with myself, but am now resolved. This life of deceit must continue no longer. Will you hear my vindication?"

I assented. The wonderful melody of her voice and the purity of her features were charming me once more. I half believed in her innocence already.

“My father has told you a portion of his history. But he did not tell you that his continued failures in his search after the secret of metallic transmutation nearly killed him. Two years ago he was on the verge of the grave, working every day at his mad pursuit, and every day growing weaker and more emaciated. I saw that if his mind was not relieved in some way he would die. The thought was madness to me, for I loved him, — I love him still, as a daughter never loved a father before. During all these years of poverty I had supported the house with my needle ; it was hard work, but I did it, — I do it still !”

“What ?” I cried, startled, “does not —”

“Patience. Hear me out. My father was dying of disappointment. I must save him. By incredible exertions, working night and day, I saved about thirty-five dollars in notes. These I exchanged for gold, and one day, when my father was not looking, I cast them into the crucible in which he was making one of his vain attempts at transmutation. God, I am sure, will pardon the deception. I never anticipated the misery it would lead to.

“I never beheld anything like the joy of my poor father, when, after emptying his crucible, he found a deposit of pure gold at the bottom. He wept, and danced, and sang, and built such castles in the air, that my brain was dizzy to hear him. He gave me the ingot to keep, and went to work at his alchemy with renewed vigor. The same thing occurred. He always found the same quantity of gold in his crucible. I alone knew the secret. He was happy, poor man, for nearly two years, in the belief that he was amassing a fortune. I all the while plied my needle for our daily bread. When he asked me for

his savings, the first stroke fell upon me. Then it was that I recognized the folly of my conduct. I could give him no money. I never had any, — while he believed that I had fourteen thousand dollars. My heart was nearly broken when I found that he had conceived the most injurious suspicions against me. Yet I could not blame him. I could give no account of the treasure I had permitted him to believe was in my possession. I must suffer the penalty of my fault, for to undeceive him would be, I felt, to kill him. I remained silent then, and suffered.

“You know the rest. You now know why it was that I was reluctant to give you that ingot, — why it was that I degraded myself so far as to ask it back. It was the only means I had of continuing a deception on which I believed my father’s life depended. But that delusion has been dispelled. I can live this life of hypocrisy no longer. I cannot exist, and hear my father, whom I love so, wither me daily with his curses. I will undeceive him this very day. Will you come with me, for I fear the effect on his enfeebled frame?”

“Willingly,” I answered, taking her by the hand; “and I think that no absolute danger need be apprehended. Now, Marian,” I added, “let me ask forgiveness for having even for a moment wounded so noble a heart. You are truly as great a martyr as any of those whose sufferings the Church perpetuates in altar-pieces.”

“I knew you would do me justice when you knew all,” she sobbed, pressing my hand; “but come. I am on fire. Let us hasten to my father, and break this terror to him.”

When we reached the old alchemist’s room, we found him busily engaged over a crucible which was placed on

a small furnace, and in which some indescribable mixture was boiling. He looked up as we entered.

“No fear of me, Doctor,” he said, with a ghastly smile, “no fear. I must not allow a little physical pain to interrupt my great work, you know. By the way, you are just in time. In a few moments the marriage of the Red King and White Queen will be accomplished, as George Ripley calls the great act, in his book entitled *The Twelve Gates*. Yes, Doctor, in less than ten minutes you will see me make pure, red, shining gold!” And the poor old man smiled triumphantly, and stirred his foolish mixture with a long rod, which he held with difficulty in his bandaged hands. It was a grievous sight for a man of any feeling to witness.

“Father,” said Marian, in a low, broken voice, advancing a little toward the poor old dupe, “I want your forgiveness.”

“Ah, hypocrite! for what? Are you going to give me back my gold?”

“No, father, but for the deception that I have been practising on you for two years —”

“I knew it! I knew it!” shouted the old man, with a radiant countenance. “She has concealed my fourteen thousand dollars all this time, and now comes to restore them. I will forgive her. Where are they, Marian?”

“Father, — it must come out. You never made any gold. It was I who saved up thirty-five dollars, and I used to slip them into your crucible when your back was turned, — and I did it only because I saw that you were dying of disappointment. It was wrong, I know, — but, father, I meant well. You’ll forgive me, won’t you?” And the poor girl advanced a step towards the alchemist.

He grew deathly pale, and staggered as if about to fall. The next instant, though, he recovered himself, and burst into a horrible sardonic laugh. Then he said, in tones full of the bitterest irony, "A conspiracy, is it? Well done, Doctor! You think to reconcile me with this wretched girl by trumping up this story, that I have been for two years a dupe of her filial piety. It's clumsy, Doctor, and is a total failure. Try again."

"But I assure you, Mr. Blakelock," I said as earnestly as I could, "I believe your daughter's statements to be perfectly true. You will find it to be so, as she has got the ingot in her possession which so often deceived you into the belief that you made gold, and you will certainly find that no transmutation has taken place in your crucible."

"Doctor," said the old man, in tones of the most settled conviction, "you are a fool. That girl has wheedled you. In less than a minute I will turn you out a piece of gold, purer than any the earth produces. Will that convince you?"

"That will convince me," I answered. By a gesture I imposed silence on Marian, who was about to speak. I thought it better to allow the old man to be his own undeceiver, — and we awaited the coming crisis.

The old man, still smiling with anticipated triumph, kept bending eagerly over his crucible, stirring the mixture with his rod, and muttering to himself all the time. "Now," I heard him say, "it changes. There, — there's the scum. And now the green and bronze shades flit across it. O, the beautiful green! the precursor of the golden-red hue, that tells of the end attained! Ah! now the golden-red is coming — slowly — slowly! It deepens, it shines, it is dazzling! Ah, I have it!" So saying, he

caught up his crucible in a chemist's tongs, and bore it slowly toward the table on which stood a brass vessel.

"Now, incredulous Doctor!" he cried, "come and be convinced"; and immediately began carefully pouring the contents of the crucible into the brass vessel. When the crucible was quite empty, he turned it up, and called me again. "Come, Doctor, come and be convinced. See for yourself."

"See first if there is any gold in your crucible," I answered, without moving.

He laughed, shook his head derisively, and looked into the crucible. In a moment he grew pale as death.

"Nothing!" he cried. "O, a jest! a jest! There must be gold somewhere. Marian!"

"The gold is here, father," said Marian, drawing the ingot from her pocket; "it is all we ever had."

"Ah!" shrieked the poor old man, as he let the empty crucible fall, and staggered toward the ingot which Marian held out to him. He made three steps, and then fell on his face. Marian rushed toward him, and tried to lift him, but could not. I put her aside gently, and placed my hand on his heart.

"Marian," said I, "it is perhaps better as it is. He is dead!"

MY WIFE'S TEMPTER.

I.

A PREDESTINED MARRIAGE.

ELSIE and I were to be married in less than a week. It was rather a strange match, and I knew that some of our neighbors shook their heads over it and said that no good would come. The way it came to pass was thus.

I loved Elsie Burns for two years, during which time she refused me three times. I could no more help asking her to have me, when the chance offered, than I could help breathing or living. To love her seemed natural to me as existence. I felt no shame, only sorrow, when she rejected me; I felt no shame either when I renewed my suit. The neighbors called me mean-spirited to take up with any girl that had refused me as often as Elsie Burns had done; but what cared I about the neighbors? If it is black weather, and the sun is under a cloud every day for a month, is that any reason why the poor farmer should not hope for the blue sky and the plentiful burst of warm light when the dark month is over? I never entirely lost heart. Do not, however, mistake me. I did not mope, and moan, and grow pale, after the manner of poetical lovers. No such thing. I went bravely about my business, ate and drank as usual, laughed when the laugh went round, and slept soundly, and woke refreshed. Yet all this time I loved — desperately loved — Elsie

Burns. I went wherever I hoped to meet her, but did not haunt her with my attentions. I behaved to her as any friendly young man would have behaved: I met her and parted from her cheerfully. She was a good girl, too, and behaved well. She had me in her power, — how a woman in Elsie's situation could have mortified a man in mine! — but she never took the slightest advantage of it. She danced with me when I asked her, and had no foolish fears of allowing me to see her home of nights, after a ball was over, or of wandering with me through the pleasant New England fields when the wild-flowers made the paths like roads in fairy-land.

On the several disastrous occasions when I presented my suit I did it simply and manfully, telling her that I loved her very much, and would do everything to make her happy, if she would be my wife. I made no fulsome protestations, and did not once allude to suicide. She, on the other hand, calmly and gravely thanked me for my good opinion, but with the same calm gravity rejected me. I used to tell her that I was grieved; that I would not press her; that I would wait and hope for some change in her feelings. She had an esteem for me, she would say, but could not marry me. I never asked her for any reasons. I hold it to be an insult to a woman of sense to demand her reasons on such an occasion. Enough for me that she did not then wish to be my wife; so the old intercourse went on, — she cordial and polite as ever, I never for one moment doubting that the day would come when my roof-tree would shelter her, and we should smile together over our fireside at my long and indefatigable wooing.

I will confess that at times I felt a little jealous, — jealous of a man named Hammond Brake, who lived in our

village. He was a weird, saturnine fellow, who made no friends among the young men of the neighborhood, but who loved to go alone, with his books and his own thoughts for company. He was a studious, and, I believe, a learned young man, and there was no avoiding the fact that he possessed considerable influence over Elsie. She liked to talk with him in corners, or in secluded nooks of the forest, when we all went out blackberry-gathering or picnicking. She read books that he gave her, and whenever a discussion arose relative to any topic higher than those ordinary ones we usually canvassed, Elsie appealed to Brake for his opinion, as a disciple consulting a beloved master. I confess that for a time I feared this man as a rival. A little closer observation, however, convinced me that my suspicions were unfounded. The relation between Elsie and Hammond Brake was purely intellectual. She revered his talents and acquirements, but she did not love him. His influence over her, nevertheless, was none the less decided.

In time — as I thought all along — Elsie yielded. I was what was considered a most eligible match, being tolerably rich, and Elsie's parents were most anxious to have me for a son-in-law. I was good-looking and well-educated enough, and the old people, I believe, pertinaciously dinned all my advantages into my little girl's ears. She battled against the marriage for a long time with a strange persistence, — all the more strange because she never alleged the slightest personal dislike to me; but after a vigorous cannonading from her own garrison, (in which, I am proud to say, I did not in any way join,) she hoisted the white flag and surrendered.

I was very happy. I had no fear about being able to gain Elsie's heart. I think — indeed I know — that she

had liked me all along, and that her refusals were dictated by other feelings than those of a personal nature. I only guessed as much then. It was some time before I knew all.

As the day approached for our wedding Elsie did not appear at all stricken with woe. The village gossips had not the smallest opportunity for establishing a romance, with a compulsory bride for the heroine. Yet to me it seemed as if there was something strange about her. A vague terror appeared to beset her. Even in her most loving moments, when resting in my arms, she would shrink away from me, and shudder as if some cold wind had suddenly struck upon her. That it was caused by no aversion to me was evident, for she would the moment after, as if to make amends, give me one of those voluntary kisses that are sweeter than all others.

I reflected over this gravely, as was my custom, but could come to no conclusion. I dismissed it as one of those mysteries of maidenhood which it is not given to man to fathom.

The day came at length on which we were to be married, — a glorious autumnal day, on which the sweet season of fruits and flowers seemed to have copied the kings of old, and robed itself in its brightest purple and gold, in order to die with becoming splendor. The little village church was nearly filled with the bridal party and the curious crowd who came to see the persevering lover win his bride. Elsie was calm, and grave, and beautiful. The sober beauty of the autumn itself seemed to tinge her face.

Once only did she show any emotion. When the solemn question was put to her, the answer to which was to decide her destiny, I felt her hand — which was in mine

—tremble. As she gasped out a convulsive “Yes,” she gave one brief, imploring glance at the gallery on the right. I placed the ring upon her finger, and looked in the direction in which she gazed. Hammond Brake’s dark countenance was visible looking over the railings, and his eyes were bent sternly on Elsie. I turned quickly round to my bride, but her brief emotion, of whatever nature, had vanished. She was looking at me anxiously, and smiling—somewhat sadly—through her maiden’s tears.

I kissed her, and whispered a loving word or two in her ear, at which she brightened; and her grave, decorous old father, and quaint, tender-hearted mother, kissed her, and we rode all alone through glories of the autumn woods to our home.



II.

THE STRANGE BOOK.

THE months went by quickly, and we were very happy. I learned that Elsie really loved me, and of my love for her she had proof long ago. I will not say that there was no cloud upon our little horizon. There was one, but it was so small, and appeared so seldom, that I scarcely feared it. The old vague terror seemed still to attack my wife. If I did not know her to be pure as heaven’s snow, I would have said it was a *remorse*. At times she scarcely appeared to hear what I said, so deep would be her reverery. Nor did those moods seem pleasant ones. When rapt in such, her sweet features would contract, as if in a hopeless effort to solve some mysterious problem. A sad

pain, as it were, quivered in her white, drooped eyelids. One thing I particularly remarked : *she spent hours at a time gazing at the west.* There was a small room in our house whose windows, every evening, flamed with the red light of the setting sun. Here Elsie would sit and gaze westward, so motionless and entranced that it seemed as if her soul was going down with the day. Her conduct to me was curiously varied. She apparently loved me very much, yet there were times when she absolutely avoided me. I have seen her strolling through the fields, and left the house with the intention of joining her, but the moment she caught sight of me approaching, she has fled into the neighboring copse, with so evident a wish to avoid me that it would have been absolutely cruel to follow.

Once or twice the old jealousy of Hammond Brake crossed my mind, but I was obliged to dismiss it as a frivolous suspicion. Nothing in my wife's conduct justified any such theory. Brake visited us once or twice a week, — in fact, when I returned from my business in the village, I used to find him seated in the parlor with Elsie, reading some favorite author, or conversing on some novel literary topic ; but there was no disposition to avoid my scrutiny. Brake seemed to come as a matter of right ; and the perfect unconsciousness of furnishing any grounds for suspicion with which he acted was a sufficient answer to my mind for any wild doubts that my heart may have suggested.

Still I could not but remark that Brake's visits were in some manner connected with Elsie's melancholy. On the days when he had appeared and departed the gloom seemed to hang more thickly than ever over her head. She sat, on such occasions, all the evening at the western

window, silently gazing at the cleft in the hills through which the sun passed to his repose.

At last I made up my mind to speak to her. It seemed to me to be my duty, if she had a sorrow, to partake of it. I approached her on the matter with the most perfect confidence that I had nothing to learn beyond the existence of some girlish grief, which a confession and a few loving kisses would exorcise forever.

"Elsie," I said to her one night, as she sat, according to her custom, gazing westward, like those maidens of the old ballads of chivalry watching for the knights that never came, — "Elsie, what is the matter with you, darling? I have noticed a strange melancholy in you for some time past. Tell me all about it."

She turned quickly round and gazed at me with eyes wide open and face filled with a sudden fear. "Why do you ask me that, Mark?" she answered. "I have nothing to tell."

From the strange, startled manner in which this reply was given, I felt convinced that she had something to tell, and instantly formed a determination to discover what it was. A pang shot through my heart as I thought that the woman whom I held dearer than anything on earth hesitated to trust me with a petty secret.

"Elsie," I said, "don't treat me as if I was a grand inquisitor, with racks and thumb-screws in readiness for you if you prove contumacious. You need not look at me in that frightened way. I'm not an ogre, child. I don't breakfast on nice, cosey little women five months married. Supposing you do owe a bill to the milliner, in Boston, — what does it matter? I'm tolerably rich. How much is it?"

I knew perfectly well that she did not owe any such

bill, but it was a mode of testing her. A look of relief passed over her features as I spoke.

"Mark," she said, stroking my hair with her little hand and smiling faintly, "you're a goose. I don't owe any bill to the milliner in Boston, and I have no secret worth knowing. I know I'm a little melancholy at times, — I feel weary; but that is not unnatural, you know, just now, Mark dear," — kissing me on the lips, — "you must bear with my moods for a little while, until there are *three* of us, and then I'll be better company."

I knew what she alluded to, but, God help me! I felt sad enough at the moment, though I kissed her back, and ceased to question her. I felt sad, because my instinct told me that she deceived me; and it is very hard to be deceived, even in trifles, by those we love. I left her sitting at her favorite window, and walked out into the fields. I wanted to think.

I remained out until I saw lights in the parlor shining through the dusk evening; then I returned slowly. As I passed the windows, — which were near the ground, our house being cottage-built, — I looked in. Hammond Brake was sitting with my wife. She was sitting in a rocking-chair opposite to him, holding a small volume open on her lap. Brake was talking to her very earnestly, and she was listening to him with an expression I had never before seen on her countenance. Awe, fear, and admiration were all blent together in those dilating eyes. She seemed absorbed, body and soul, in what this man said. I shuddered at the sight. A vague terror seized upon me; I hastened into the house. As I entered the room, rather suddenly, my wife started and hastily concealed the little volume that lay on her lap in one of her wide pockets. As she did so, a loose leaf escaped from the volume and slowly

fluttered to the floor unobserved by either her or her companion. But I had my eye upon it. I felt that it was a clew.

"What new novel or philosophical wonder have you both been poring over?" I asked, quite gayly, stealthily watching at the same time the telltale embarrassment under which Elsie was laboring.

Brake, who was not in the least discomposed, replied. "That," said he, "is a secret which must be kept from you. It is an advance copy, and is not to be shown to any one except your wife."

"Ha!" cried I, "I know what it is. It is your volume of poems that Ticknor is publishing. Well, I can wait until it is regularly for sale."

I knew that Brake had a volume in the hands of the publishing house I mentioned, with a vague promise of publication some time in the present century. Hammond smiled significantly, but did not reply. He evidently wished to cultivate this supposed impression of mine. Elsie looked relieved, and heaved a deep sigh. I felt more than ever convinced that a secret was beneath all this. So I drew my chair over the fallen leaf that lay unnoticed on the carpet, and talked and laughed with Hammond Brake gayly, as if nothing was on my mind, while all the time a great load of suspicion lay heavily at my heart.

At length Hammond Brake rose to go. I wished him good night, but did not offer to accompany him to the door. My wife supplied this omitted courtesy, as I had expected. The moment I was alone I picked up the book-leaf from the floor. It was *not* the leaf of a volume of poems. Beyond that, however, I learned nothing. It contained a string of paragraphs printed in the Biblical

fashion, and the language was Biblical in style. It seemed to be a portion of some religious book. Was it possible that my wife was being converted to the Romish faith? Yes, that was it. Brake was a Jesuit in disguise, — I had heard of such things, — and had stolen into the bosom of my family to plant there his destructive errors. There could be no longer any doubt of it. This was some portion of a Romish book; — some infamous Popish publication. Fool that I was not to see it all before! But there was yet time. I would forbid him the house.

I had just formed this resolution when my wife entered. I put the strange leaf in my pocket and took my hat.

“Why, you are not going out, surely?” cried Elsie, surprised.

“I have a headache,” I answered. “I will take a short walk.”

Elsie looked at me with a peculiar air of distrust. Her woman's instinct told her that there was something wrong. Before she could question me, however, I had left the room and was walking rapidly on Hammond Brake's track.

He heard the footsteps, and I saw his figure, black against the sky, stop and peer back through the dusk to see who was following him.

“It is I, Brake,” I called out. “Stop; I wish to speak with you.”

He stopped, and in a minute or so we were walking side by side along the road. My fingers itched at that moment to be on his throat. I commenced the conversation.

“Brake,” I said, “I'm a very plain sort of man, and I never say anything without good reason. What I came

after you to tell you is, that I don't wish you to come to my house any more, or to speak with Elsie any farther than the ordinary salutations go. It's no joke. I'm quite in earnest."

Brake started, and, stopping short, faced me suddenly in the road. "What have I done?" he asked. "You surely are too sensible a man to be jealous, Dayton."

"O," I answered, scornfully, "not jealous in the ordinary sense of the word, a bit. But I don't think your company good company for my wife, Brake. If you *will* have it out of me, I suspect you of being a Roman Catholic, and of trying to convert my wife."

A smile shot across his face, and I saw his sharp, white teeth gleam for an instant in the dusk.

"Well, what if I am a Papist?" he said, with a strange tone of triumph in his voice. "The faith is not criminal. Besides, what proof have you that I was attempting to proselyte your wife?"

"This," said I, pulling the leaf from my pocket,— "this leaf from one of those devilish Papist books you and she were reading this evening. I picked it up from the floor. Proof enough, I think!"

In an instant Brake had snatched the leaf from my hand and torn it into atoms.

"You shall be obeyed," he said. "I will not speak with Elsie as long as she is your wife. Good night. So you think I'm a Papist, Dayton? You're a clever fellow!" And with rather a sneering chuckle he marched on along the road and vanished into the darkness.

III.

THE SECRET DISCOVERED.

BRAKE came no more. I said nothing to Elsie about his prohibition, and his name was never mentioned. It seemed strange to me that she should not speak of his absence, and I was very much puzzled by her silence. Her moodiness seemed to have increased, and, what was most remarkable, in proportion as she grew more and more reserved, the intenser were the bursts of affection which she exhibited for me. She would strain me to her bosom and kiss me, as if she and I were about to be parted forever. Then for hours she would remain sitting at her window, silently gazing, with that terrible, wistful gaze of hers, at the west.

I will confess to having watched my wife at this time. I could not help it. That some mystery hung about her I felt convinced. I must fathom it or die. Her honor I never for a moment doubted; yet there seemed to weigh continually upon me the prophecy of some awful domestic calamity. This time the prophecy was not in vain.

About three weeks after I had forbidden Brake my house, I was strolling over my farm in the evening, apparently inspecting my agriculture, but in reality speculating on that topic which latterly was ever present to me.

There was a little knoll covered with evergreen oaks at the end of the lawn. It was a picturesque spot, for on one side the bank went off into a sheer precipice of about eighty feet in depth, at the bottom of which a pretty pool lay, that in the summer time was fringed

with white water-lilies. I had thought of building a summer-house in this spot, and now my steps mechanically directed themselves toward the place. As I approached I heard voices. I stopped and listened eagerly. A few seconds enabled me to ascertain that Hammond Brake and my wife were in the copse talking together. She still followed him, then; and he, scoundrel that he was, had broken his promise. A fury seemed to fill my veins as I made this discovery. I felt the impulse strong upon me to rush into the grove, and then and there strangle the villain who was poisoning my peace. But with a powerful effort I restrained myself. It was necessary that I should overhear what was said. I threw myself flat on the grass, and so glided silently into the copse until I was completely within ear-shot. This was what I heard.

My wife was sobbing. "So soon, — so soon? O Hammond, give me a little time!"

"I cannot, Elsie. My chief orders me to join him. You must prepare to accompany me."

"No, no!" murmured Elsie. "He loves me so! And I love him. Our child, too, — how can I rob him of our unborn babe?"

"Another sheep for our flock," answered Brake, solemnly. "Elsie, do you forget your oath? Are you one of us, or are you a common hypocrite, who will be of us until the hour of self-sacrifice, and then fly like a coward? Elsie, you must leave to-night."

"Ah! my husband, my husband!" sobbed the unhappy woman.

"You have no husband, woman," cried Brake, harshly. "I promised Dayton not to speak to you as long as you were his wife, but the vow was annulled before it was

made. Your husband in God yet awaits you. You will yet be blessed with the true spouse."

"I feel as if I were going to die," cried Elsie. "How can I ever forsake him, — he who was so good to me?"

"Nonsense! no weakness. He is not worthy of you. Go home and prepare for your journey. You know where to meet me. I will have everything ready, and by daybreak there shall be no trace of us left. Beware of permitting your husband to suspect anything. He is not very shrewd at such things, — he thought I was a Jesuit in disguise, — but we had better be careful. Now go. You have been too long here already. Bless you, sister."

A few faint sobs, a rustling of leaves, and I knew that Brake was alone. I rose, and stepped silently into the open space in which he stood. His back was toward me. His arms were lifted high over his head with an exultant gesture, and I could see his profile, as it slightly turned toward me, illuminated with a smile of scornful triumph. I put my hand suddenly on his throat from behind, and flung him on the ground before he could utter a cry.

"Not a word," I said, unclasping a short-bladed knife which I carried; "answer my questions, or, by heaven, I will cut your throat from ear to ear!"

He looked up into my face with an unflinching eye, and set his lips as if resolved to suffer all.

"What are you? Who are you? What object have you in the seduction of my wife?"

He smiled, but was silent.

"Ah! you won't answer. We'll see."

I pressed the knife slowly against his throat. His face contracted spasmodically, but although a thin red thread of blood sprang out along the edge of the blade, Brake

remained mute. An idea suddenly seized me. This sort of death had no terrors for him. I would try another. There was the precipice. I was twice as powerful as he was, so I seized him in my arms, and in a moment transported him to the margin of the steep, smooth cliff, the edge of which was garnished with the tough stems of the wild vine. He seemed to feel it was useless to struggle with me, so allowed me passively to roll him over the edge. When he was suspended in the air, I gave him a vine stem to cling to and let him go. He swung at a height of eighty feet, with face upturned and pale. He dared not look down. I seated myself on the edge of the cliff, and with my knife began to cut into the thick vine a foot or two above the place of his grasp. I was correct in my calculation. This terror was too much for him. As he saw the notch in the vine getting deeper and deeper, his determination gave way.

"I'll answer you," he gasped out, gazing at me with starting eyeballs; "what do you ask?"

"What are you?" was my question, as I ceased cutting at the stem.

"A Mormon," was the answer, uttered with a groan. "Take me up. My hands are slipping. Quick!"

"And you wanted my wife to follow you to that infernal Salt Lake City, I suppose?"

"For God's sake, release me! I'll quit the place, never to come back. Do help me up, Dayton, — I'm falling!"

I felt mightily inclined to let the villain drop; but it did not suit my purpose to be hung for murder, so I swung him back again on the sward, where he fell panting and exhausted.

"Will you quit the place to-night?" I said. "You'd better. By Heaven, if you don't, I'll tell all the men in

the village, and we'll lynch you, as sure as your name is Brake."

"I'll go, — I'll go," he groaned. "I swear never to trouble you again."

"You ought to be hanged, you villain. Be off!"

He slunk away through the trees like a beaten dog; and I went home in a state bordering on despair. I found Elsie crying. She was sitting by the window as of old. I knew now why she gazed so constantly at the west. It was her Mecca. Something in my face, I suppose, told her that I was laboring under great excitement. She rose startled, as soon as I entered the room.

"Elsie," said I, "I am come to take you home."

"Home? Why, I *am* at home, am I not? What do you mean?"

"No. This is no longer your home. You have deceived me. You are a Mormon. I know all. You have become a convert to that apostle of hell, Brigham Young, and you cannot live with me. I love you still, Elsie, dearly; but — you must go and live with your father."

She saw there was no appeal from my word, and with a face hopeless with despair she arranged her dress and passively went with me.

I live in the same village with my wife, and yet am a widower. She is very penitent, they say; yet I cannot bring myself to believe that one who has allowed the Mormon poison to enter her veins can ever be cured. People say that we shall come together again, but I know better. Mine is not the first hearth that Mormonism has rendered desolate.

WHAT WAS IT?



It is, I confess, with considerable diffidence that I approach the strange narrative which I am about to relate. The events which I purpose detailing are of so extraordinary a character that I am quite prepared to meet with an unusual amount of incredulity and scorn. I accept all such beforehand. I have, I trust, the literary courage to face unbelief. I have, after mature consideration, resolved to narrate, in as simple and straightforward a manner as I can compass, some facts that passed under my observation, in the month of July last, and which, in the annals of the mysteries of physical science, are wholly unparalleled.

I live at No. — Twenty-sixth Street, in New York. The house is in some respects a curious one. It has enjoyed for the last two years the reputation of being haunted. It is a large and stately residence, surrounded by what was once a garden, but which is now only a green enclosure used for bleaching clothes. The dry basin of what has been a fountain, and a few fruit-trees ragged and unpruned, indicate that this spot in past days was a pleasant, shady retreat, filled with fruits and flowers and the sweet murmur of waters.

The house is very spacious. A hall of noble size leads to a large spiral staircase winding through its centre,

while the various apartments are of imposing dimensions. It was built some fifteen or twenty years since by Mr. A——, the well-known New York merchant, who five years ago threw the commercial world into convulsions by a stupendous bank fraud. Mr. A——, as every one knows, escaped to Europe, and died not long after, of a broken heart. Almost immediately after the news of his decease reached this country and was verified, the report spread in Twenty-sixth Street that No. ¹²— was haunted. Legal measures had dispossessed the widow of its former owner, and it was inhabited merely by a care-taker and his wife, placed there by the house-agent into whose hands it had passed for purposes of renting or sale. These people declared that they were troubled with unnatural noises. Doors were opened without any visible agency. The remnants of furniture scattered through the various rooms were, during the night, piled one upon the other by unknown hands. Invisible feet passed up and down the stairs in broad daylight, accompanied by the rustle of unseen silk dresses, and the gliding of viewless hands along the massive balusters. The care-taker and his wife declared they would live there no longer. The house-agent laughed, dismissed them, and put others in their place. The noises and supernatural manifestations continued. The neighborhood caught up the story, and the house remained untenanted for three years. Several persons negotiated for it; but, somehow, always before the bargain was closed they heard the unpleasant rumors and declined to treat any further.

It was in this state of things that my landlady, who at that time kept a boarding-house in Bleecker Street, and who wished to move further up town, conceived the bold idea of renting No. — Twenty-sixth Street. Hap-

pening to have in her house rather a plucky and philosophical set of boarders, she laid her scheme before us, stating candidly everything she had heard respecting the ghostly qualities of the establishment to which she wished to remove us. With the exception of two timid persons, — a sea-captain and a returned Californian, who immediately gave notice that they would leave, — all of Mrs. Moffat's guests declared that they would accompany her in her chivalric incursion into the abode of spirits.

Our removal was effected in the month of May, and we were charmed with our new residence. The portion of Twenty-sixth Street where our house is situated, between Seventh and Eighth Avenues, is one of the pleasantest localities in New York. The gardens back of the houses, running down nearly to the Hudson, form, in the summer time, a perfect avenue of verdure. The air is pure and invigorating, sweeping, as it does, straight across the river from the Weehawken heights, and even the ragged garden which surrounded the house, although displaying on washing days rather too much clothes-line, still gave us a piece of greensward to look at, and a cool retreat in the summer evenings, where we smoked our cigars in the dusk, and watched the fire-flies flashing their dark-lanterns in the long grass.

Of course we had no sooner established ourselves at No. — than we began to expect the ghosts. We absolutely awaited their advent with eagerness. Our dinner conversation was supernatural. One of the boarders, who had purchased Mrs. Crowe's "Night Side of Nature" for his own private delectation, was regarded as a public enemy by the entire household for not having bought twenty copies. The man led a life of supreme wretchedness while he was reading this volume. A system of

espionage was established, of which he was the victim. If he incautiously laid the book down for an instant and left the room, it was immediately seized and read aloud in secret places to a select few. I found myself a person of immense importance, it having leaked out that I was tolerably well versed in the history of supernaturalism, and had once written a story the foundation of which was a ghost. If a table or a wainscot panel happened to warp when we were assembled in the large drawing-room, there was an instant silence, and every one was prepared for an immediate clanking of chains and a spectral form.

After a month of psychological excitement, it was with the utmost dissatisfaction that we were forced to acknowledge that nothing in the remotest degree approaching the supernatural had manifested itself. Once the black butler asseverated that his candle had been blown out by some invisible agency while he was undressing himself for the night; but as I had more than once discovered this colored gentleman in a condition when one candle must have appeared to him like two, I thought it possible that, by going a step further in his potations, he might have reversed this phenomenon, and seen no candle at all where he ought to have beheld one.

Things were in this state when an incident took place so awful and inexplicable in its character that my reason fairly reels at the bare memory of the occurrence. It was the tenth of July. After dinner was over I repaired, with my friend Dr. Hammond, to the garden to smoke my evening pipe. Independent of certain mental sympathies which existed between the Doctor and myself, we were linked together by a vice. We both smoked opium. We knew each other's secret, and respected it. We enjoyed

together that wonderful expansion of thought, that marvellous intensifying of the perceptive faculties, that boundless feeling of existence when we seem to have points of contact with the whole universe, — in short, that unimaginable spiritual bliss, which I would not surrender for a throne, and which I hope you, reader, will never — never taste.

Those hours of opium happiness which the Doctor and I spent together in secret were regulated with a scientific accuracy. We did not blindly smoke the drug of paradise, and leave our dreams to chance. While smoking, we carefully steered our conversation through the brightest and calmest channels of thought. We talked of the East, and endeavored to recall the magical panorama of its glowing scenery. We criticised the most sensuous poets, — those who painted life ruddy with health, brimming with passion, happy in the possession of youth and strength and beauty. If we talked of Shakespeare's "Tempest," we lingered over Ariel, and avoided Caliban. Like the Guebers, we turned our faces to the east, and saw only the sunny side of the world.

This skilful coloring of our train of thought produced in our subsequent visions a corresponding tone. The splendors of Arabian fairy-land dyed our dreams. We paced that narrow strip of grass with the tread and port of kings. The song of the *rana arborea*, while he clung to the bark of the ragged plum-tree, sounded like the strains of divine musicians. Houses, walls, and streets melted like rain-clouds, and vistas of unimaginable glory stretched away before us. It was a rapturous companionship. We enjoyed the vast delight more perfectly because, even in our most ecstatic moments, we were conscious of each other's presence. Our pleasures, while

individual, were still twin, vibrating and moving in musical accord.

On the evening in question, the tenth of July, the Doctor and myself drifted into an unusually metaphysical mood. We lit our large meerschaums, filled with fine Turkish tobacco, in the core of which burned a little black nut of opium, that, like the nut in the fairy tale, held within its narrow limits wonders beyond the reach of kings; we paced to and fro, conversing. A strange perversity dominated the currents of our thought. They would *not* flow through the sun-lit channels into which we strove to divert them. [For some unaccountable reason, they constantly diverged into dark and lonesome beds, where a continual gloom brooded.] It was in vain that, after our old fashion, we flung ourselves on the shores of the East, and talked of its gay bazaars, of the splendors of the time of Haroun, of harems and golden palaces. Black afreets continually arose from the depths of our talk, and expanded, like the one the fisherman released from the copper vessel, until they blotted everything bright from our vision. Insensibly, we yielded to the occult force that swayed us, and indulged in gloomy speculation. We had talked some time upon the proneness of the human mind to mysticism, and the almost universal love of the terrible, when Hammond suddenly said to me, "What do you consider to be the greatest element of terror?"

The question puzzled me. That many things were terrible, I knew. Stumbling over a corpse in the dark; beholding, as I once did, a woman floating down a deep and rapid river, with wildly lifted arms, and awful, upturned face, uttering, as she drifted, shrieks that rent one's heart, while we, the spectators, stood frozen at a

window which overhung the river at a height of sixty feet, unable to make the slightest effort to save her, but dumbly watching her last supreme agony and her disappearance. A shattered wreck, with no life visible, encountered floating listlessly on the ocean, is a terrible object, for it suggests a huge terror, the proportions of which are veiled. But it now struck me, for the first time, that there must be one great and ruling embodiment of fear, — a King of Terrors, to which all others must succumb. What might it be? To what train of circumstances would it owe its existence?

“I confess, Hammond,” I replied to my friend, “I never considered the subject before. That there must be one Something more terrible than any other thing, I feel. I cannot attempt, however, even the most vague definition.”

“I am somewhat like you, Harry,” he answered. “I feel my capacity to experience a terror greater than anything yet conceived by the human mind; — something combining in fearful and unnatural amalgamation hitherto supposed incompatible elements. The calling of the voices in Brockden Brown’s novel of ‘Wieland’ is awful; so is the picture of the Dweller of the Threshold, in Bulwer’s ‘Zanoni’; but,” he added, shaking his head gloomily, “there is something more horrible still than these.”

“Look here, Hammond,” I rejoined, “let us drop this kind of talk, for heaven’s sake! We shall suffer for it, depend on it.”

“I don’t know what’s the matter with me to-night,” he replied, “but my brain is running upon all sorts of weird and awful thoughts. I feel as if I could write a story like Hoffman, to-night, if I were only master of a literary style.”

“Well, if we are going to be Hoffmanesque in our talk, I’m off to bed. Opium and nightmares should never be brought together. How sultry it is! Good-night, Hammond.”

“Good-night, Harry. Pleasant dreams to you.”

“To you, gloomy wretch, afreets, ghouls, and enchanters.”

We parted, and each sought his respective chamber. I undressed quickly and got into bed, taking with me, according to my usual custom, a book, over which I generally read myself to sleep. I opened the volume as soon as I had laid my head upon the pillow, and instantly flung it to the other side of the room. It was Goudon’s “History of Monsters,” — a curious French work, which I had lately imported from Paris, but which, in the state of mind I had then reached, was anything but an agreeable companion. I resolved to go to sleep at once; so, turning down my gas until nothing but a little blue point of light glimmered on the top of the tube, I composed myself to rest.

The room was in total darkness. The atom of gas that still remained alight did not illuminate a distance of three inches round the burner. I desperately drew my arm across my eyes, as if to shut out even the darkness, and tried to think of nothing. It was in vain. The confounded themes touched on by Hammond in the garden kept obtruding themselves on my brain. I battled against them. I erected ramparts of would-be blankness of intellect to keep them out. They still crowded upon me. While I was lying still as a corpse, hoping that by a perfect physical inaction I should hasten mental repose, an awful incident occurred. A Something dropped, as it seemed, from the ceiling, plumb upon my chest, and the

next instant I felt two bony hands encircling my throat, endeavoring to choke me. †

I am no coward, and am possessed of considerable physical strength. The suddenness of the attack, instead of stunning me, strung every nerve to its highest tension. My body acted from instinct, before my brain had time to realize the terrors of my position. In an instant I wound two muscular arms around the creature, and squeezed it, with all the strength of despair, against my chest. In a few seconds the bony hands that had fastened on my throat loosened their hold, and I was free to breathe once more. Then commenced a struggle of awful intensity. Immersed in the most profound darkness, totally ignorant of the nature of the Thing by which I was so suddenly attacked, finding my grasp slipping every moment, by reason, it seemed to me, of the entire nakedness of my assailant, bitten with sharp teeth in the shoulder, neck, and chest, having every moment to protect my throat against a pair of sinewy, agile hands, which my utmost efforts could not confine, — these were a combination of circumstances to combat which required all the strength, skill, and courage that I possessed.

At last, after a silent, deadly, exhausting struggle, I got my assailant under by a series of incredible efforts of strength. Once pinned, with my knee on what I made out to be its chest, I knew that I was victor. I rested for a moment to breathe. I heard the creature beneath me panting in the darkness, and felt the violent throbbing of a heart. It was apparently as exhausted as I was; that was one comfort. At this moment I remembered that I usually placed under my pillow, before going to bed, a large yellow silk pocket-handkerchief. I felt for it instantly; it was there. In a few

seconds more I had, after a fashion, pinioned the creature's arms.

I now felt tolerably secure. There was nothing more to be done but to turn on the gas, and, having first seen what my midnight assailant was like, arouse the household. I will confess to being actuated by a certain pride in not giving the alarm before; I wished to make the capture alone and unaided.

Never losing my hold for an instant, I slipped from the bed to the floor, dragging my captive with me. I had but a few steps to make to reach the gas-burner; these I made with the greatest caution, holding the creature in a grip like a vice. At last I got within arm's-length of the tiny speck of blue light which told me where the gas-burner lay. Quick as lightning I released my grasp with one hand and let on the full flood of light. Then I turned to look at my captive.

I cannot even attempt to give any definition of my sensations the instant after I turned on the gas. I suppose I must have shrieked with terror, for in less than a minute afterward my room was crowded with the inmates of the house. I shudder now as I think of that awful moment. *I saw nothing!* Yes; I had one arm firmly clasped round a breathing, panting, corporeal shape, my other hand gripped with all its strength a throat as warm, and apparently fleshly, as my own; and yet, with this living substance in my grasp, with its body pressed against my own, and all in the bright glare of a large jet of gas, I absolutely beheld nothing! Not even an outline, — a vapor!

I do not, even at this hour, realize the situation in which I found myself. I cannot recall the astounding incident thoroughly. Imagination in vain tries to compass the awful paradox.

It breathed. I felt its warm breath upon my cheek. It struggled fiercely. It had hands. They clutched me. Its skin was smooth, like my own. There it lay, pressed close up against me, solid as stone, — and yet utterly invisible!

I wonder that I did not faint or go mad on the instant. Some wonderful instinct must have sustained me; for, absolutely, in place of loosening my hold on the terrible Enigma, I seemed to gain an additional strength in my moment of horror, and tightened my grasp with such wonderful force that I felt the creature shivering with agony.

Just then Hammond entered my room at the head of the household. As soon as he beheld my face — which, I suppose, must have been an awful sight to look at — he hastened forward, crying, “Great heaven, Harry! what has happened?”

“Hammond! Hammond!” I cried, “come here. O, this is awful! I have been attacked in bed by something or other, which I have hold of; but I can’t see it, — I can’t see it!”

Hammond, doubtless struck by the unfeigned horror expressed in my countenance, made one or two steps forward with an anxious yet puzzled expression. A very audible titter burst from the remainder of my visitors. This suppressed laughter made me furious. To laugh at a human being in my position! It was the worst species of cruelty. *Now*, I can understand why the appearance of a man struggling violently, as it would seem, with an airy nothing, and calling for assistance against a vision, should have appeared ludicrous. *Then*, so great was my rage against the mocking crowd that had I the power I would have stricken them dead where they stood.

“Hammond! Hammond!” I cried again, despairingly,

“for God’s sake come to me. I can hold the — the thing but a short while longer. It is overpowering me. Help me! Help me!”

“Harry,” whispered Hammond, approaching me, “you have been smoking too much opium.”

“I swear to you, Hammond, that this is no vision,” I answered, in the same low tone. “Don’t you see how it shakes my whole frame with its struggles? If you don’t believe me, convince yourself. Feel it, — touch it.”

Hammond advanced and laid his hand in the spot I indicated. A wild cry of horror burst from him. He had felt it!

In a moment he had discovered somewhere in my room a long piece of cord, and was the next instant winding it and knotting it about the body of the unseen being that I clasped in my arms.

“Harry,” he said, in a hoarse, agitated voice, for, though he preserved his presence of mind, he was deeply moved, “Harry, it’s all safe now. You may let go, old fellow, if you’re tired. The Thing can’t move.”

I was utterly exhausted, and I gladly loosed my hold.

Hammond stood holding the ends of the cord that bound the Invisible, twisted round his hand, while before him, self-supporting as it were, he beheld a rope laced and interlaced, and stretching tightly around a vacant space. I never saw a man look so thoroughly stricken with awe. Nevertheless his face expressed all the courage and determination which I knew him to possess. His lips, although white, were set firmly, and one could perceive at a glance that, although stricken with fear, he was not daunted.

The confusion that ensued among the guests of the house who were witnesses of this extraordinary scene between Hammond and myself, — who beheld the panto-

mime of binding this struggling Something, — who beheld me almost sinking from physical exhaustion when my task of jailer was over, — the confusion and terror that took possession of the bystanders, when they saw all this, was beyond description. The weaker ones fled from the apartment. The few who remained clustered near the door and could not be induced to approach Hammond and his Charge. Still incredulity broke out through their terror. They had not the courage to satisfy themselves, and yet they doubted. It was in vain that I begged of some of the men to come near and convince themselves by touch of the existence in that room of a living being which was invisible. They were incredulous, but did not dare to undeceive themselves. How could a solid, living, breathing body be invisible, they asked. My reply was this. I gave a sign to Hammond, and both of us — conquering our fearful repugnance to touch the invisible creature — lifted it from the ground, manacled as it was, and took it to my bed. Its weight was about that of a boy of fourteen.

“Now, my friends,” I said, as Hammond and myself held the creature suspended over the bed, “I can give you self-evident proof that here is a solid, ponderable body, which, nevertheless, you cannot see. Be good enough to watch the surface of the bed attentively.”

I was astonished at my own courage in treating this strange event so calmly; but I had recovered from my first terror, and felt a sort of scientific pride in the affair, which dominated every other feeling.

The eyes of the bystanders were immediately fixed on my bed. At a given signal Hammond and I let the creature fall. There was the dull sound of a heavy body alighting on a soft mass. The timbers of the bed creaked.

A deep impression marked itself distinctly on the pillow, and on the bed itself. The crowd who witnessed this gave a low cry, and rushed from the room. Hammond and I were left alone with our Mystery. #

We remained silent for some time, listening to the low, irregular breathing of the creature on the bed, and watching the rustle of the bed-clothes as it impotently struggled to free itself from confinement. Then Hammond spoke.

“Harry, this is awful.”

“Ay, awful.”

“But not unaccountable.”

“Not unaccountable! What do you mean? Such a thing has never occurred since the birth of the world. I know not what to think, Hammond. God grant that I am not mad, and that this is not an insane fantasy!”

“Let us reason a little, Harry. Here is a solid body which we touch, but which we cannot see. The fact is so unusual that it strikes us with terror. Is there no parallel, though, for such a phenomenon? Take a piece of pure glass. It is tangible and transparent. A certain chemical coarseness is all that prevents its being so entirely transparent as to be totally invisible. It is not *theoretically impossible*, mind you, to make a glass which shall not reflect a single ray of light, — a glass so pure and homogeneous in its atoms that the rays from the sun will pass through it as they do through the air, refracted but not reflected. We do not see the air, and yet we feel it.”

“That’s all very well, Hammond, but these are inanimate substances. Glass does not breathe, air does not breathe. *This* thing has a heart that palpitates, — a will that moves it, — lungs that play, and inspire and respire.”

“You forget the phenomena of which we have so often

heard of late," answered the Doctor, gravely. "At the meetings called 'spirit circles,' invisible hands have been thrust into the hands of those persons round the table, — warm, fleshy hands that seemed to pulsate with mortal life."

"What? Do you think, then, that this thing is —"

"I don't know what it is," was the solemn reply; "but please the gods I will, with your assistance, thoroughly investigate it."

We watched together, smoking many pipes, all night long, by the bedside of the unearthly being that tossed and panted until it was apparently wearied out. Then we learned by the low, regular breathing that it slept.

The next morning the house was all astir. The boarders congregated on the landing outside my room, and Hammond and myself were lions. We had to answer a thousand questions as to the state of our extraordinary prisoner, for as yet not one person in the house except ourselves could be induced to set foot in the apartment.

The creature was awake. This was evidenced by the convulsive manner in which the bed-clothes were moved in its efforts to escape. There was something truly terrible in beholding, as it were, those second-hand indications of the terrible writhings and agonized struggles for liberty which themselves were invisible.

Hammond and myself had racked our brains during the long night to discover some means by which we might realize the shape and general appearance of the Enigma. As well as we could make out by passing our hands over the creature's form, its outlines and lineaments were human. There was a mouth; a round, smooth head without hair; a nose, which, however, was little elevated above the cheeks; and its hands and feet felt like those of a

boy. At first we thought of placing the being on a smooth surface and tracing its outline with chalk, as shoemakers trace the outline of the foot. This plan was given up as being of no value. Such an outline would give not the slightest idea of its conformation.

* A happy thought struck me. We would take a cast of it in plaster of Paris. This would give us the solid figure, and satisfy all our wishes. But how to do it? The movements of the creature would disturb the setting of the plastic covering, and distort the mould. Another thought. Why not give it chloroform? It had respiratory organs, — that was evident by its breathing. Once reduced to a state of insensibility, we could do with it what we would. Doctor X—— was sent for; and after the worthy physician had recovered from the first shock of amazement, he proceeded to administer the chloroform. In three minutes afterward we were enabled to remove the fetters from the creature's body, and a modeller was busily engaged in covering the invisible form with the moist clay. In five minutes more we had a mould, and before evening a rough fac-simile of the Mystery. It was shaped like a man, — distorted, uncouth, and horrible, but still a man. It was small, not over four feet and some inches in height, and its limbs revealed a muscular development that was unparalleled. Its face surpassed in hideousness anything I had ever seen. Gustave Doré, or Callot, or Tony Johannot, never conceived anything so horrible. There is a face in one of the latter's illustrations to *Un Voyage où il vous plaira*, which somewhat approaches the countenance of this creature, but does not equal it. It was the physiognomy of what I should fancy a ghoul might be. It looked as if it was capable of feeding on human flesh.

Having satisfied our curiosity, and bound every one in the house to secrecy, it became a question what was to be done with our Enigma? It was impossible that we should keep such a horror in our house; it was equally impossible that such an awful being should be let loose upon the world. I confess that I would have gladly voted for the creature's destruction. But who would shoulder the responsibility? Who would undertake the execution of this horrible semblance of a human being? Day after day this question was deliberated gravely. The boarders all left the house. Mrs. Moffat was in despair, and threatened Hammond and myself with all sorts of legal penalties if we did not remove the Horror. Our answer was, "We will go if you like, but we decline taking this creature with us. Remove it yourself if you please. It appeared in your house. On you the responsibility rests." To this there was, of course, no answer. Mrs. Moffat could not obtain for love or money a person who would even approach the Mystery.

The most singular part of the affair was that we were entirely ignorant of what the creature habitually fed on. Everything in the way of nutriment that we could think of was placed before it, but was never touched. It was awful to stand by, day after day, and see the clothes toss, and hear the hard breathing, and know that it was starving.

Ten, twelve days, a fortnight passed, and it still lived. The pulsations of the heart, however, were daily growing fainter, and had now nearly ceased. It was evident that the creature was dying for want of sustenance. While this terrible life-struggle was going on, I felt miserable. I could not sleep. Horrible as the creature was, it was pitiful to think of the pangs it was suffering.

At last it died. Hammond and I found it cold and stiff one morning in the bed. The heart had ceased to beat, the lungs to inspire. We hastened to bury it in the garden. It was a strange funeral, the dropping of that viewless corpse into the damp hole. The cast of its form I gave to Doctor X——, who keeps it in his museum in Tenth Street.

As I am on the eve of a long journey from which I may not return, I have drawn up this narrative of an event the most singular that has ever come to my knowledge.

DUKE HUMPHREY'S DINNER.*

“HAVE we no more coal, Agnes?”

“No more.”

“What the deuce are we going to do for fire?”

“I have n't the slightest idea, Dick. You're clever. Why don't you invent some way of warming one's self without the aid of fire?”

“If you were a man I could box with you,” said Dick, looking meditatively at his wife as if wondering whether she could stand a round or two. “Boxing warms one up famously; but then we have no gloves.”

“No,” said Agnes, with a laugh, “and we shall have no shoes either in a very short time,” — and she pushed out, as she spoke, a little foot with a dilapidated slipper on it.

“What a funny thing it is to have no money, Agnes!” said Dick, gazing at a very small fire which smouldered in the grate, with a rather contemplative air. “Do you know that, if it was n't so confoundedly cold, I'd rather enjoy poverty. Now in summer-time there must be something very *piquant* in misery.”

* O'Brien wrote a little comedy on the same subject treated in this story, which was produced at Wallack's Theatre, February 4th, 1856, with Mr. Lester Wallack as *Burdoon*, and Mrs. Hoey as *Agnes*. — ED.

"Only to think," answered Agnes, "of the thousands of dollars that I've thrown away on follies, when a tenth part of the sum would be a perfect dream of happiness now."

"At present five dollars would present as magnificent an appearance as the English national debt in gold sovereigns."

"Do you remember the ball at which you first proposed to me, Dick?"

"Don't I?"

"The large, lofty rooms, glowing with burnished gold and soft lights;—the carpets, with their elastic, mossy pile, into which one's feet sank so far and so pleasantly that they became loath to leave their nests, making one lounge lazily instead of walking;—the conservatory, dimly lit with colored lamps, where tropical leaves nodded heavily, as if bathed in Eastern dreams, and the rich scent of the tuberose wandered through the trees like the souls of dead flowers roaming in search of some bloomy paradise;—the music streaming through the wide doors of the dancing-rooms, and quivering off into the distance; the rustle of rich silks; the murmur of the thousand voices; the light; the perfume; the glory of youth and joy spreading over everything like an atmosphere of human sunshine in which myriads of gay and splendid butterflies floated. Don't you remember, Dick?"

"I do," answered Dick, with rather a sad smile, and a glance round the wretched room in which they were sitting. "I remember well the glories of the life in which you were born, and the contrast, strange enough, with the life to which I have brought you. You have described the past; let me describe the present. A fourth-story room in a tumble-down tenement-house in the

filthiest part of Mulberry Street. German shoemakers and Irish washerwomen above and below us. No furniture save a table and a pallet-bed. A couple of old wine-boxes to sit on, in place of chairs. Two feet of snow on the ground, and no coal; an exceedingly healthy and promising hunger gnawing at both of us, and no money to buy food. All our available goods sold or pawned long ago. Repudiated by our relatives because we chose to marry each other on the ridiculous basis of mutual affection. All our efforts to obtain work being constantly frustrated by either Providence or his Satanic Majesty. Just enough of inconvenient pride left in us to prevent us from begging. And I think, my dear Agnes, you have as pretty a case for suicide as ever came up in evidence before a Paris police court. Don't you feel like a pan of charcoal and a last embrace? or a dose of strychnine and a despairing letter to our friends? I would offer you a pair of pistols and a mutual shooting arrangement, but at present my account at the Merchants' Bank is rather confused, and I do not like to draw a check for any amount until it is settled."

And the young husband laughed as heartily as if the whole thing were a sort of comedy which he was rehearsing, and which he thought he was doing exceedingly well.

"Dick," said his wife, very earnestly, coming round to where her husband sat, and kissing him gently on the forehead, — "Dick, you are jesting, are you not? You have no such ideas, I trust?"

"Jesting? Of course I am, you dear little puss! Of all the unphilosophical things a man can do, killing himself is about the most unphilosophical. To kill another man is unphilosophical, because the chances are ten to one

that the murder will be discovered, and the perpetrator hanged. Therefore, murder is only a devious way of committing suicide, with the additional disadvantage of having killed a fellow-creature. But, as far as regards the individual, suicide is still more unphilosophical than murder, for you do not allow yourself even a chance of escape. We may have to die of starvation, my dear little Mentor, though I think it unlikely. If we have, however, the best thing we can do is to use all the means in our power to avert the unpleasant occurrence, and, if it comes, meet it manfully, — you may say womanfully, if you choose. But if we were to kill ourselves by poison in order to avoid dying twenty hours later of starvation, don't you think we should be doing rather an absurd thing? Particularly if, after we were dead, our spirits discovered that Providence would have sent us, at the nineteenth hour, some guardian angel, in shape of a friend, who would have relieved us from all our misery. No, my dear, we won't have any prussic acid, or French exits from life. When we are too weak to stand up, we will lie down side by side; and when we are too exhausted to live, we will clasp our hands together, bless God with our last breath, and die like the babes in the wood. Perhaps, after we are dead, that Irish washerwoman who lives in the fifth story may come in, like the robin in the legend, and cover us with leaves. She is n't very like a robin, certainly," continued Dick, with an air of mock meditation, "for she swears frightfully, and, I regret to say, smells of whiskey."

This struck the pair as so very comic an idea that they simultaneously clapped their hands, and burst into peals of laughter. To hear those shrieks of merriment one would have thought this young couple the blithest and most careless creatures in the world.

Their history was a simple romance. They were both orphans, the only difference being that Agnes Grey was an orphan with rich relatives, and Richard Burdoon an orphan with no relatives at all. Agnes had been adopted by her uncle, an old bachelor, who lived in Boston, — a selfish old man, who, once he took possession of the poor girl, looked on her as his personal property, and regarded all who would seek to deprive him of her as atrocious burglars, worthy of the extremest penalties of the law. He petted her, then, as Caligula petted his favorite horse. She was clothed in purple and fine linen, and had her gilded stable. Agnes Grey had but to express a desire, and every luxury that wealth could purchase dropped at her feet from the hands of the abominable old fairy, her uncle. She gave balls and *matinées*, and rode on Arab steeds. Her jewels were the newest and the most wonderful, her dresses unimaginably well-fitting. Having wealth, beauty, and an indulgent guardian, this charming young girl wanted but one thing, — a lover. It is a curious dispensation of Providence, that, while some young ladies are all their lives waiting for lovers, that commodity never arrives, whereas others have scarce begun to feel the vague desire, when lo! it rains and hails and snows any quantity of adoring young gentlemen. Agnes Grey, then, had scarcely conjured up the youngest of desires in her most secret heart, when the wall opened, and Mr. Richard Burdoon, stepping out, proclaimed himself her lover. I don't mean to say that the wall opened in reality, but it is a metaphorical way I have of expressing that he arrived in the nick of time. They met at a party. Mr. Burdoon, having been left a few thousand dollars just one year previously by the death of his only surviving relative, set off for Europe to spend them. He succeeded

to admiration, and, at the time I speak of, had just returned with an immense deal of useless experience, and just three hundred and fifty dollars. Considering, very properly, that so enormous a capital justified any folly, he ran off with Miss Agnes Grey, without consulting her avuncular dragon. That jealous old relative, wounded in his tenderest spot, raged like a fury, disowned his unhappy niece, and swore a solemn oath that he would let her die of starvation ere he would assist her. At first, Agnes and her husband mentally whistled at his threats. Had they not three hundred and fifty dollars? Armed with so incalculable a sum, what cared they for poverty? They came to New York. Ah! how quickly did the scenes in the panorama succeed each other! Metropolitan Hotel and fine apartments; then boarding-house, and sudden departure therefrom owing to bills unpaid; then cheap lodgings and visits to the pawnbroker; then appealing letters to old uncle,—all of which were returned unopened. Lastly, in the miserable tenement in Mulberry Street, we find them without sixpence, laughing in the face of starvation.

What wonders will not youth and hope work! What horrible witches fly affrighted at its merry laugh, piercing as the clarion of the cock! Midas should have been the god of youth, for he turned everything to gold!

After a pause in the merry talk of this young couple, which I took advantage of in order to relate all I knew of their history, Dick said suddenly, as if the conviction forced itself on him for the first time, "Do you know, Agnes, that I feel absolutely hungry?"

"No! Do you, though?" said Agnes, with the most comic air of surprise. "Let us hasten up dinner."

"Certainly," answered Dick, falling instinctively in

with her humor. "This cook of ours is confoundedly slow to-day. I shall give her warning";—and he made a feint of looking at his watch.

"I will ring the bell, and tell John to hurry her," said Agnes, pulling an imaginary bell-rope. "John," she continued, after a pause sufficient to allow the mythical John to mount the stairs, — "John, tell the cook to send up the dinner instantly. Master is very angry at the delay."

"Yes, mum," replied a gruff voice, which Agnes, of course, did not affect to consider as proceeding from the bottom of Dick's chest. Then Agnes and her husband talked of indifferent matters for a moment or two, as if beguiling the weary time before dinner. After a proper period of delay, John's gruff voice announced dinner in the same mysterious manner as before. Then Dick made a great show of giving Agnes his arm, and leading her in state into the dining-room. This solemn procession, however, consisted in marching round the naked chamber a couple of times, and bringing up before the old deal table, which was supposed to be loaded with all the delicacies of the season. Dick was agreeably surprised at the splendor of the repast.

"What!" he exclaimed, seating himself on the old wine-box, and glancing over the bare table, — "what a sumptuous feast! Ha! I shall enjoy it. My appetite is splendid. John, remove the cover from the soup. This is *potage à la reine*, my dear. Excellent, if I may judge by the odor. Shall I send you some?"

"Thank you, dear," answered Agnes, receiving a supposititious soup-plate from the mythical John. "It is delicious! But oh! I declare, I have burned my mouth, it is so hot!" and Agnes went through all the spasms of a person suffering from a spoonful of hot soup.

“As I live, a salmon!” exclaimed Dick, starting into an attitude of surprise. “It is early in the season for such fish.”

“It was sent from Scotland, in ice,” replied Agnes.

“It is a noble animal!” said Dick, using an aerial fish-knife with wonderful dexterity. “There is no sport more magnificent than that of salmon-fishing, particularly on the Scotch and Irish rivers. The noble scenery, the rapid river, the long, lithe rod, the whizzing line that drops the gorgeous fly into the deep pool, where the silver-sided rascals lurk. Then the strike; the quick whirring of the wheel; the flashing leaps of the captive; the moments of agony when the line slackens as he runs up stream; the joy when he pulls again; the breathless anxiety when the gaff is thrust under him as he swims; the deep sigh of relief when he is hauled, flapping, shining, bleeding, dying, into the boat;—all this is—”

“Very eloquent, no doubt,” says Agnes; “but your salmon is cooling all this time, my dear husband.”

“Ah! true,” cries Dick, with a sudden start, and applying himself with instant vigor to the discussion of a supposed cut of rosy flesh, with mealy flakes of white lying in the crevices of the meat. “What a delicious salmon! We are indebted to our noble friend in Scotland.”

“You will find this *turban de volaille aux truffes* very excellent,” said Agnes, peering with the air of a connoisseur at the ideal dish before her. “François’s last master says that he is celebrated for it.”

“Hum! we will see,” muttered Dick, pursing up his lips, and leaning back as far as he could on the wine-box, with a critical importance. “Good heavens, Agnes!” he exclaimed, the moment after, with an air of horror, “how could you recommend this? Why, the fellow has not put

a single cock's-comb in it! Pshaw! Here, John, take this away, and tell François, if he sends up a dish of that kind again, I will condemn him to eat it."

"Fortunately, there are some delicious *cotelettes à la financière* left, so that we can dispense with the *volaille*," says Agnes.

"They are indeed excellent," answers Dick, making believe that his mouth is full of the succulent meat of the *cotelettes*.

So on through the whole of this strange repast. Delicacy after delicacy was announced, — some relished, others criticised, more dismissed indignantly. The unlucky François came in for many severe rebukes, transmitted through the mythical John. The game was pronounced overdone, and an English pheasant — a present from an illustrious British friend — was condemned as having been utterly spoiled in the dressing. The dessert, however, consisted of a *soufflet*, and a delicious confection, called *gâteaux Egyptienne*, was solemnly pronounced to be perfect, and John was commissioned to convey a flattering compliment to François, as a salve for the rebukes given during the previous courses. Two children, playing at "feasting," could not have conducted this visionary repast more earnestly. The correct wines were drunk at the correct moment, and all the little ceremonies of a formal dinner scrupulously performed.

When all was over, — when the coffee had been served and drunk, when the table had been cleared away, and John had respectfully retired, — the eyes of the young couple met, and a flash of laughter sprang from the encounter. Casting aside the elegant formality of the great lady *en grand tenue*, Agnes ran to her husband, and, clasping him round the neck, fairly sobbed out her laughter on his breast.

“Do you know, dear,” said Dick, after a little while, “it may entail on me the reputation of being a glutton, of having a wolf in my stomach, of being a vampire, or a thousand other unpleasant reports? But I nevertheless cannot help confessing that I feel rather more hungry than I did before I commenced that exquisite dinner, which, in spite of some failures, does François infinite credit.”

“Would you like to dine over again, Dick?” inquired his wife, with a grave air. “Nothing is easier, you know.”

“Certainly,” answered Dick, dubiously, “nothing is easier; but — but I’m rather afraid that my tastes are becoming somewhat coarse. I am really ashamed of the very idea; but the fact is that at this very moment I have an intense longing for a piece of roast beef.”

“That is singular,” said Agnes, with an air of surprise. “However, nature sometimes avenges itself on luxury, by afflicting her votaries with homely tastes. I really pity you, Dick. For my part, nothing less delicate than a reed-bird, — tender, succulent, melting, — an epitome, in fact, of perfume, nourishment, and flavor, — nothing less than this could possibly tempt my pampered appetite.”

“I declare, Agnes,” cried Dick, “I have a fancy just now to behave like a poor devil who has n’t got a penny. Yes! you may shrug your shoulders, but I really wish to divest myself of my splendor, and commit an act that contradicts the magnificence with which we are surrounded.”

“Explain yourself.”

“You remember that magnificent edition of Erasmus which my old friend, Harry Waters, gave me when I was

going abroad. Well, I cherish that book dearly, for the sake of him, and the few affectionate lines he has written on the fly-leaf. Now, if a very poor man had that book he would sell it, if he had nothing else to dispose of, for it is clasped with silver, and is worth something; so I, who wish, merely for a freak, to experience the sensations of a poor man, have an idea of going out and selling that book, — merely for the sake of the illusion, you know. Nothing more, on my honor.”

“You always had queer fancies, dear,” answered Agnes, as unconcernedly as if she had millions in her purse; but one might see beneath all that careless gayety a sudden flash of hope sparkle for an instant. One could see very plainly that this book — which, doubtless, had till then been forgotten — gave her a new lease of life; one could see very plainly how bravely she had been smiling in the face of hunger and of death.

“Let me perform the last act of the millionaire before I play the part of a beggar,” said Dick, rising joyously from his wine-box. “Sardanapalus burned his furniture; why should not I consume my chairs? The fire is going out in a most unaccountable manner; let us see how this *fauteuil* will blaze.” So saying, he broke the wine-box into fragments, and cast it into the almost fireless grate.

The wine-box blazed. A lofty, ruddy flame sprang up in the fireplace, and shed a glow over the cold, naked room. It seemed as if the purple Burgundy that once had lain between those few boards had left some portion of its fiery heart behind it. Who knows but that a bottle of that glowing wine was at that very moment sparkling on some splendid table, — that in some other hemisphere the curtains were drawn close, and the wax-lights blazing, and a party of jolly fellows, with legs well stretched

under the shining mahogany, were toasting beautiful women, while the case which held the precious juice they were quaffing, the shell from which the soul that they were inhaling had fled, was burning in a rusty grate, and making a bonfire to scare away the wehrwolf, death?

"The blaze is really quite cheerful," said Agnes, warming her hands, while a faint glow of pleasure spread itself over her face. "Do you know that I think a wood-fire preferable to all others?"

"It recalls the feudal times," answered Dick. "We are in a vast baronial hall. The roof is solid with ribs of blackened oak, and antlers hang from the walls, to each horn of which cling a thousand memories of the chase. The floor is of solid stone. Old, tattered banners droop from the walls, and wave heavily, as if too weak with age to shake off the thickening dust that soils their historic splendor. No modern garments shroud our limbs. You, dearest, are clad in a lustrous Cramoisie velvet, with peaked stomacher, and stately train sweeping on the ground. A cavalier's hat, with its trailing feather, droops over my temples. My sword clangs against the pavement, and I assume a picturesque and haughty attitude, as I stand with my back to the wide fireplace, where huge logs of oak, supported by iron 'dogs,' spit and blaze, and send streams of sparkles up the huge chimney. I am at present meditating whether Hubert the seneschal shall be beheaded or not. Shall I order his instant execution, or —"

"Sell the book?" interrupted Agnes; "please yourself."

"By Jove, I forgot!" said Dick, forgetting in a moment all his splendor and feudality. "Agnes, I'll be

back in five minutes. Tell John to prepare tea, and let us have the Sèvres service";— and he bolted down the crazy stairs, reaching the bottom in a few bounds.

Agnes smiled sorrowfully as she crouched over the rapidly-sinking fire. The wine-box was fast losing its fiery spirit and degenerating into a dull mass of blackening embers. Now that her joyous young husband was away she had no one with whom she could laugh at misery. It takes two to fight that crawling, cruel monster. The moment the echoes of Dick's footsteps had died away the horror laid its cold hand upon her heart. It was in vain that she tried to sing, to laugh, to conjure up those comical visions which she and Dick had used so often before as an exorcism. She felt a black wall, as it were, closing gradually round her; the air became too thick to breathe; the last bit of sky was gradually being shut off, — then — then a quick foot on the stairs, a merry cricket-like voice, a half-sung carol, and Dick burst into the room, performing a species of triumphal dance. A piece of paper fluttered in his hand.

"Two dollars!" he cried, executing an indescribable figure. "Going for two dollars! This splendid, magnificent, delicious, succulent book, with silver facings, like a militia officer, going for two dollars! Who'll bid? Only two dollars! Gone at two dollars!"

"You don't mean to say —" said Agnes, rising eagerly.

"I do. I absolutely got two dollars for the book. 'T was worth fifteen; but then you know we must not be too nice. Isn't it splendid?" and he waved the two-dollar bill as a young ensign waves his standard in the battle. "I brought it home, Agnes dear, because I think you are the best person to spend it. These wretches of

tradespeople would certainly cheat me if I attempted to buy any eatables. What shall it be?"

"What do you think of sausages?" said Agnes, suggesting rather timidly. "They are cheap and —"

"Excellent!" cried Dick, with a new pirouette, "charming! I adore the sausage. Sausage, with some nice white bread, a pat of butter, and a few apples, and we shall feast in dazzling splendor!"

"Not forgetting a cigar for Dick," whispered Agnes, looking up lovingly in his face. "I know that you long for a cigar."

"Angel!" cried Dick, clasping her in his arms, and waltzing round the room with her. "There are no soundings to the depth of woman's love!"

"I'm off to the market, love," said Agnes, giving him a kiss; but this chaste salute was suddenly interrupted by a knock at the door. Both hearts leaped. Who could it be? A new misfortune? The bookseller, where Dick sold the book, seemed suspicious about his being in possession of such property. Heaven grant that nothing unpleasant threatened, was the prayer of the young couple.

"Does Mr. Burdoon live here?" said a very deep, gruff voice.

"Yes," said Dick, boldly, "come in."

A short, thick-set man in a great-coat entered, and stood near the door. It was a dusky twilight in the room. The Assyrian bonfire of the wine-box had just expired in a few convulsive sparkles, and it was in vain that Dick tried to see the stranger's countenance.

"Are you Mr. Burdoon?" asked the visitor.

"I am," answered Dick; "what is your business, sir? I would ask you to be seated, but, unfortunately, all my furniture is packed up."

"Never mind," answered the man, gruffly. "You sold a book a short time since at Mr. Marbell's bookstore, did you not?"

"I really am not aware, sir," said Dick, haughtily, "that this is any one's business but my own."

"Softly, softly, my friend," answered the new-comer. "No need of quarrelling. How did that book come into your possession?"

"Are you a police-officer?" inquired Dick, in a menacing tone.

"Never mind," said the man, "answer my question first."

"When I have answered it, I shall kick you down stairs, my friend."

"I'll run the risk," said the fellow, with a short laugh.

"Well, then, it was given to me by a friend," answered Dick, making an ominous step toward the intruder.

"Wait a moment,—don't kick me down stairs just yet. Why did you part with that book?"

"Curse you, that's none of your business," cried Dick, savagely. "If you value your bones you'll leave me."

"I don't value my bones, so I'll stay until you have answered me," said the man, very quietly. Dick could not help smiling at this audacity.

"Every question I answer," said he, "I shall give you an additional kick for. You know the terms,—ask away."

"Why did you part with that book?"

"Because I was starving. Because I saw my wife fainting, and dying of cold and hunger before my eyes, all the time with a brave smile upon her lips. Because I have sought for work and could not get it. Because there was neither food, nor fire, nor furniture in this wretched hole. Because starvation was flapping his wings like a vulture, hoping each moment to plunge

his beak into our vitals. For these reasons I sold the book that dear old Harry Waters gave me, and for none other would I have profaned his gift. Now I have exposed my misery to you, sir, whoever you are, and you shall pay dearly for it. I will break every bone in your body," and he sprang like a tiger at the short, thick-set man, who stood in the gloom. He felt himself suddenly seized by the shoulder, and rooted to the earth, as if he had been in the grip of an enormous vise.

"Dick Burdoon," said the thick-set man, and this time his voice was sweet and soft as a woman's, "you are not going to kick me, Dick Burdoon; for many a star-lit night, in the silent fields, you have lain with my arms around you, and your head upon my bosom, while we talked of the splendid things we would achieve when we two went out into life hand in hand."

Dick trembled like a leaf, and said not a word.

"You will not kick me, Dick Burdoon," went on the thick-set man, loosening his grasp of Dick's shoulder, and drawing closer as he spoke, "because one day, when the sun was pitiless, and the river cool, a young, weak boy, tempted by the clear waters, ventured into a deep part, and went down. And then his friend, older and stronger than himself, plunged in, determined to rescue that fair boy or perish with him. And he dived into the deep waters twice, and the second time he found him, clasped in the meshes of loathsome weeds, with the merciless river sweeping away his young life. The elder boy struggled with him to land, and when they reached the shore people could scarce tell the saver from the saved. But when both recovered their strength and speech, the younger boy swore eternal gratitude to his preserver, and they vowed to be friends forevermore."

"I remember! I remember!" cried Dick sobbingly.

"Since that time," continued the thick-set man, "their paths in life have lain asunder; but I know that in the hearts of both the old friendship lives still, and that, if one of the twain were frowned on by the world, the other would pour out his life in smiles to make it sunshine with him again. That is why I know that you will not kick me, Dick Burdoon."

"Harry! Harry Waters, — my dear, dear old boy!" cried Dick through his tears, and flinging himself into the visitor's arms. "God bless you for coming, Harry, for I needed you sorely."

"I saw you, my boy," said Harry, folding him in an embrace so gentle that one would imagine he was fondling a child, — "I saw you the moment you entered the shop. You know I was always famous for poking in old book-stores, and I am glad I have such tastes. I saw you selling the old Erasmus, my boy, and knew that something must be wrong with you. I followed you here, and now we three are joined, thank God, for a long time to come." And the kind fellow took poor, timid Agnes's hand and drew her close till all three were united in one fond trinity of love.

Need I tell how Harry Waters, the rich bachelor, carried Agnes and Dick off that evening to his house, and made much of them there? Need I say how they lived with him until Dick got employment, from which he has gradually raised himself to be a great merchant? Need I tell about that solemn christening, whereat Dick's first-born was named, with much ceremony, Harry Waters Burdoon? A hint of all those happy days will, I am sure, be enough for the warm-hearted reader, who has long since, I know, wished the young couple a full meal. One

thing I must relate, however, — an incident that occurred on the evening after the sale of the Erasmus. When the sobbings and the embraces were all over, Harry Waters, by way of saying something general, said to Dick, “By the way, have you dined yet?”

Dick turned to his wife, who smiled.

“O, yes, we dined sumptuously an hour ago,” said Dick.

“Ah! indeed!” said Harry, rather surprised.

“Yes! we dined with Duke Humphrey!”

MILLY DOVE.



I.

It was the quaintest of imaginable rooms. It was deep and dark in the corners, where the very spirit of mystery itself seemed to hide away, while there lay from end to end of the crazy old floor a long bar of golden light, that had poured in through the single window, seeming like a luminous pathway which, if followed, would take one straight out through the diamonded casement, and so on to heaven. The walls were dim, and deeply panelled with some dark, melancholy wood, and in the chinks of every panel active spiders lived a toilsome life, passing their days in the construction of suspension-bridges from their houses to the ceiling, — which works were apparently undertaken from a purely scientific motive, as they were never seen to traverse them after they were finished. Three chairs lurked in the corners of this half-lit chamber. One of them — old-fashioned, with a high back and crooked arms — seemed to repose in the twilight of the place, like some high-shouldered old beau of the last century, silently reflecting, as it were, on the habits of the present generation. This old fellow was not, however, always in retreat. He was many a time during the day dragged forth into the centre of the stream of golden light that poured through the deep window, where he seemed to blink and shrink from the unwonted glare,

while a small, bright figure nestled into his comfortable angles, and pierced his bent and padded old arms with cruel pins, to which divers endless cotton threads were fastened. And then, as the sunlight poured splendidly through the diamond panes, powdering the air with golden dust and playing on the carvings of the ceiling, there was not a prettier picture in the world — not even in your grand foreign galleries beyond the sea — than Milly Dove, sitting in her sumptuous old chair.

She was very, very pretty, this little Milly Dove. Her eyes were so dark and blue, and the light that shone in them seemed to be so far off behind, that one saw it shining, shining miles and miles away, like the lights of a distant city across the sea! Then her hair was of such a rich brown, — golden-hued where the light struck it, — and her rosy, cloven mouth was so fresh and dewy, that, if I *were* a painter, I would not have tried to paint Milly Dove for the world, — I would only have dreamed of her.

Milly sat the greater part of the day in that high-backed chair, right in the sunny stream, working at her embroidery or knitting. I said before — prettily enough too, I think — that the light, as it poured in, seemed like a path to heaven. If it were so, who that saw this little maiden seated in its radiance would not say that she was an angel made to tread it?

She did not tread it, however, or even dream of any such proceeding as marching out through the window on a pavement of sunbeams, and wandering off into problematical regions. Not that Milly Dove did not wish to go to heaven; but she had so many things to do down below here that she never would have thought of such a journey, unless it pleased God to take her.

She had much to do, that little thing, though you would not think it to look at her. Milly Dove kept a shop. Yes! absolutely kept a shop. Directly opposite to that old-fashioned window which lit the little room, a small glass door stood always half open, through which one could catch a glimpse of a small counter and small shelves, and a varied assortment of the smallest merchandise it was possible to keep. Tiny drums for infants of a military turn of mind; scanty bundles of cotton and muslin stuffs, large enough, perhaps, to furnish dolls' dresses; infinitesimal brooches; ridiculously reduced thimbles; stunted whips; dwarf rakes and spades, and baby wheelbarrows, together with a hundred such like articles, useful or ornamental, lay on the shelves, were hidden away in secret places under the counter, or depended in bunches from the low ceiling.

It seemed exceedingly odd to be obliged to regard Milly Dove as the owner of all this magnificent and varied property. Her childish figure had nothing of the rigidity of a proprietor; she did not look as if she had any pockets to keep her money in; nor did she possess in the faintest degree the air of being arithmetical. No one would believe, to look into those clear, unworldly eyes, that she could buy or sell anything to the slightest advantage, — unless, indeed, it were eggs, that commodity having been, as every one knows who has read story-books, intrusted from time immemorial to pretty little girls to convey to market. Now, in spite of all this, Milly Dove was a famous hand at a bargain. It was excellent to see her standing behind her small counter, insisting pertinaciously on the price of some article which she was selling; explaining with much gravity, to the cunning clown who wished to purchase, its various merits

and positive value ; declaring that, if she gave it a cent cheaper, it would be a dead loss to her, — and how were folks to live if they did not make some profit on their goods ? Then all this with such a sweet and gentle firmness, such a mixture of innocence and shrewdness, that it must be a hard customer indeed who could find the heart to beat her down.

That house, — a small, old-fashioned New England tenement, smelling of the Mayflower, — together with the shop and its stock of goods, was all that Milly Dove possessed in this wide world. Her parents were dead, and this old roof, with a scanty supply of merchandise, was all they had to bequeath to their only child. And she managed her inheritance wonderfully well, let me tell you ! By the aid of her little shop, she made nearly two hundred and fifty dollars in the year ; and she had a tenant for the upper part of the house, in the person of a Mr. Josiah Compton, who paid her probably as much more ; so that this little proprietor of sixteen, although somewhat forlorn, was not very poor, and was able to lay something by every year in a savings bank at Boston.

Mr. Josiah Compton was Milly's only friend. He was a gnarled bachelor of fifty-six ; odd, kind-hearted, passionately attached to flowers and music, and loving dearly everything old and quaint, and which did not smell, as he said, of the modern varnish. He had lived in this house a very long time. Indeed, he had been living there for many a year before Milly was born, and loved the place for the air of quiet antiquity with which it was haunted. There was a curious old garden at the back of the house, which Mr. Josiah Compton had with his own hands brought to a high state of floral culture. He had labored at it for years, and had written

the history of his toil in flowers. The ground glowed with tulips and ranunculuses; fiery lychnises and rich-blossomed roses flaunted in the deep borders; trumpet honeysuckles thrust the golden lips of their horns through a tented drapery of glossy leaves, as if about to sound a challenge to the blue convolvulus; dahlias, drunk with dew, nodded their heavy heads; the campanulas, with their bells of intense blue, grew in close ranks around the edges of the beds, like a tiny army guarding the borders of this kingdom of flowers. Color and perfume floated like a spell through the entire place. The brilliant plants, trained into no formality, sprang up to heaven with a splendid freedom. The walks were paved with the blossoms that they shed, and the heavens were fragrant with the odors that they breathed

On this garden Mr. Compton's window opened; and he would sit in the summer time at his piano, with the casement flung wide, the rich perfume of the flowers floating in upon the languid air, and the rich music he awakened surging over and under and through all, and mingling itself inextricably with the warm breath of the blossoming roses.

Mr. Compton's playing — and he played beautifully — was a source of intense pleasure to Milly, as she sat in her old-fashioned parlor underneath, and watched the shop through the half-open door. Poor child! of music as an art she was profoundly ignorant. Dominants, subdominants, fifths and sevenths, intervals, contrapunta, and such like, were mysteries unknown to her by name. She had never heard any other performer than Mr. Compton; but those wild voluntaries that he played pleased her mightily, — those sad, harmonious wailings, that poured all day long through the open window, until toward the

close of day, when the sun was setting, they would burst into some triumphal melody that would sweep her soul up along the path of golden light striking heavenward, until it reached a goal so dazzlingly beautiful that she grew blinded with its glories.

She was very happy sitting there in the sunshine, knitting and listening to the music. Occasionally some villager, in need of a ball of twine or a pair of scissors, would enter the shop, and then Milly, jumping nimbly from her perch, would glide behind the small counter, looking intensely business-like. Or mayhap it would be some great boy who had just come into possession of wealth unlimited in the shape of a quarter-dollar, and who tremblingly entered Milly's little shop, determined, yet scarce knowing how, to spend it. And to all such Milly Dove was beautifully kind and patient; showing them, with perfect good-humor, all the expensive toys to which they pointed, although perfectly aware all the time of the extent of their means, which were generally displayed in their hands with the most confiding simplicity. Her little sales over, she would again retreat to her parlor, to knit, or, it may be, to take a good long peep at her panorama.

Milly Dove had a panorama. Not a panorama ever so many miles long, professing to exhibit the entire world in the most satisfactory manner possible in an hour and twenty-five minutes. No; Milly's panorama was, I must confess, limited in extent, but it possessed endless variety for her, and I do believe that she was never tired of looking at it.

The panorama was by no means complicated. Its exhibition was not encumbered with huge pulleys, and impossibly heavy weights and windlasses and cog-wheels to keep it moving. But, in spite of this insignificance when

compared with a "seven-mile mirror," Milly's panorama was for her a splendid pastime. It was an endless round of enjoyment, a garden of perpetual delights.

This work of art consisted of a large wooden box supported on four long, diverging, attenuated legs. It contained a few colored prints hung on hinges from the top, one hiding the other, each capable of being lifted into a horizontal position, so as to disclose the next picture in succession, by a series of little pulleys of a primitive character fixed on the exterior of the box. These pictures, when viewed through the double convex lens which was fixed in the front of the box at a proper focal distance, were magnified and glorified in so wonderful and splendid a manner, that to Milly they presented the aspect of illimitable paintings, unsurpassable in beauty of design or brilliancy of color. How this treasure of art had come into her family the little maiden was altogether ignorant. Her mother was possessed of it long before Milly made her appearance in the world, and when dying had left no tradition of its history. The probability was, that some wandering exhibitor may have left it with Mrs. Dove in pledge for unpaid board, and had never redeemed it, poor fellow!

But there it was, and when Milly was left alone in the world it became hers, — and proud enough of it she was, I can assure you. It afforded the dear child wondrous delight to look through the peep-hole, and draw up the paintings one after the other. She knew nothing of history, — I don't like her a bit the less for that, — and the subjects of these splendid illustrations would have remained mysteries to her forever, had it not been for the kindness of Mr. Compton, who would pull the strings as she peeped, and, assuming the air and manner of a veri-

table showman, explain each cartoon as it appeared. That gentleman, however, was not always quite certain himself as to what scenes were really depicted in this splendid gallery; but then he never hesitated on account of any want of knowledge, but assigned to each picture the most probable explanation and title he could think of. I have seen many grand battle-pieces in great galleries across the sea that might just as well have been called the battle of Pavia as the battle of Agincourt, and have looked at many a heathen goddess painted by some great old artist, who might quite as well have been put down as Moll Flanders in the catalogue, and no one would have questioned the propriety of the title. So I do not blame Mr. Compton in the least for his impromptu style of nomenclature. It satisfied Milly perfectly, and he had no other object.

These explanations did not, however, tax Mr. Compton's inventive faculties very largely. There were the Pyramids of Ghizeh, which he could not very well mistake, and which afforded him an opportunity of delivering a very learned discourse on the manners and customs of the ancient Egyptians, all carefully extracted from an encyclopædia; and there was the battle of Waterloo, which the Duke of Wellington's nose and Napoleon's coat identified sufficiently; but, again, there arose a fiery painting with flames, and soldiers, and much killing, and falling horses, with agonized mothers of large families in the fourth stories, which, having no better name for it, Mr. Compton christened the Battle of Prague; and when he afterward performed the piece of music of that name on the piano, and came to the part called by the composer in an explanatory note "the cries of the wounded," there remained no shadow of doubt on Milly's mind that the

picture was indeed a faithful representation of that terrible combat, and that Mr. Compton was the best-informed historian in the world.

Of late, somehow, Milly, poor child, was not quite so interested in her panorama, or so attentive to her shop as was her wont. She had not peeped through that magical hole for many days; her knitting was, I regret to say, of an unusually spasmodic character; when she sat in the sunshine it seemed almost too gay for her; and her pretty little face seemed to have a cloud of sadness covering it. But she welcomed the music with more pleasure than ever; and the more melancholy it was, the better she liked it; for it seemed then to speak to her in a language which she understood, yet could not interpret, — harmoniously talking of strange things which she thought she felt; and still was unable to comprehend. So she sat all day and listened to Mr. Compton's wild improvisations, as they floated over the flowers, till perfume and harmony seemed to be mingling, and she grew so abstracted in her habits that she had to be called thrice by Mrs. Barberry, who wanted to buy a flour-dredge, before she thought of answering.

It was singular, but no less true, that just at this time I had the privilege of peeping into that pure little maiden's mind, and observing, in secret, all its innocent little operations. It was a rare privilege, I know, but I hope I love honor, beauty, and virtue too much not to look upon the prerogative as holy. You will hear, therefore, from me only such things as are necessary to the conduct of the story I am endeavoring to relate.

I saw, at my very first peep, what it was that induced Milly to forget her panorama, and pay such little heed to old Mrs. Barberry. The cause of all this distraction was

a certain person, of whom you shall know more before I have done with you.

About a week previous to the time I am speaking of a stranger had made his appearance in the little town of Blossomdale, in which Milly lived; and just about the same time Milly, who had heard of the stranger's arrival — as one hears everything in a village — but had not seen him, observed a man of singular aspect passing her shop frequently. Coupling the two facts together she came to the conclusion that this person and the strange arrival were one; which at least proves that Milly Dove was capable of inductive reasoning.

He was a remarkable man, this stranger. Not very tall, but rather powerfully built; he always walked rapidly, with his frame stooped forward from the hips, as if his mind were in advance of his body. His face was somewhat narrow, and delicately featured. A thin mustache curled around a small mouth, and his hair was profuse, though not long. But it was in his eyes that his individuality chiefly resided, — eyes that seemed to gaze at nothing, and yet see everything. They did not look, they absorbed, those great dark eyes, and shed from out their own darkness a shadow over the whole face. They were eyes truly delightful to look at, — as it is delightful to look down into a calm sea, — and hard to be forgotten.

Milly did not easily forget them, I promise you. They haunted her as she sat alone in the little half-lit parlor, and seemed to glow with a strange light in the dim corners where the spiders dwelt. She looked at them, and they looked at her all the livelong day, and this was why she forgot her panorama,

Now Milly Dove told Mr. Compton everything. He

was her only friend. He stood to her in the place of a parent, and loved her as a daughter. Confidence existed between them as a matter of course, and she talked to him as the stream flows. So she soon told him about this stranger: how she had seen him; how his face haunted her continually; how she kept thinking about him all day long; how she watched for him at the hour when it was usual for him to pass her door, and felt a sort of dim, indistinct pleasure when he passed. All this she told her old friend simply, truly, naturally, without even the remotest idea of the nature or origin of her feelings; for Milly was at that happy age when people are not learned in the mysteries of themselves, and do not possess the mournful knowledge which enables them to anatomize their own hearts. Mr. Compton at first looked rather sad at hearing this *naïve* confession; but after a moment he laughed and kissed her fair forehead, saying that she would soon forget this wonderful stranger. Then he sat down at his piano and played so wild and wonderful a strain, fraught with such depths of pure and unconscious passion, that Milly lay statue-like near him, and dreamed so perfectly that she dreamed no more.



II.

It was a pleasant June day. Through the open window in Milly's little room a mingled stream of sunshine and the breath of flowers rolled in, filling the chamber with light and perfume. The spiders dozed in the crevices of the panelled walls, while their aerial webs shone like delicate threads of silver. The high-shouldered chairs sidled off into the corners, as if they were ashamed of

their age, and the great panorama, which stood on one side of the door, glared with its huge, eye-like lens at the green window, like a species of four-legged Cyclops. Milly, as usual, was sitting in the sun. Nestled into that great, high-backed chair, which was a world too large for her, she worked absently at some intricate feminine fabric, — a fabric it was that I believe would have driven me crazy if I had been set down to learn its mysteries. There were dozens of strings pinned to various portions of the unhappy old chair. More strings trailed on the floor, whose courses, if followed, would be found to terminate in numberless little balls, that kept continually rolling off into the corners and disturbing the spiders that lived on the first floors of the panels. Then each string had to be unpinned every second minute, and juggled with after some wondrous fashion, until, having been thrust, by a species of magic known only to Milly, through an interminable perspective of loops, it was solemnly repinned to the chair, and then the whole process began again.

Whether it was owing to the complication of this terrible web, or to the preoccupation of her own thoughts, no Penelope ever made so many blunders as Milly Dove, on that June morning. Every now and then the web would come to a sudden stand-still; a minute investigation of certain curious knots would result in the discovery of some heart-rending error. Then the vagrant balls would have to be hunted up in the corners, and the pin would have to come out, and with a pettish toss of the head and a little pouting of the under lip, the child would tediously unravel all the false work and begin again.

Sometimes she would let it drop altogether, and gaze absently through the open window, as if she were watch-

ing the humming-birds that hung before the golden-lipped tubes of the trumpet-honeysuckle; or she would turn toward the desolate panorama, that seemed to gaze reproachfully at her with its single eye, and ponder over the propriety of taking another peep at that bloody Battle of Prague, or the extraordinary representation of the Israelites gathering the manna in the desert, — which said manna seemed to have been made into very respectable and well-baked quartern loaves before it fell.

Milly's reveries, whatever they were, were interrupted by the entrance of Master Dick Boby, the eldest son of Judge Boby, who was the richest and greatest man in the village. Master Boby had acquired — probably by inheritance — the sum of half a dollar, and immediately upon coming into possession of his property had set off for Milly's shop, uncertain as to whether he would purchase her entire stock or simply confine himself to the acquisition of a stick of molasses candy. Milly, with her pleasant smile, was behind the counter in an instant, awaiting the commands of the young squire.

“What's them guns apiece, Miss Milly?” inquired Master Boby, pointing to a couple of flimsy fowling-pieces that stood in the corner.

“Six dollars apiece, sir.”

“I guess you'd take half-price for them if a body was to buy both?” said the young millionaire, half inquiringly, as if he had only to put his hand in his pocket and pull out the money.

“Well,” said Milly, “I didn't buy them; they were here when father died, and as they've been so long on my hands, I'd be glad to sell them cheap. You can have them both for seven dollars and fifty cents, if you want them, Master Dick.”

“O, I don’t want them ; only father might, if his own gun was to burst. What’s the price of them skates, Miss Milly ?”

“A dollar fifty, sir. They are capital skates, and came all the way from York. But what do you want of skates this weather, Master Dick ?”

“O, I didn’t know but I might lose my own skates next winter, you know, so I thought I’d ask. Are you going to the circus show this evening, Miss Milly ? for if you’d like to go, I can get tickets from father, and I’ll take you.” And Master Dick looked admiringly at the pretty little maiden.

“Thank you kindly, sir ; but I don’t think Mr. Compton would like me to go. He says the circus is a bad place.”

“He don’t know nothing,” answered Master Dick, surlily ; “but if you won’t go, I know one who will. Give me an ounce of molasses candy, and half an ounce of peppermint, Miss Milly.”

Milly had just opened the drawer containing the confections demanded by Master Dick, and was about measuring out the required quantity of molasses and peppermint, when she saw something through the window that made her suddenly stop. A gentleman was marching slowly down the street. He appeared to be lost in reverie, for his head was thrown back, and his eyes were fixed on vacancy, while he moved on apparently unconscious of the existence of everybody, himself included. He was a pleasant gentleman, too, and seemed to be occupied with pleasing thoughts, for a sort of half-born smile played around his thin lips, seeming always on the point of becoming a laugh but never fulfilling its promise. This gentleman had just arrived opposite to Milly’s

door, when his reverie was suddenly and most unexpectedly interrupted by a big stone. This big stone was a stone of infamous habits. It lurked under a specious coating of clay, seemingly soft and elastic in its nature, but all the while turning up one sharp and treacherous edge, that to the foot of the tight-booted and unwary pedestrian caused unutterable tortures. It was a *Tar-tuffe* among stones, — hypocritical, velvety, inducing confidence, — but woe to the toe that lit upon its venomous edge !

Well, of course this thoughtful gentleman marched straight upon this assassin of a stone. *Tschut!* A terrible “thud” of toes against the treacherous edge, a wild flinging out of arms in a vain attempt at equilibrium, a convulsive ejaculation which I hope nobody heard, and our pedestrian measured his length in the dust. He rose in a moment, looked reproachfully at the stone as if to upbraid it for its misconduct, then, recalled probably by some unusual sensation, he looked down at his legs. Alas ! across his left knee there was a great gaping split in his trousers, through which a wide vista of linen was visible. The poor gentleman gazed ruefully at this scene of destruction ; looked around, and then again at his knee ; then tried to walk a step or two ; stopped, looked at his knee once more, and seemed to meditate profoundly on his position.

While rapt in this painful reverie, the victim of that abominable stone was startled by a very sweet little voice at his elbow. This voice, belonging to Milly Dove, said, “Please, sir, if you will step into the shop, I will mend it for you.”

The gentleman turned round, and gave a rapid glance at the sunny, girlish face that looked up into his with

such a frank, easy expression, as if it was the most natural thing in the world that he should fall, and that she should come out and offer to mend his trousers.

“Thank you, child!” said he, simply. “I am very much obliged to you. What is your name?”

“Milly Dove, sir.”

“And this is your father’s shop, I suppose?” And the stranger glanced round as he entered, with a half-smile at the varied assortment of goods that it contained. It was quite deserted; for Master Dick Bobby, left alone with the candy, had, I regret to say, helped himself and departed.

“No, sir; it’s mine!” answered Milly, poking in her pocket for her needle-box.

“Yours! why, you are young to be at the head of an establishment.”

“I was sixteen my last birthday, sir. Will you come into the inside room, if you please, so that you may put your foot upon a chair?”

The stranger did as he was bidden, and Milly’s nimble fingers were soon busily drawing together the jagged edges of that gaping rent in his injured trousers. He looked down upon her with a wondering gaze.

“I suppose some of your relatives live with you here?” he said, after a pause, during which he had been studying her features intently.

“No, sir; I am alone.”

“Alone!”

“No; that is — not exactly alone. Mr. Compton lodges up-stairs.”

“Mr. Compton?” said the stranger, a sort of dark shadow falling across his face like a veil. “Who is Mr. Compton? A young man?”

“A friend of my mother’s, sir. He lives here all the year round, and is a dear, pleasant gentleman. He’s quite young, too; not more than fifty-six.”

“Ah!” and the Knight of the Rueful Breeches seemed to breathe more freely. “That is young indeed! How long have you been keeping shop?”

“Two years, sir. My mother died about that time, and the neighbors were all very good to me when I began. I think it will do now, sir!”

“Thanks! thanks!” replied the stranger, scarce giving a glance at the neat seam across his knee. “You are an excellent little workwoman.” And as he spoke he seated himself deliberately in Milly’s high-backed chair, much to that young lady’s surprise. “You have a pretty room here,” he continued, looking round him approvingly, — “a very pretty room! The sunlight gushing in through that window, and parting, as it were to make good its entrance, the honeysuckles that wave before it, has a charming effect. Is it you who take care of the flowers out there?”

“O, there’s not much to do now,” said Milly, modestly. “Mr. Compton made the garden, and now I help him a little. They grow there so nicely, the flowers do! And in the spring I freshen up the beds a little, and weed the walks, and clip off the dead branches, and I think the sun and the rain do the rest.”

“Hum! that’s prettily said!”

Poor Milly grew scarlet at the tone of easy assurance in which this approbation was uttered. This gentleman seemed to have an air of the world about him that somehow alarmed her, she knew not why, — his walk, his way of speech, his manner, were all so different from those of the loutish villagers to whom she had been accustomed.

He was even unlike Mr. Compton, who to Milly, until then, had been the highest type of human perfection.

"I'd like to live in a room like this!" muttered the stranger half aloud, gazing round him with evident pleasure. "It has a sweet, thoughtful air; and that garden outside would fill me with poetry. I'd like very much indeed to live here!"

"Then why don't you come?" was on the tip of Milly's tongue; but she suddenly recollected herself in time, and so was silent.

"Do you ever read, Miss Milly Dove?" was the next question, as the visitor turned abruptly to the young maiden.

"No — yes — that is — sometimes," was the alarmed reply.

"Which means that you do not read at all?" said the stranger, gravely.

Milly looked as if she was immediately about to tuck the end of her little apron into her eyes, and weep herself away.

"Well," continued he, "that can be remedied; but Mr. Compton should have given you books."

"Sir," said Milly stoutly, quick to espouse her friend's cause, though unable to defend her own, — "Sir, Mr. Compton knows a great deal more, in fact, than any one I ever saw, and everything that he does is right."

The stranger laughed. "You are a chivalrous but illogical little maiden," said he, in a tone of insufferable patronage.

"I may not read much," said Milly, flushing up, "but I have a panorama."

"O, you have a panorama? A panorama of what? Let us see this wonder that supplies the place of books."

"Shall I show it to you, sir?" asked Milly timidly.

"Certainly; but before profiting by your kindness, I must introduce myself formally. I am Mr. Alexander Winthrop, a poor gentleman, with enough for his appetites, and too little for his desires. I am fond of travelling, books, and thinking. I am only twenty-five years old, although I look thirty. I live close to New York, and am at present at Blossomdale on business. Now, you know all that I intend you to know about me; so we will go on with our panorama."

This off-hand introduction was delivered with such gravity that poor Milly did not know what to make of it. At first, she thought he was laughing at her, but on looking at his eyes she could not detect the slightest twinkle of merriment; so she nodded her little head to Mr. Alexander Winthrop, as if to say, "All right, I know you," and then proceeded to introduce him to the panorama.

"This," said Milly in a solemn voice, as she made him put his eye to the peep-hole, and proceeded to pull the strings that lifted the pictures, "this is the invasion of Mexico by the Spaniards. The man in the big boat is Cortes, a very cruel man indeed; and the man on the shore is Montezuma, the king of Mexico, who may be known by his red skin."

"Hem!" coughed Mr. Alexander. "How do you know that this is the invasion of Mexico?"

"Mr. Compton told me, sir."

"O, Mr. Compton told you! Then it's all right, of course. But," he continued, muttering to himself, "if Mr. Compton is right, Cortes dressed exceedingly like William Penn; and Montezuma would make a capital North American Indian."

"This picture," continued Milly, pulling another string,

“represents the great Pyramids of Egypt, built by various kings to serve for their tombs. The ancient Egyptians were far advanced in civilization, while the rest of the globe was plunged in the obscurity of ignorance. Their chief god was Osiris, and the priesthood was so powerful that the government, in truth, was an ecclesiastical one. The ancient Egyptians were in the habit of placing a skeleton at the head of the table when they feasted, for the purpose of reminding them of their mortality, and it is believed that from them first sprang the art of embalming bodies. They were a highly commercial people, and found large markets for the products of their industry and art, in the ancient cities of Greece and Rome.”

“Why, child, where did you learn this?” exclaimed Mr. Alexander, gazing with astonishment on the little maiden, who ran off this farrago of learning with the glibness of a lecturer on ancient history, looking all the while exceedingly proud of her knowledge.

“Mr. Compton told me,” she answered proudly.

Mr. Alexander could no longer contain himself, but burst into a shout of laughter that made Milly's ears tingle. Her round cheeks flushed, and the tears rose to her eyes. Poor little thing! She thought this Mr. Alexander Winthrop exceedingly rude, and yet she could not feel angry with him.

“Well, what's the next picture?” he asked, as soon as he had recovered from his mirth, and without making the slightest apology for his improper behavior.

“It's the Battle of the Nile,” answered Milly, rather sullenly, for she did not exactly like the merciless laugh of her new friend.

“I was there all the while,” chimed in Mr. Alexander.

“You could n't. It happened ever so long ago,” an-

swered Milly quickly, delighted at finding Mr. Alexander out in a fib.

That gentleman was on the point of going off into another fit of merriment, when a wild prelude on a piano wavered harmoniously through the window. After wandering up and down the keys for a short time, striking out fragments of melodies, and fluttering uncertainly from one to the other, as a butterfly roams from bud to bud, not knowing which to choose, the performer at length struck on a theme that seemed to satisfy him, and then poured out his entire soul. That it was a voluntary, one could discern in an instant, from the occasional irregularity of the rhythm, and lack of proper sequence between the parts; but it was so wild, so original, so mournful, so full of broken utterances of passion, that one might have imagined it the wail of a lost angel, outside the gates of that paradise which he saw but could not enjoy.

“That is a great performer,” said Mr. Alexander, rising. “I must go and see him.”

“It’s Mr. Compton,” cried Milly, eagerly; “he does not like to be disturbed. You must not go now.”

“I don’t care,” said Mr. Alexander, very coolly. “Where’s the stairs? O, here! — all right!” And before she could detain him, he had bounded up the stairs, and was gone.

“I make no apology for coming in here in this way,” said Mr. Alexander, as he pushed open Mr. Compton’s door, “because, if you don’t want people to rush in on you unannounced, you should not play so well, nor improvise such original themes.”

“You are an artist, then?” said Mr. Compton, rising in some surprise at this sudden intrusion. “All such have a right to enter here.”

“Enough of an artist to comprehend you,” said the young man, bluntly. “You are an artist, Mr. Compton, and have never done anything but toy with art. More shame for you!”

“Who is my lecturer?” said Mr. Compton, rather sternly.

“My name is Alexander Winthrop.”

“What! he who —”

“Hush!” cried the young man, lifting his finger; for at that moment Milly appeared, with flushed cheeks, on the threshold of the door. “I am only Alexander Winthrop. I tore my trousers by a fall opposite to this house. This little fairy,” pointing to Milly, “mended them for me. I heard you playing; I ran up stairs. Now you know all about me.”

“Then you must be the stranger of whom Milly has so often spoken to me, as passing the door every day,” said Mr. Compton, with a bland ignorance of the incautiousness of his remark, and totally heedless of Milly’s agonized telegraphings to make him stop.

“O, then, the little fairy knew me before!” exclaimed Mr. Alexander, eagerly. “So we were old acquaintances, Miss Milly?”

Milly said nothing, but appeared to have suddenly remembered that her shop had been left unprotected, and disappeared as if by magic.

“I want to have a talk with you, Mr. Compton,” said Mr. Alexander, looking after her.

Mr. Compton sighed. “Let us go into the garden,” he said; and they went out together.

III.

Two months after this, Milly Dove sat in her little room, reading. Those wondrous fabrics on which she used to labor with such patience were gone. There was dust on the panorama ; its single eye was dim and melancholy. No more balls disturbed the repose of the fat old spiders in the panels ; the very shop itself seemed to have an uncared-for look.

The reason of all this was that Milly Dove had become a student, — a hard, close, unwearying student, — and the books that she read were given to her by Mr. Alexander. One author in particular pleased her mightily. A man named Ivan Thorle had lately astonished the world with an alternate succession of works of philosophy and fiction. In both paths did he seem to be equally at home. His novels were tender, impassioned, truthful, and always breathing the sublimest scorn for everything mean and unholy. His philosophy was still more wonderful, because it was so clear. The progress of man was always his theme. The gradual amalgamation of races ; the universal equalization of climate from the cultivation of the entire globe ; the disappearance of poverty from the earth before the influence of machinery, which labored for all ; the consequent improvement of the physical condition of our race ; the abolishment of crime ; — in short, the apogee of the world. On all this he expatiated with a profundity of thought and simplicity of expression that made him at once the deepest and clearest of writers. Ivan Thorle, then, opened a new world for Milly. For the first time she comprehended the true beauty of life, and experienced those delicious sensations which one experiences when beginning to observe, — an epoch, let me tell you, that comes much

later than one imagines. Thus a trinity of genius and goodness reigned supreme in Milly Dove's little heart, — Mr. Compton, Mr. Alexander, and Ivan Thorle, — and although her reason placed Mr. Compton first, as being the oldest friend, and Ivan Thorle next, as being the greatest genius, yet I doubt much if that little maiden's heart did not put Mr. Alexander Winthrop, her affianced lover, high above all.

There was one thing that grieved this dear child, and it was so strange a grief for her to have had at that period that it seems a mystery to me how she ever could have had it. It was that Mr. Alexander was not a great writer. She loved him very dearly, and she knew that Mr. Compton loved him, and they talked very learnedly together for hours at a time. He was very clever, this Mr. Alexander Winthrop ; but oh ! if he would only write books like Ivan Thorle ! If he would create those dear stories, — so pure, so good, and so true ! If he would make those splendid books that made every one love his fellow-men better when he had read them, and which were so purely written that a child might understand them ! If he would only do this, she told him many times, as she clung to his breast, she would be as happy as the humming-birds that lived outside, forever in the sunshine ! And Mr. Alexander would stroke her brown hair, and kiss her white forehead, and, smiling mysteriously, say, "Some time, perhaps —" But he did not write books, and Milly Dove was sad.

Her sadness was now, however, for the moment lost in the perusal of Ivan Thorle's last book, "The Ladder of Stars," — a strange mixture of romance and philosophy ; and Milly pored over it in her high-backed chair, while the humming-birds outside looked in at her with their

sharp, cunning eyes, and said to themselves, as they saw her rosy lips, "Bless us! where there are flowers there must be loads of honey. Let us go in and get it!" But now and then these rosy flowers had a strange way of opening with a laughing sound, and showing rows of white seed inside, in a manner unlike any flower ever before seen; so that the humming-birds thought they might be dangerous flowers, and did not go in. Milly was reading one of the most beautiful passages in the "Ladder of Stars," when she heard a step behind her. She turned, and beheld one of the most beautiful ladies she had ever seen, standing in the doorway. A tall, proud-looking lady she was, with bright eyes and fierce lip, and the smallest hands in the world. And such dress! So rich and elegant and flowing! Milly thought she was a fairy. Being naturally polite, however, even to fairies, the little maiden rose and advanced timidly to this sultana. The lady did not keep her long in suspense.

"Your name is Milly Dove?" she said, in a commanding voice.

"Yes, ma'am," said Milly, half frightened at the tone of the question.

"You are going to marry a man calling himself Alexander Winthrop. Is it not so?"

"Yes, ma'am." Milly's limbs began to tremble at this point.

"You must not marry him."

"Why, ma'am?" Milly's strength began to come back a little.

"Because he would make you unhappy."

"How do you know, ma'am?" O Milly Dove! Milly Dove! where did you pick up the Socratic mode of reasoning?

"Because I know it," said the sultana, stamping her foot. "You cannot marry him. He loves me. I know he does!" she continued passionately.

"He loves me better!" said Milly, quietly. "I know it, for he told me so."

"You! love you better! Listen, child. You do not know this man. He is proud, wealthy, learned, a genius, and courted by all the world. His sphere in life rolls through another orbit than yours. His genius, his tastes, his friendships, will all separate him from you. He thinks he loves you now; well, in three months he will be disenchanted. He will neglect you, — ill-treat you, perhaps, — laugh at your ill-breeding, sport with your ignorance, and break your heart. Be warned in time. Here! I am rich. You shall have money, as much money as you wish, if you fly this place and promise never to see Alexander Winthrop again. I will make you wealthy, happy, everything you wish, only leave me my love! leave me my love!" She held out a purse to Milly as she spoke, and her splendid form literally shook with passion.

Poor Milly was thunderstruck; she knew not what to do. O, how she wished for either Alexander or Mr. Compton!

"Ma'am," said she at last, "I don't want money. I never knew that Mr. Alexander was rich; but it makes no matter to me whether he is or not. I know he loves me; for he said so, and he never tells a lie. Therefore I cannot do as you wish me. I am sorry, ma'am, that you should love Mr. Alexander too."

"But you must, I tell you, — you must, girl! You shall not wed him! He is mine! Do you not know —"

"She does *not* know, Miss Helen De Rham," said Mr.

Alexander himself, stepping, at this juncture, out of the shop, and putting his arm around Milly's waist.

"O, you are here, sir!" said Miss De Rham, with a scornful curl of her upper lip. "Enjoying love in a cottage, which, no doubt, you taste merely as a literary experience to be made serviceable in your next book. It is a pretty idyl."

"Madam," said Alexander, "let me hear no unworthy sneers against a love so pure that you could not understand it. Milly, as this lady has thought fit to intrude herself on my privacy and yours, it is fit that you should learn the history of our association."

"Tell it, sir, by all means," said Miss De Rham, seating herself in a chair; "you are accustomed to weave romances."

"I tell the truth, madam, always; and if I did not this pure mind here is too true a touchstone not to detect the falsehood. Milly, that handsome lady there was once my friend. I believe I loved her, for she was beautiful and gifted. We were much together, and I understand that she expressed admiration for my talents. I thought her honest, and I loved her for her honesty; for she was one of those who could talk with that frank bluntness that so well simulates sincerity. Well, she was ambitious; she wanted to be a goddess, when she was only a woman; she wished to write, when God had only given her the power to appreciate. She came to me one day with a poem, — a beautiful poem, which she said she had written. I got it published for her; it was admired everywhere. On the strength of it she rose to the reputation of a woman of genius. Well, Milly, it was all a lie! — an acted, a spoken, a perpetuated lie! — the poem was not hers. It was written for her by a *protégé* of hers, who

betrayed her trust, and the deception was discovered. I left Miss De Rham, Milly Dove, to the shame which, if she had a heart, ought to have eaten it out."

"And you could not discover the difference between an innocent piece of vanity and a crime! O Ivan Thorle, in spite of all your knowledge you know not the world!"

"I do not wish to know it better, Miss De Rham. Leave me and my bride in ignorance and peace. Go, madam, back to your town luxury and refined atmosphere, where pretty names are given to bad deeds. I wish to remain unmolested with that pure love which will ever be a mystery to you. Go!"

"What name did she call you?" cried Milly Dove, breathlessly, as the proud lady swept scornfully out through the little shop.

"Milly, you may now know what I have long concealed. I am Ivan Thorle!"

"You? you? O, I am so glad — so glad — so glad! Dear Alexander, I have now nothing to wish for."

"But I have, dear Milly!"

Those who have read Alexander Winthrop's latest and best novel, "The Village Bride," will see there how happily he and Milly and Mr. Compton lived together; and they will recognize in the lecturer on Woman's Rights the portrait of Miss De Rham.

THE DRAGON FANG POSSESSED BY THE CONJURER PIOUS-LU.



CHAPTER OF THE MIRACULOUS DRAGON FANG.

“COME, men and women, and little people of Tching-tou, come and listen. The small and ignoble person who annoys you by his presence is the miserable conjurer known as Piou-Lu. Everything that can possibly be desired he can give you;—charms to heal dissensions in your noble and illustrious families;—spells by which beautiful little people without style may become learned Bachelors, and reign high in the palaces of literary composition;—Supernatural red pills, with which you can cure your elegant and renowned diseases;—wonderful incantations, by which the assassins of any members of your shining and virtuous families can be discovered and made to yield compensation, or be brought under the just eye of the Brother of the Sun. What is it that you want? This mean little conjurer, who now addresses you, can supply all your charming and refreshing desires; for he is known everywhere as Piou-Lu, the possessor of the ever-renowned and miraculous Dragon Fang!”

There was a little, dry laugh, and a murmur among the crowd of idlers that surrounded the stage erected by Piou-Lu in front of the Hotel of the Thirty-two Virtues. Fifth-class Mandarins looked at fourth-class Mandarins and smiled, as much as to say, “We who are educated

men know what to think of this fellow." But the fourth-class Mandarins looked haughtily at the fifth-class, as if they had no business to smile at their superiors. The crowd, however, composed as it was principally of small traders, barbers, porcelain-tinkers, and country people, gazed with open mouths upon the conjurer, who, clad in a radiant garment of many colors, strutted proudly up and down upon his temporary stage.

"What is a Dragon Fang, ingenious and well-educated conjurer?" at last inquired Wei-chang-tze, a solemn-looking Mandarin of the third class, who was adorned with a sapphire button, and a one-eyed peacock's feather. "What is a Dragon Fang?"

"Is it possible," asked Piou-Lu, "that the wise and illustrious son of virtue, the Mandarin Wei-chang-tze, does not know what a Dragon Fang is?" and the conjurer pricked up his ears at the Mandarin, as a hare at a barking dog.

"Of course, of course," said the Mandarin Wei-chang-tze, looking rather ashamed of his having betrayed such ignorance, "one does not pass his examinations for nothing. I merely wished that you should explain to those ignorant people here what a Dragon Fang is; that was why I asked."

"I thought that the Soul of Wisdom must have known," said Piou-Lu, triumphantly, looking as if he believed firmly in the knowledge of Wei-chang-tze. "The noble commands of Wei-chang-tze shall be obeyed. You all know," said he, looking round upon the people, "that there are three great and powerful Dragons inhabiting the universe. Lung, or the Dragon of the Sky; Li, or the Dragon of the Sea; and Kiau, or the Dragon of the Marshes. All these Dragons are wise, strong, and

terrible. They are wondrously formed, and can take any shape that pleases them. Well, good people, a great many moons ago, in the season of spiked grain, I was following the profession of a barber in the mean and unmentionable town of Siho, when one morning, as I was sitting in my shop waiting for customers, I heard a great noise of tam-tams, and a princely palanquin stopped before my door. I hastened, of course to observe the honorable Rites toward this new-comer, but before I could reach the street a Mandarin, splendidly attired, descended from the palanquin. The ball on his cap was of a stone and color that I had never seen before, and three feathers of some unknown bird hung down behind his head-dress. He held his hand to his jaw, and walked into my house with a lordly step. I was greatly confused, for I knew not what rank he was of, and felt puzzled how to address him. He put an end to my embarrassment.

“‘I am in the house of Piou-Lu, the barber,’ he said, in a haughty voice that sounded like the roll of a copper drum amidst the hills.

“‘That disgraceful and ill-conditioned person stands before you,’ I replied, bowing as low as I could.

“‘It is well,’ said he, seating himself in my operating-chair, while two of his attendants fanned him. ‘Piou-Lu, I have the toothache!’

“‘Does your lordship,’ said I, ‘wish that I should remove your noble and illustrious pain?’

“‘You must draw my tooth,’ said he. ‘Woe to you if you draw the wrong one!’

“‘It is too much honor,’ I replied; ‘but I will make my abominable and ill-conducted instruments entice your lordship’s beautiful tooth out of your high-born jaw with much rapidity.’

“So I got my big pincers, and my opium-bottle, and opened the strange Mandarin’s mouth. Ah! it was then that my low-born and despicable heart descended into my bowels. I should have dropped my pincers from sheer fright if they had not caught by their hooked ends in my wide sleeve. The Mandarin’s mouth was all on fire inside. As he breathed, the flames rolled up and down his throat, like the flames that gather on the Yellow Grass Plains in the season of Much Heat. His palate glowed like red-hot copper, and his tongue was like a brass stewpan that had been on the salt-fire for thirty days. But it was his teeth that affrighted me most. They were a serpent’s teeth. They were long, and curved inward, and seemed to be made of transparent crystal, in the centre of which small tongues of orange-colored fire leaped up and down out of some cavity in the gums.

“‘Well, dilatory barber,’ said the Mandarin, in a horrible tone, while I stood pale and trembling before him, ‘why don’t you draw my tooth? Hasten, or I will have you sliced lengthwise and fried in the sun.’

“‘O, my lord!’ said I, terrified at this threat, ‘I fear that my vicious and unendurable pincers are not sufficiently strong.’

“‘Slave!’ answered he in a voice of thunder, ‘if you do not fulfil my desires, you will not see another moon rise.’

“I saw that I should be killed any way, so I might as well make the attempt. I made a dart with my pincers at the first tooth that came, closed them firmly on the crystal fang, and began to pull with all my strength. The Mandarin bellowed like an ox of Thibet. The flames rolled from his throat in such volumes that I thought they would singe my eyebrows. His two attendants and his four palanquin-bearers put their arms round my waist

to help me to pull, and there we tugged for three or four minutes, until at last I heard a report as loud as nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine fire-crackers. The attendants, the palanquin-bearers, and myself all fell flat on the floor, and the crystal fang glittered between the jaws of the pincers.

“The Mandarin was smiling pleasantly as I got up from the floor. ‘Piou-Lu,’ said he, ‘you had a narrow escape. You have removed my toothache, but had you failed, you would have perished miserably ; for I am the Dragon Lung, who rules the sky and the heavenly bodies, and I am as powerful as I am wise. Take as a reward the Dragon Fang which you drew from my jaw. You will find it a magical charm with which you can work miracles. Honor your parents, observe the Rites, and live in peace.’

“So saying, he breathed a whole cloud of fire and smoke from his throat, that filled my poor and despicable mansion. The light dazzled and the smoke suffocated me, and when I recovered my sight and breath the Dragon Lung, the attendants, the palanquin, and the four bearers had all departed, how and whither I knew not. Thus was it, elegant and refined people of Tching-tou, that this small and evil-minded person who stands before you became possessed of the wonderful Dragon Fang, with which he can work miracles.”

This story, delivered as it was with much graceful and dramatic gesticulation, and a volubility that seemed almost supernatural, had its effect upon the crowd, and a poor little tailor, named Hang-pou, who was known to be always in debt, was heard to say that he wished he had the Dragon-Fang, wherewith to work miracles with his creditors. But the Mandarins, blue, crystal, and gilt,

smiled contemptuously, and said to themselves, "We who are learned men know how to esteem these things."

The Mandarin Wei-chang-tze, however, seemed to be of an inquiring disposition, and evinced a desire to continue his investigations.

"Supremely visited conjurer," said he to Piou-Lu, "your story is indeed wonderful. To have been visited by the Dragon Lung must have been truly refreshing and enchanting. Though not in the least doubting your marvellous relation, I am sure this virtuous assemblage would like to see some proof of the miraculous power of your Dragon Fang."

The crowd gave an immediate assent to this sentiment by pressing closer to the platform on which Piou-Lu strutted, and exclaiming with one voice, "The lofty Mandarin says wisely. We would like to behold."

Piou-Lu did not seem in the slightest degree disconcerted. His narrow black eyes glistened like the dark edges of the seeds of the water-melon, and he looked haughtily around him.

"Is there any one of you who would like to have a miracle performed, and of what nature?" he asked, with a triumphant wave of his arms.

"I would like to see my debts paid," murmured the little tailor, Hang-pou.

"O Hang-pou," replied the conjurer, "this unworthy personage is not going to pay your debts. Go home and sit in your shop, and drink no more rice-wine, and your debts will be paid; for labor is the Dragon Fang that works miracles for idle tailors!"

There was a laugh through the crowd at this sally, because Hang-pou was well known to be fond of intoxicating drinks, and spent more of his time in the street than on his shop-board.

“Would either of you like to be changed into a camel?” continued Piou-Lu. “Say the word, and there shall not be a finer beast in all Thibet!”

No one, however, seemed to be particularly anxious to experience this transformation. Perhaps it was because it was warm weather, and camels bear heavy burdens.

“I will change the whole honorable assemblage into turkey-buzzards, if it only agrees,” continued the conjurer; “or I will make the Lake Tung come up into the town in the shape of a water-melon, and then burst and overflow everything.”

“But we should all be drowned!” exclaimed Hang-pou, who was cowardly as well as intemperate.

“That’s true,” said Piou-Lu, “but then you need not fear your creditors,” — and he gave such a dart of his long arm at the poor little tailor, that the wretched man thought he was going to claw him up and change him into some frightful animal.

“Well, since this illustrious assembly will not have turkey-buzzards or camels, this weak-minded, ill-shapen personage must work a miracle on himself,” said Piou-Lu, descending from his platform into the street, and bringing with him a little three-legged stool made of bamboo rods.

The crowd retreated as he approached, and even the solemn Wei-chang-tze seemed rather afraid of this miraculous conjurer. Piou-Lu placed the bamboo stool firmly on the ground, and then mounted upon it.

“Elegant and symmetrical bamboo stool,” he said, lifting his arms, and exhibiting something in his hand that seemed like a piece of polished jade-stone, — “elegant and symmetrical bamboo stool, the justly despised conjurer, named Piou-Lu, entreats that you will immediately grow tall, in the name of the Dragon Lung!”

Truly the stool began to grow, in the presence of the astonished crowd. * The three legs of bamboo lengthened and lengthened with great rapidity, bearing Piou-Lu high up into the air. As he ascended he bowed gracefully to the open-mouthed assembly.

"It is delightful!" he cried; "the air up here is so fresh! I smell the tea-winds from Fuh-kien. I can see the spot where the heavens and the earth cease to run parallel. I hear the gongs of Peking, and listen to the lowing of the herds in Thibet. Who would not have an elegant bamboo stool that knew how to grow?"

By this time Piou-Lu had risen to an enormous height. The legs of the slender tripod on which he was mounted seemed like silkworm's threads, so thin were they compared with their length. The crowd began to tremble for Piou-Lu.

"Will he never stop?" said a Mandarin with a gilt ball, named Lin.

"O, yes!" shouted Piou-Lu from the dizzy height of his bamboo stool. "O, yes! this ugly little person will immediately stop. Elegant stool, the poor conjurer entreats you to stop growing; but he also begs that you will afford some satisfaction to this beautifying assemblage down below, who have honored you with their inspection."

The bamboo stool, with the utmost complaisance, ceased to lengthen out its attenuated limbs, but on the moment experienced another change as terrifying to the crowd. The three legs began to approach each other rapidly, and before the eye could very well follow their motions had blended mysteriously and inexplicably into one, the stool still retaining a miraculous equilibrium. Immediately this single stem began to thicken most marvellously, and instead of the dark shining skin of a bamboo stick, it

seemed gradually to be incased in overlapping rings of a rough bark. Meanwhile a faint rustling noise continued overhead, and when the crowd, attracted by the sound, looked up, instead of the flat disk of cane-work on which Piou-Lu had so wondrously ascended, they beheld a cabbage-shaped mass of green, which shot forth every moment long, pointed satiny leaves of the tenderest green, and the most graceful shape imaginable. But where was Piou-Lu? Some fancied that in the yellow crown that topped the cabbage-shaped bud of this strange tree they could see the tip of his cap, and distinguish his black, roguish eyes, but that may have been all fancy; and they were quickly diverted from their search for the conjurer by a shower of red, pulpy fruits, that began to fall with great rapidity from the miraculous tree. Of course there was a scramble, in which the Mandarins themselves did not disdain to join; and the crimson fruits — the like of which no one in Tching-tou had ever seen before — proved delightfully sweet and palatable to the taste.

“That’s right! that’s right! perfectly bred and very polite people,” cried a shrill voice while they were all scrambling for the crimson fruits; “pick fruit while it is fresh, and tea while it is tender. For the sun wilts, and the chills toughen, and the bluest plum blooms only for a day.”

Everybody looked up, and lo! there was Piou-Lu, as large as life, strutting upon the stage, waving a large green fan in his hand. While the crowd was yet considering this wonderful reappearance of the conjurer, there was heard a very great outcry at the end of the street, and a tall thin man in a coarse blue gown came running up at full speed.

“Where are my plums, sons of thieves?” he cried,

almost breathless with haste. "Alas! alas! I am completely ruined. My wife will perish miserably for want of food, and my sons will inherit nothing but empty baskets at my death! Where are my plums?"

"Who is it that dares to address the virtuous and well-disposed people of Tching-tou after this fashion?" demanded the Mandarin Lin, in a haughty voice, as he confronted the new-comer.

The poor man, seeing the gilt ball, became immediately very humble, and bowed several times to the Mandarin.

"O, my lord!" said he, "I am an incapable and undeserving plum-seller, named Liho. I was just now sitting at my stall in a neighboring street selling five cash worth of plums to a customer, when suddenly all the plums rose out of my baskets as if they had the wings of hawks, and flew through the air over the tops of the houses in this direction. Thinking myself the sport of demons, I ran after them, hoping to catch them, and — Ah! there are my plums," he cried, suddenly interrupting himself, and making a dart at some of the crimson fruits that the tailor Hang held in his hand, intending to carry them home to his wife.

"These your plums!" screamed Hang, defending his treasure vigorously. "Mole that you are, did you ever see scarlet plums?"

"This man is stricken by Heaven," said Piou-Lu, gravely. "He is a fool who hides his plums and then thinks that they fly away. Let some one shake his gown."

A porcelain-cobbler who stood near the fruiterer immediately seized the long blue robe and gave it a lusty pull, when, to the wonder of everybody, thousands of the most beautiful plums fell out, as from a tree shaken by

the winds of autumn. At this moment a great gust of wind arose in the street, and a pillar of dust mounted up to the very top of the strange tree, that still stood waving its long satiny leaves languidly above the house-tops. For an instant every one was blinded, and when the dust had subsided so as to permit the people to use their eyes again the wonderful tree had completely vanished, and all that could be seen was a little bamboo stool flying along the road, where it was blown by the storm. The poor fruiterer, Liho, stood aghast, looking at the plums, in which he stood knee-deep.

The Mandarin, addressing him, said sternly, "Let us hear no more such folly from Liho, otherwise he will get twenty strokes of the stick."

"Gather your plums, Liho," said Piou-Lu kindly, "and think this one of your fortunate days; for he who runs after his losses with open mouth does not always overtake them."

And as the conjurer descended from his platform it did not escape the sharp eyes of the little tailor Hang that Piou-Lu exchanged a mysterious signal with the Mandarin Wei-chang-tze.



THE CHAPTER OF THE SHADOW OF THE DUCK.

It was close on nightfall when Piou-Lu stopped before Wei-chang-tze's house. The lanterns were already lit, and the porter dozed in a bamboo chair so soundly, that Piou-Lu entered the porch and passed the screen without awaking him. The inner room was dimly lighted by some horn lanterns elegantly painted with hunting scenes; but despite the obscurity the conjurer could discover

Wei-chang-tze seated at the farther end of the apartment on an inclined couch covered with blue and yellow satin. Along the corridor that led to the women's apartments the shadows lay thick; but Piou-Lu fancied he could hear the pattering of little feet upon the matted floor, and see the twinkle of curious eyes illuminating the solemn darkness. Yet, after all, he may have been mistaken, for the corridor opened on a garden wealthy in the rarest flowers, and he may have conceived the silver dripping of the fountain to be the pattering of dainty feet, and have mistaken the moonlight shining on the moist leaves of the lotus for the sparkle of women's eyes.

"Has Piou-Lu arrived in my dwelling?" asked Wei-chang-tze from the dim corner in which he lay.

"That ignoble and wrath-deserving personage bows his head before you," answered Piou-Lu, advancing and saluting the Mandarin in accordance with the laws of the Book of Rites.

"I hope that you performed your journey hither in great safety and peace of mind," said Wei-chang-tze, gracefully motioning to the conjurer to seat himself on a small blue sofa that stood at a little distance.

"When so mean an individual as Piou-Lu is honored by the request of the noble Wei-chang-tze, good fortune must attend him. How could it be otherwise?" replied Piou-Lu, seating himself not on the small blue sofa, but on the satin one which was partly occupied by the Mandarin himself.

"Piou-Lu did not send in his name, as the Rites direct," said Wei-chang-tze, looking rather disgusted by this impertinent freedom on the part of the conjurer.

"The elegant porter that adorns the noble porch of Wei-chang-tze was fast asleep," answered Piou-Lu, "and

Piou-Lu knew that the great Mandarin expected him with impatience."

"Yes," said Wei-chang-tze; "I am oppressed by a thousand demons; devils sleep in my hair, and my ears are overflowing with evil spirit; I cannot rest at night, and feel no pleasure in the day. Therefore was it that I wished to see you, in hopes that you would, by amusing the demon that inhabits my stomach, induce him to depart."

"I will endeavor to delight the respectable demon who lodges in your stomach with my unworthy conjurations," replied Piou-Lu. "But first I must go into the garden to gather flowers."

"Go," said Wei-chang-tze. "The moon shines, and you will see there very many rare and beautiful plants that are beloved by my daughter Wu."

"The moonlight itself cannot shine brighter on the lilies than the glances of your lordship's daughter," said the conjurer, bowing and proceeding to the garden.

Ah! what a garden it was that Piou-Lu now entered! The walls that surrounded it were lofty, and built of a rosy stone brought from the mountains of Mantchouria. This wall, on whose inner face flowery designs and triumphal processions were sculptured at regular intervals, sustained the long and richly laden shoots of the white magnolia, which spread its large snowy chalices in myriads over the surface. Tamarisks and palms sprang up in various parts of the grounds, like dark columns supporting the silvery sky; while the tender and mournful willow drooped its delicate limbs over numberless fish-ponds, whose waters seemed to repose peacefully in the bosom of the emerald turf. The air was distracted with innumerable perfumes, each more fragrant than the other. The

blue convolvulus, the crimson ipomea, the prodigal azaleas, the-spotted tiger-lilies, the timid and half-hidden jasmine, all poured forth, during the day and night, streams of perfume from the inexhaustible fountains of their chalices. The heavy odors of the tube-rose floated languidly through the leaves, as a richly-plumaged bird would float through summer air, borne down by his own splendor. The blue lotus slept on the smooth waves of the fishponds in sublime repose. There seemed an odor of enchantment over the entire place. The flowers whispered their secrets in the perfumed silence; the inmost heart of every blossom was unclosed at that mystic hour; all the magic and mystery of plants floated abroad, and the garden seemed filled with the breath of a thousand spells. But amidst the lilies and lotuses, amidst the scented roses and the drooping convolvuli, there moved a flower fairer than all.

"I am here," whispered a low voice, and a dusky figure came gliding toward Piou-Lu, as he stood by the fountain.

"Ah!" said the conjurer, in a tender tone, far different from the shrill one in which he addressed the crowd opposite the Hotel of the Thirty-two Virtues. "The garden is now complete. Wu, the Rose of Completed Beauty, has blossomed on the night."

"Let Piou-Lu shelter her under his mantle from the cold winds of evening, and bear her company for a little while, for she has grown up under a lonely wall," said Wu, laying her little hand gently on the conjurer's arm, and nestling up to his side as a bird nestles into the fallen leaves warmed by the sun.

"She can lie there but a little while," answered Piou-Lu, folding the Mandarin's daughter in a passionate embrace, "for Wei-chang-tze awaits the coming of Piou-Lu

impatiently, in order to have a conjuration with a devil that inhabits his stomach."

"Alas!" said Wu, sadly, "why do you not seek some other and more distinguished employment than that of a conjurer? Why do you not seek distinction in the Palace of Literary Composition, and obtain a style? Then we need not meet in secret, and you might without fear demand my hand from my father."

Piou-Lu smiled, almost scornfully. He seemed to gain an inch in stature, and looked around him with an air of command.

"The marble from which the statue is to be carved must lie in the quarry until the workman finds it," he answered, "and the hour of my destiny has not yet arrived."

"Well, we must wait, I suppose," said Wu, with a sigh. "Meantime, Piou-Lu, I love you."

"The hour will come sooner than you think," said Piou-Lu, returning her caress; "and now go, for the Mandarin waits."

Wu glided away through the gloom to her own apartment, while the conjurer passed rapidly through the garden and gathered the blossoms of certain flowers as he went. He seemed to linger with a strange delight over the buds bathed in the moonlight and the dew; their perfume ascended into his nostrils like incense, and he breathed it with a voluptuous pleasure.

"Now let the demon tremble in the noble stomach of Wei-chang-tze," said Piou-Lu, as he re-entered the hall of reception laden with flowers. "This ill-favored personage will make such conjurations as shall delight the soul of the elegant and well-born Mandarin, and cause his illustrious persecutor to fly terrified."

Piou-Lu then stripped off the petals from many of the flowers, and gathered them in a heap on the floor. The mass of leaves was indeed variegated. The red of the quamoclit, the blue of the convolvulus, the tender pink of the camellia, the waxen white of the magnolia, were all mingled together like the thousand hues in the Scarfs of Felicity. Having built this confused mass of petals in the shape of a pyramid, Piou-Lu unwound a scarf from his waist and flung it over the heap. He then drew the piece of jade-stone from his pocket, and said, —

“This personage of outrageous presence desires that what will be may be shown to the lofty Mandarin, Wei-chang-tze.”

As he pronounced these words, he twitched the scarf away with a rapid jerk, and lo! the flower-leaves were gone, and in their place stood a beautiful mandarin duck, in whose gorgeous plumage one might trace the brilliant hues of the flowers. Piou-Lu now approached the duck, caught it up with one hand, while with the other he drew a sharp knife from his girdle and severed the bird's head from its body at a single stroke. To the great astonishment of Wei-chang-tze, the body and dismembered head of the bird vanished the moment the knife had passed through the neck; but at the same instant a duck, resembling it in every respect, escaped from the conjurer's hands and flew across the room. When I say that this duck resembled the other in every respect, I mean only in shape, size, and colors. For the rest, it was no bodily duck. It was impalpable and transparent, and even when it flew it made no noise with its wings.

“This is indeed wonderful!” said Wei-chang-tze. “Let the marvellous conjurer explain.”

“The duck formed out of flowers was a duck pure in

body and in spirit, most lofty Mandarin," said Piou-Lu, "and when it died under the knife, I ordered its soul to pass into its shadow, which can never be killed. Hence the shadow of the duck has all the colors as well as the intelligence of the real duck that gave it birth."

"And to what end has the very wise Piou-Lu created this beautiful duck-shadow?" asked the Mandarin.

"The cultivated Wei-chang-tze shall immediately behold," answered the conjurer, drawing from his wide sleeve a piece of rock-salt and flinging it to the farther end of the room. He had hardly done this when a terrific sound, between a bark and a howl, issued from the dim corner into which he had cast the rock-salt, and immediately a large gray wolf issued wonderfully from out of the twilight, and rushed with savage fangs upon the shadow of the beautiful duck.

"Why, it is a wolf from the forests of Mantchouria!" exclaimed Wei-chang-tze, rather alarmed at this frightful apparition. "This is no shadow, but a living and blood-thirsty beast."

"Let my lord observe and have no fear," said Piou-Lu, tranquilly.

The wolf seemed rather confounded when, on making a snap at the beautiful duck, his sharp fangs met no resistance, while the bird flew with wonderful venom straight at his fiery eyes. He growled, and snapped, and tore with his claws at the agile shadow that fluttered around and over him, but all to no purpose. As well might the hound leap at the reflection of the deer in the pool where he drinks. The shadow of the beautiful duck seemed all the while to possess some strange, deadly influence over the savage wolf. His growls grew fainter and fainter, and his red and flaming eyes seemed to drop blood. His

limbs quivered all over, and the rough hairs of his coat stood on end with terror and pain, — the shadow of the beautiful duck never ceasing all the time to fly straight at his eyes.

“The wolf is dying!” exclaimed Wei-chang-tze.

“He will die, — die like a dog,” said Piou-Lu, in a tone of savage triumph.

And presently, as he predicted, the wolf gave two or three faint howls, turned himself round in a circle as if making a bed to sleep on, and then laid down and died. The shadow of the beautiful duck seemed now to be radiant with glory. It shook its bright wings, that were lovely and transparent as a rainbow, and, mounting on the dead body of the wolf, sat in majesty upon his grim and shaggy throne.

“And what means this strange exhibition, learned and wise conjurer?” asked Wei-chang-tze, with a sorely troubled air.

“I will tell you,” said Piou-Lu, suddenly dropping his respectful and ceremonious language, and lifting his hand with an air of supreme power. “The mandarin duck, elegant, faithful, and courageous, is an emblem of the dynasty of Ming, that true Chinese race that ruled so splendidly in this land before the invaders usurped the throne. The cowardly and savage wolf is a symbol of the Mantchou Tartar robbers who slew our liberties, shaved our heads, and enchained our people. The time has now arrived when the duck has recovered its splendor and its courage, and is going to kill the wolf; for the wolf cannot bite it, as it works like a shadow in the twilight and mystery of secret association. This you know, Wei-chang-tze, as well as I.”

“I have indeed heard of a rebel Chinese named Tién-té,

who has raised a flame in our peaceful land, and who, proclaiming himself a lineal descendant of the dynasty of Ming, seeks to dethrone our wise and heavenly sovereign, Hién-foung."

"Lie not to me, Wei-chang-tze, for I know your inmost thoughts. Chinese as you are, I know that you hate the Tartar in your heart, but you are afraid to say so for fear of losing your head."

The Mandarin was so stupefied at this audacious address that he could not reply, while the conjurer continued: "I come to make you an offer. Join the forces of the heaven-descended Emperor Tién-té. Join with him in expelling this tyrannical Tartar race from the Central Kingdom, and driving them back again to their cold hills and barren deserts. Fly with me to the Imperial camp, and bring with you your daughter Wu, the Golden Heart of the Lily, and I promise you the command of one third of the Imperial forces, and the Presidency of the College of Ceremonies."

"And who are you, who dare to ask of Wei-chang-tze to bestow on you his nobly-born daughter?" said Wei-chang-tze, starting in a rage from his couch.

"I!" replied Piou-Lu, shaking his conjurer's gown from his shoulders and displaying a splendid garment of yellow satin, on the breast of which was emblazoned the Imperial Dragon, — "I am your Emperor, Tién-té?"

"Ha!" screamed a shrill voice behind him at this moment, "here he is. The elegant and noble rebel for whose head our worthy Emperor has offered a reward of ten thousand silver tales. Here he is. Catch! beautiful and noble Mandarins, catch him! and I will pay my creditors with the head-money."

Piou-Lu turned, and beheld the little tailor Hang-pou,

at whose back were a whole file of soldiers and a number of Mandarins. Wei-chang-tze shuddered, for in this compromise of his character he knew that his death was written if he fell into the Imperial hands.



THE CHAPTER OF "ALL IS OVER."

"STATELY and temperate tailor," said Piou-Lu, calmly, "why do you wish to arrest me?"

"Ho! because I will get a reward, and I want to pay my debts," said Hang-pou, grinning spitefully.

"A reward for me, the miserable and marrowless conjurer, Piou-Lu! O, elegant cutter of summer gowns, your well-educated brains are not at home!"

"O, we know you well enough, mighty conjurer. You are none other than the contumacious rebel, Tién-té, who dares to claim the throne held by the wise and merciful Hién Foung; and we will bear you to the court of Peking in chains, so that you may wither in the light of his terrible eyes."

"You think you will get a reward of ten thousand silver tales for my head?" said Piou-Lu.

"Certainly," replied the little tailor, rubbing his hands with glee, — "certainly. His Unmatched and Isolated Majesty has promised it, and the Brother of the Sun never lies."

"Listen, inventive closer of symmetrical seams! Listen, and I will tell you what will become of your ten thousand silver tales. There is a long avenue leading to the Imperial treasury, and at every second step is an open hand. When the ten thousand tales are poured out, the first hand grasps a half, the second hand an eighth of the

remaining half, the third hand grasps a fourth of the rest, and when the money-bags get down a little lower, all the hands grasp together ; so that when the bags reach the little tailor Hang-pou, who stands stamping his feet very far down indeed, they are entirely empty ; for Tartar robbers surround the throne, and a Tartar usurper sits upon it, and the great Chinese nation toils in its rice-fields to gild their palaces, and fill their seraglios, and for all they give get neither justice nor mercy. But I, Tién-té, the Heavenly Emperor of this Central Land, will ordain it otherwise, and hurl the false Dragon from his throne ; for it is written in the Book of Prognostics, a copy of which was brought to me on the wings of a yellow serpent, that the dynasty of Han shall rule once more, and the Tartar wolves perish miserably out of the Land of Flowers."

"This is treason against the Light of the Universe, our most gracious Emperor," said the Mandarin Lin. "You shall have seventy times seven pounds of cold iron put upon your neck for these blasphemies, and I will promise you that many bamboo splinters shall be driven up under your rebellious nails."

"Let our ears be no longer filled with these atrocious utterances!" cried Hang-pou. "O brave and splendid Mandarins, order your terrifying tigers to arrest this depraved rebel, in order that we may hasten with him to Pekin."

"Before you throw the chains of sorrow around my neck, O tailor of celestial inspirations," said Piou-Lu, with calm mockery, — "before the terrible weight of your just hand falls upon me, I pray you, if you would oblige me, to look at that duck." So saying, Piou-Lu pointed to where the shadow of the duck was sitting on the body of the wolf.

"O, what a beautiful duck!" cried Hang-pou, with glistening eyes, and clapping his hands. "Let us try and catch him!"

"It is indeed a majestic duck," said Mandarin Lin, gravely stroking his mustache. "I am favorable to his capture."

"You will wait until we catch the duck, illustrious rebel!" said Hang-pou to Piou-Lu, very innocently, never turning his eyes from the duck, to which they seemed to be glued by some singular spell of attraction.

"I will talk with the Mandarin Wei-chang-tze while you put your noble manœuvres into motion," answered Piou-Lu.

"Now let us steal upon the duck," said Hang-pou. "Handsomely-formed duck, we entreat of you to remain as quiet as possible, in order that we may grasp you in our hands."

Then, as if actuated by a single impulse, the entire crowd, with the exception of Wei-chang-tze and Piou-Lu, moved toward the duck. The Mandarins stepped on tiptoe, with bent bodies, and little black eyes glistening with eagerness; Hang-pou crawled on his belly like a serpent; and the soldiers, casting aside their bows and shields, crept, with their hands upon their sides, toward the beautiful bird. The duck remained perfectly quiet, its variegated wings shining like painted tale, and its neck lustrous as the court robe of a first-class Mandarin. The crowd scarcely breathed, so intense was their eagerness to capture the duck; and they moved slowly forward, gradually surrounding it.

Hang-pou was the first to make a clutch at the bird, but he was very much astonished to find his hand closing on empty air, while the duck remained seated on the wolf, as still as a picture.

“Miserable tailor!” cried Mandarin Lin, “your hand is a sieve, with meshes wide enough to strain elephants. How can you catch the beautiful duck? Behold me!” and Mandarin Lin made a rapid and well-calculated dive at the duck. To the wonderment of every one except Piou-Lu and Wei-chang-tze, the duck seemed to ooze through his fingers, and, escaping, flew away to the other end of the room.

“If my hand is a sieve,” said Hang-pou, “it is evident that the noble Mandarin’s hand is not a wall of beaten copper, for it lets ducks fly through with wonderful ease.”

“It is a depraved and abominable duck, of criminal parentage,” said Mandarin Lin, in a terrible rage; “and I vow, by the whiskers of the Dragon, that I will catch it and burn it on a spit.”

“O, yes!” cried the entire crowd, — Mandarins, soldiers, and the little tailor, — all now attracted to the chase of the duck by a power that they could no longer resist. “O, yes! we will most assuredly capture this little duck, and, depriving him of his feathers, punish him on a spit that is exceedingly hot.”

So the chase commenced. Here and there, from one corner to the other, up the walls, on the altar of the household gods, — in short, in every possible portion of the large room, did the Mandarins, the little tailor, and the soldiers pursue the shadow of the beautiful duck. Never was seen such a duck. It seemed to be in twenty places at a time. One moment Mandarin Lin would throw himself bodily on the bird, in hopes of crushing it, and would call out triumphantly that now indeed he had the duck; but the words would be hardly out of his mouth when a loud shout from the rest of the party would disabuse his mind, and, turning, he would behold the duck marching

proudly down the centre of the floor. Another time a soldier would declare that he had the duck in his breeches pocket; but while his neighbors were carefully probing that recess the duck would be seen calmly emerging from his right-hand sleeve. One time Hang-Pou sat down suddenly on the mouth of a large china jar, and resolutely refused to stir, declaring that he had seen the duck enter the jar, and that he was determined to sit upon the mouth until the demon of a duck was starved to death. But even while uttering his heroic determination, his mouth was seen to open very wide, and, to the astonishment of all, the duck flew out. In an instant the whole crowd was after him again; Mandarin Hy-le tumbled over Mandarin Ching-tze, and Mandarin Lin nearly drove his head through Hang-pou's stomach. The unhappy wretches began now to perspire and grow faint with fatigue, but the longer the chase went on the hotter it grew. There was no rest for any of them. From corner to corner, from side to side,—now in one direction, now in another,—no matter whither the duck flew, they were compelled to follow. Their faces streamed, and their legs seemed ready to sink under them. Their eyeballs were ready to start out of their heads, and they had the air of government couriers who had travelled five hundred *li* in eleven days. They were nearly dead.

“Those men will surely perish, illustrious claimant of the throne,” said Wei-chang-tze, gazing with astonishment at this mad chase.

“Let them perish!” said the conjurer; “so will perish all the enemies of the Celestial sovereign, Tién-té. Wei-chang-tze, once more, do you accept my offer? If you remain here, you will be sent to Peking in chains; if you come with me, I will gird your waist with the scarf of

Perpetual Delight. We want wise men like you to guide our armies, and —”

“And the illustrious Tién-té loves the Mandarin’s daughter,” said Wei-chang-tze, roguishly finishing the sentence. “Light of the Universe and Son of Heaven, Wei-chang-tze is your slave!”

Piou-Lu — for I still call him by his conjurer’s name — gave a low whistle, and, obedient to the summons, Wu’s delicate shape came gliding from the corridor toward her lover, with the dainty step of a young fawn going to the fountain.

“Wu,” said Piou-Lu, “the marble is carved, and the hour is come.”

“My father, then, has consented?” said Wu, looking timidly at her father.

“When the Emperor of the Central Land condescends to woo, what father dare refuse?” said Wei-chang-tze.

“Emperor!” said Wu, opening her black eyes with wonder. “My Piou-lu an Emperor!”

“I am indeed the son of the Dragon,” said Piou-Lu, folding her to his breast, “and you shall sit upon a throne of ivory and gold.”

“And I thought you were only a conjurer!” murmured Wu, hiding her head in his yellow gown.

“But how are we to leave this place?” asked Wei-chang-tze, looking alarmed. “The guard will seize us if they get knowledge of your presence.”

“We shall be at my castle in the mountains of Tse-Hing, near the Kouéi-Lin, in less than a minute,” answered Piou-Lu; “for to the possessor of the Dragon Fang all things are possible.”

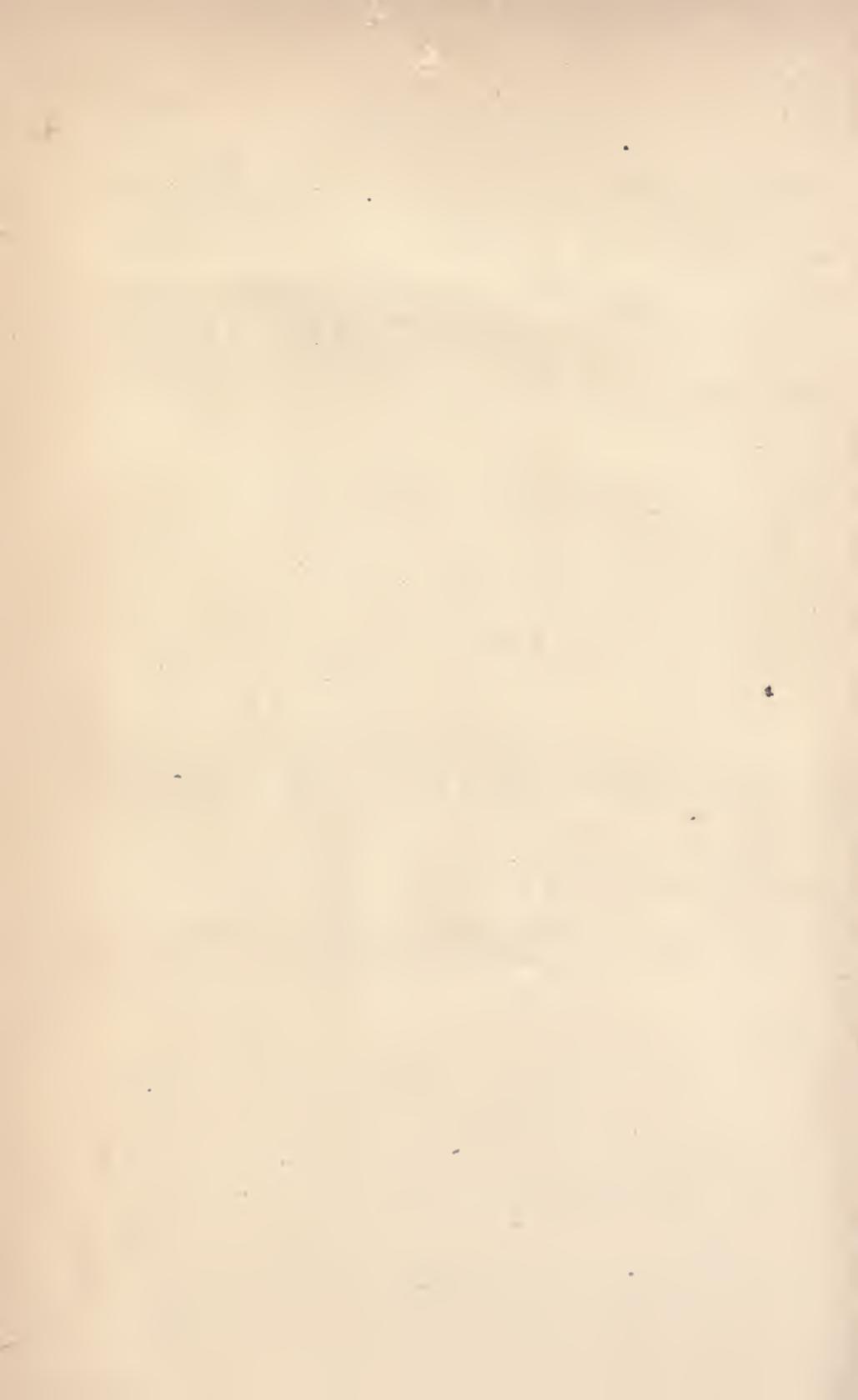
Even as he spoke the ground began to slide from under their feet with wonderful rapidity, leaving them motion-

less and upright. Houses, walls, gardens, fields, all passed by them with the swiftness of a dream, until, in a few seconds, they found themselves in the mountain castle of Tién-té, where they were welcomed with a splendid hospitality. Wu became the favorite wife of the adventurous Emperor, and Wei-chang-tze one of his most famous generals.

The day after these events some Tartar soldiers entered Wei-chang-tze's house to search for the Mandarin, when, in the reception-hall, they were confounded at finding a number of men lying dead upon the floor, while in the midst sat a beautiful duck, that immediately on their entrance flew out through a window, and was seen no more. The dead men were soon recognized, and it was the opinion of the people of Tching-tou that Wei-chang-tze had poisoned all the soldiers and Mandarins, and then fled. The tailor, Hang-pou, being among the corpses, was found to have given his creditors the slip forever.

Victory still sits on the banner of Tién-té, and he will, without doubt, by the time that the tea is again fit to gather, sit upon the ancient throne of his ancestors.

Everything is now gracefully concluded.





APPENDIX.



"I come but in as others do."

SHAKESPEARE.





Mr. [Name] [Address]



CHARLES DAWSON SHANLY.

From a painting by William E. Marshall.



CHARLES DAWSON SHANLY.

[From the *New York Tribune*, April 19, 1875.]

INFORMATION has been received of the death of Charles Dawson Shanly. He expired at Jacksonville, in Florida, whither he had gone for the benefit of his health, on the 15th of April. This news will carry a sharp pang of sorrow to more than one heart. Mr. Shanly was known to the public as a writer for the magazines, — charmingly companionable, quietly humorous, playful, and quaint ; but all that he was as a writer seems little in comparison with what he was as a man ; and it is the high-minded, kind-hearted, simple, faithful comrade and friend, rather than the man of letters, who will at first be mourned. Nobility of character, integrity of conduct, fidelity to duty, cheerful submission to fate, sweetness of temperament, and modesty of bearing are rarer and richer virtues than intellectual brilliancy ; and they were all combined in him. Mr. Shanly has lived in New York, working with his pen, for about eighteen years ; and to all who knew him, and all with whom he came into contact, he was conspicuous as a type of what, with tenderness and pride, the human heart instinctively accepts as a gentleman. His life was lonely. His mind seemed to have been long ago saddened in some way, but not embittered. He was a kindly, quiet, thoughtful man, who worked hard, accomplished much, did all the good that he could find to do, and never spoke about himself or his labors. His fortunes were small, and they were precarious. He was at times acquainted with hardship. But whether in shadow or sunshine his mind and heart remained equable and patient, and his industry and probity undisturbed. There were not many persons, perhaps, who saw and appreciated his example. The more showy and pretentious author gets the most credit with the crowd. But those who did understand this example found comfort and

strength in it, and will remember it now with love and pride. Mr. Shanly's writings consist of many essays and descriptive articles, in *The Atlantic Monthly*, many poems and ballads, — some of which are imaginative and pathetic, while some are satirical or humorous, — and many miscellaneous articles and paragraphs in the newspapers. He was, in 1860, one of the chief contributors to *Vanity Fair*, — which was started, in the fall of the previous year, by Mr. William A. Stephens, — and he became, at a subsequent time, its editor. He was also the editor of *Mrs. Grundy*, which was started here by Dr. Alfred L. Carrol, in July, 1865, and was discontinued after the publication of twelve numbers. He was a contributor to *The New York Leader*, for which, as afterward for *The New York Weekly Review*, and during a time for *The New York Albion*, he wrote reviews of art. He was passionately fond of painting, and he was an expert draughtsman in the line of comic sketches. One of his characteristic drawings, published, long ago, in *The London Punch*, represents with excellent comic effect the horror and discomfiture of a stout old Englishman, who, at a private museum of natural curiosities, has mistaken a big horned owl for a stuffed cat, and has got his bald head scratched by the angry fowl. This little thing is mentioned as denoting the bent of his playfulness. He was also a contributor to *The New York World*, wherein he wrote upon social topics and the evanescent trifles of the passing day. He particularly excelled as a writer of poems of dramatic incident, or of representative dramatic mood. "The Brier-wood Pipe," which met with a wide acceptance and admiration during the Civil War, was his ; and so too was the weird ballad of "The Walker of the Snow." Still another unique work of this kind was his startling and sad poem, — which is picture and poem in one, — "Rifleman, shoot me a fancy shot." This was first published in London, in *Once a Week*. Mr. Shanly did not, perhaps, accomplish enough in this vein to win for him an abiding rank among the poets ; but his name is entitled to its place in every representative collection of American poetry. He was not indeed an American by birth, but this was the land of his choice and his labors, and here he would have wished to be remembered. Mr. Shanly was an Irish gentleman, of old and honorable family. He lived in Great Britain, and also in Canada, before settling in New York. He was about fifty years of age, and of a hardy constitution, having blue eyes, iron-gray hair, a weather-beaten face,

and a slender, wiry figure. He was thoroughly well acquainted with animals and field sports, and he was a great walker. Within the last two years his health has seemed to waste slowly and gradually away ; but this, like all else that was painful and sad in his life, he kept to himself. He knew when he went hence that he was going to his death, and he had prepared himself, with humbleness and submission, for the inexorable change. There is no one of the busy workers in journalism who will not be benefited by reflection upon a character so pure and simple, a life so industrious, useful, and blameless, and an end so tranquil.

WILLIAM WINTER.



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