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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK LETTERS OF PEREGRINE PICKLE ***

LETTERS

OF

PEREGRINE PICKLE

BY

GEORGE P. UPTON.

"*This, That and the Other.*"

CHICAGO:
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1869

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To My Wife,

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Sympathy and Encouragement

HAVE CONSTANTLY WELCOMED AND FOLLOWED

THESE LETTERS,

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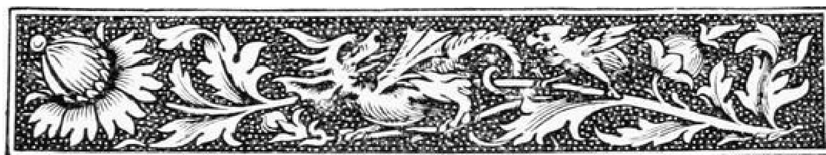


PREFACE.

THE contents of this book originally appeared in the columns of the Chicago Tribune, in the form of weekly letters, over the *nom de plume* of "Peregrine Pickle," devoted to matters of gossip and interest in the world of amusement. Necessarily, much of this matter was of an ephemeral

nature, which perished with publication. Many of these letters, also, were devoted to topics of a purely local and temporary character, which, at this present date, would possess no interest. I have, therefore, taken care to preserve only such parts of them as have a general bearing, and have arranged them under appropriate heads, with dates at the end of each, as a matter of convenience and reference.

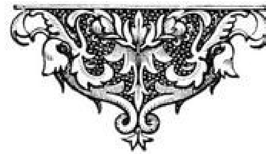
These letters were commenced in the early part of the winter of 1866-'67, and have, therefore, reached the very respectable age of nearly three years. Like other children, they are old enough to go alone, and I therefore send them out into the world, richly endowed with my blessings, [vi] which is all I have to give them. Should they succeed in the world, I shall be profoundly astonished, as they were born amidst the press and hurry of other editorial duties, and they came into the world scarce half made up. Should they fail, I shall at least have the gratification of showing that Lytton Bulwer was in error in regard to the lexicon of youth.

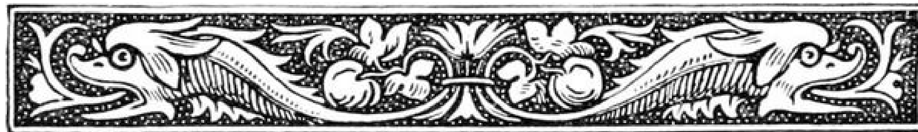
The characters—Old Blobbs and Mrs. Blobbs, Aurelia, Celeste, Mignon, Blanche, Boosey, Fitz-Herbert, and the Maiden Aunt—whom the reader will find in these pages, may be real or not, as the reader fancies. None of them are willing, however, to have me divulge their real names, as that would destroy the little mystery which envelopes our breakfast gatherings, and would put us ill at ease when talking with the reader, as we hope to do for some time to come, through the columns of the Tribune. Meanwhile, if the reader knows any large-hearted, large-handed man, who speaks very plainly and hates shams, it is quite possible that man is Old Blobbs. Mrs. Blobbs is a very good woman when she is severely let alone, and her ideas of etiquette are not shocked. Aurelia is a plain, practical, well-educated woman, who shed all her nonsense when her first baby made her appearance. Celeste is a little flighty, and would be a Girl of the Period, if that did not involve vulgarity. Mignon is the pet of our set, keenly alive to whatever is beautiful, always lively and always graceful, and Blanche is her companion—a quiet and lovable girl. Boosey is a good- [vii] hearted, weak-kneed young fellow, quite harmless and very self-opinionated, while Fitz-Herbert is an incapable we cannot shake off. The Maiden Aunt is not with us now, having gone to a better world than this. Perhaps the reader knows all these people. They are not difficult to find.

These pages may prove to you, oh! reader, but a garden overrun with weeds. Should you, however, find only one simple little flower worth laying away as a souvenir, my purpose will have been answered.

G. P. U.

Chicago, September 20, 1869.





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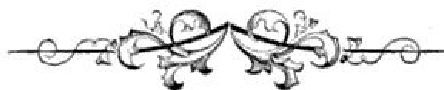
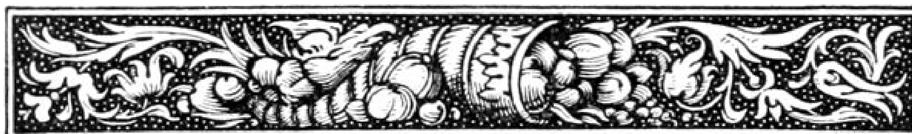
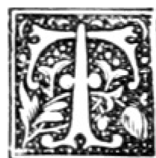




THE SEASON.



THE backbone of the winter is broken. The Carnival is about over. The lights are going out and the curtain is about to be rung down. The Spring will soon come slowly up this way, and then Lent. We shall take off our masques, be good children, and moralize on the routs, the follies and frivolities of December, January and February; and moralizing, we shall pronounce the winter the gayest, wildest, most dashing and smashing Chicago has ever known.

The winter has been one perpetual ball and party. Private amusement has usurped the place of public, and as a consequence, concerts and operas have suffered. The poor Philharmonic has withered like a leaf under this neglect, and Strakosch has lost money at a frightful rate. Soiree, ball and party have succeeded each other with wonderful rapidity, and the belles have been literally kept whirling until they are worn out and pine for the grateful Lent, when they can rest and get ready for the watering places.

The milliners, mantua-makers, dress-makers, hair-dressers, and others who make such exquisite fits and tremendous bills, have been in clover. The young ladies sometimes, after a season of only one night, come home so smashed that there is little left of their light fabrics and heavy [2] waterfalls. Papa's purse has bled freely, while mamma, who *will* wear a train and try to eclipse her daughter, gets trodden on and banged up and has to go into the toilet dry dock quite often for repairs. This is the reason why the milliner *et al.* high-priced individuals have been happy and old Blobbs has staid away from evening meetings and, growling at the fire-screen, made an Ursa Major of himself.

So we go. Young Boosey and Aurelia care little for the tariff, reconstruction, high church controversy, tax bills and legislative stealings. They are optimists. They want the best, and they want it now while the purse holds out. They have had a gay winter, will dawdle along through the spring and leave us just in time to escape the hot weather and the cholera, and we shall miss them as we miss the butterflies, and hail their return as they come back in the fall for another winter campaign. I do not know that they build many houses, endow many colleges, teach many Sunday school classes or consume much calico and cold water; but then the streets would be very monotonous, and the counter-jumpers would grow rusty and life would be tinted with ashes of roses without them.

February 16, 1867.

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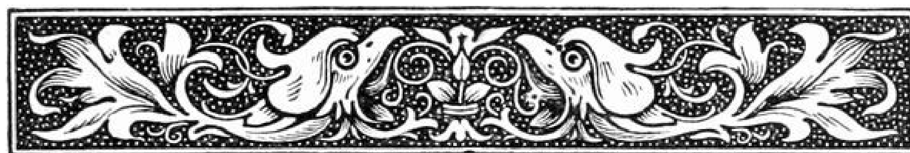


SLEEPING IN CHURCH.

AM usually of a very philosophical temperament and preserve my equilibrium with a wonderful degree of success. I can resist even the blandishments of the tax-collector and never get up to boiling point, as it requires too much effort; but I have at last failed to retain my composure; and I have failed, because an unfortunate Irishman wandered into a church in Rhode Island and went to sleep and was sent to jail for ten days, not for going to church, but for going to sleep. He was not drunk. He did not even snore. He simply went to sleep like a good Christian. And this innovation upon the ancient rights of pew-holders, and especially of strangers, was endured by the parishioners without a murmur.

Now, if we are going to establish precedents about sleeping in church, wouldn't it be well to reverse the order of things? For instance, send every minister to jail for ten days who cannot keep his hearers awake. Or, send every architect, who builds churches without means of ventilation, to jail for the same length of time. If I am to be deprived of my customary nap at the head of the family pew, why, then I must go where preachers are less somnolent or stay at home and take my nap, and thereby diminish the revenues of the church. And if all the heads which nod [4] assent so vigorously to the preacher's premises, are to be deprived of their siestas, what will become of the preachers? Does good old Deacon Jones, who always wakes up in time to pass the contribution box, intend to encourage this state of things? Does good sister Jones, who drowses just a trifle, notwithstanding her smelling-bottle, vote in favor of it?

I never heard of but one man before, who was punished for sleeping in church, and he was Eutychus, I believe, who was sitting in an open window, and falling into a deep sleep, had a worse fall than that, by falling out of the window. Now, Eutychus was a very foolish young man to go to sleep in an open window, and deserved his punishment for his stupidity, but there is little danger of any one suffering in that manner now-a-days, for an open window in a church is as rare as a church without a contribution box or a strawberry festival.

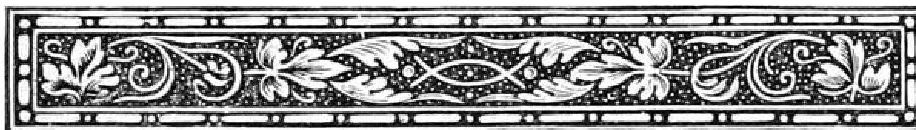
In another respect, this sleeping in church is a compliment to the minister. It indicates that his congregation are satisfied with the soundness of his doctrines and are willing to trust him alone. Suppose Brother Ryder should preach eternal damnation, or Brother Hatfield should announce universal salvation, or Brother Locke should advocate the elevation of the Host, would their parishioners do much sleeping?

Not much!

I feel for that unfortunate Milesian. I feel that in his punishment, landmarks are swept away and that an old established usage, sanctified by the experience of immemorial ages, is overturned.

March 2, 1867.

[5]



THE ORGAN GRINDER.

E is the child of sunny Italy, and it is to be regretted that he is not with his parents.

Likewise his monkey.

I was reminded this morning that Spring is slowly coming up this way, by meeting him and his organ and his red-blanketted monkey; and the air was full of the infernal jangle and din, ground out by that remorseless man; and as I passed along I reflected.

Does the Italian take naturally to the hand-organ? Is he born with the crank and the monkey in his mouth? What sin has he committed that he should be compelled to tramp, making day and night hideous? What becomes of him in winter? Where does he live? Does he go where the flies go? Is he preserved in amber from Autumn to Spring? You see him on one of the last days of Autumn. A biting wind the next day and the birds are gone. If you ask me what becomes of him, I will answer, I will tell you, when you tell me what becomes of all the hoop-skirts. Does the Organ-Grinder go to church? Does he pay taxes? Are there a Mrs. Organ-Grinder and little Organ-Grinders bringing up little monkeys to the business? Do they live in houses, or do they burrow in the ground? Where do they go when they die? In fact, do they ever die? Are they not like the wandering Jew, compelled to keep moving, grinding as they go?

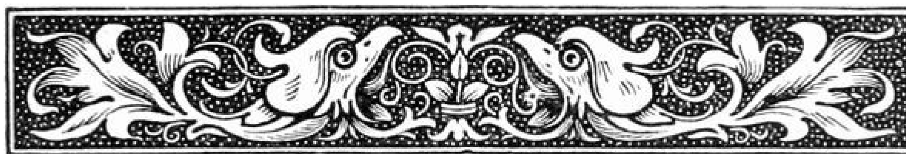
[6] These questions are worthy of consideration. There is only one thing certain about him. He is as resistless as fate. Give him a penny to go away and he will come the next day for a similar favor. Threaten to shoot him and he will laugh at you. Buttons and board-nails are just as current with him as pennies. Tell him your family are at the point of death, and he will grind out a soothing strain and come the next day with several more of his tribe to play a dirge at the funeral. I think I can eat a frugal meal with a Digger Indian; I am even prepared to recognize the greasy Esquimaux and horse-eating Gauls, but I cannot recognize a man and brother in the Organ-Grinder.

He is one of those mysterious dispensations like the cholera, rinderpest and trichiniasis which only future ages may appreciate. Undoubtedly he has his mission. Undoubtedly there are people who dote on the Organ-Grinder and the organ and the monkey and are soothed with the touching story of "Old Dog Tray." Undoubtedly there was an old woman who kissed a cow; and there are people at the antipodes who eat mice and other small deer.

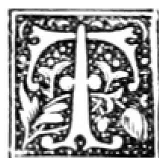
Such patience, determination, humility and industry, if applied to the Foreign Missions, would speedily clothe every Fiji sinner in a flannel jacket and his right mind. Were such attachments as exist between the Organ-Grinder and his monkey more common, we should rapidly approach the Millenium. Tramp on, then, O! Organ-Grinder! Tramp on, O! monkey! It is meet we should be taught patience.

April 13, 1867.

[7]



A RETROSPECT.



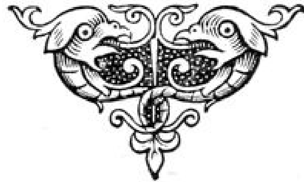
HE young ladies have commenced doing a very naughty thing, which is nothing more nor less than inserting a looking-glass on the inner side of the book of "Common Prayer." It is so handy you know, when you are saying the responses, to pay your little devotions to the mirror, for how can one say the responses aright if her strings are fluttered or her chignon awry? And then you know you can get reflections from Celeste over in the next slip and examine her toilet and all the time be looking at your Prayer Book, like a good child. For combining the altar and the toilet, there is nothing like it. When the Rector intimates that Aurelia is a worm of the dust, she will look at her chignon and think of the gregarines. When he cautions her against pride, the sweet little Pharisee will glance at Celeste's shadow and be thankful that she is not as proud as C. But when she lisps the confession to her looking-glass, will she discover that she has left undone the things she ought to have done, and be miserable all through the service? And when the Rector says: "Keep thy foot when thou goest into the house of God * * * and offer not the sacrifice of fools," will she

see a fool in the looking-glass?

Which reminds me to say that I shall go to the Old Folks' Concert on Monday night; and I shall revive the recollection of those days when Hepzibah, in a blue calico, sang treble and turned up her nose at Prudence, in bombazine, who sang second and always went off the key in the fugue; of those days when Zephaniah played bass viol with an unctuous, solemn sound, and sister Brown thought it was about time that Huldy Perkins published her banns if she was ever "a-goin 'ter"; when old Deacon Jones couldn't sleep well through the sermon, the "tarnal" flies "pestered him so;" when my aunt, in a black silk that would stand alone, and a white cap over those gray locks that are now strangely twisted among the roots of the daisies, always made the chorister mad when they sang Coronation because she couldn't get through the quirl in the final "Lord," without running off the track and wrecking half the congregation. There was a great deal of talk about this failing of my aunt's at the sewing bees, and it occasioned hard feelings between her and the chorister, but I have no doubt they have settled it now, and sing a great deal better than they did when they were in the flesh. [8]

At least, I hope they do.

April 27, 1867.



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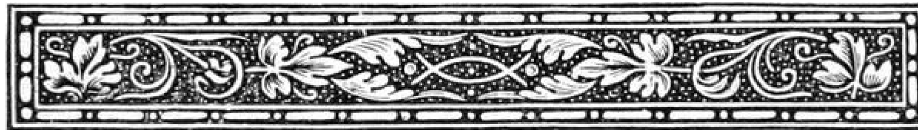

WHITED SEPULCHRES.

ALTHOUGH Aurelia has had a great deal on her mind during the past two or three days in getting ready for the Opera, she did not fail to remind me this morning, over her muffins, that I had agreed to say something about male whited sepulchres.

She also did not fail to remind me that mite parties, sewing societies, private musical soirees, young ladies' charitable institutions, ladies' aid societies, and other mild forms of social delirium on which the Women of America dote, had unanimously declared I was "too bad" and that it was "a shame."

If by some happy coincidence, I shall secure a similar state of feeling on the part of the Board of Trade, the Young Mens' Debating Society, the Society for the Propagation of Knowledge in Bridgeport, the Good Templars, the Masonic Lodges, the Turners, the late Philharmonic Society, and other mild forms of masculine gregariousness—on which the Men of America dote, I shall account myself fortunate.

Thus I said to Aurelia, as she rose from her muffins to once more endeavor to find the place in Swinburne's last poem, which she lost some days ago. The Dear Creature thinks it a duty she owes society to read Swinburne, but whenever she stops reading, she always loses her place, so that her reading of Swinburne is likely to prove the latest style of perpetual motion.

Persuading her to forego Swinburne for a few minutes, I took the Dear Child into my den, the only part of the house which has thus far escaped the innovations of Mrs. Grundy, and I said to her: [10]

My Dear Child, you have hitherto formed your opinions of men from the samples furnished you at one dollar and fifty cents each, selected from the artificial articles concocted by Miss Muloch, Miss Bronte, Miss Evans, Dumas *pere*, Henry Ward Beecher and others. You know very little of the real article, for which reason I will catalogue a few of the best specimens of masculine whited sepulchres.

Old Gunnybags, who sits at the head of his pew every Sunday morning, pretending to listen to the preacher, but in reality thinking of the invoice of sugar to arrive Monday morning; who contributes certain sums for the conversion of the Siamese, but kicks the beggar from his door; who wreathes his face with smiles when he sees old Tea Chest in the next slip and in reality hates him because T. C. holds his I. O. U.; who reads the Confession very unctuously and pronounces the Amen very sonorously, at the same time inwardly cursing his next brown-stone-front neighbor, who got ahead of him in a bargain, on Saturday; who is all things to all men and a grindstone to the individual—he is a whited sepulchre and the sepulchre is full of hypocrisy.

Mr. Cutaswell, who orders his claret at fifty dollars a dozen and superfluous lace for his wife at as

many dollars a yard; who drives the fastest bays on the avenue; who takes an opera box for the season; who imports pictures from Germany and cooks from France; who goes to Saratoga every summer and gives stunning soirees every winter; who does all these things when he ought to be paying his "calls"—he is a whited sepulchre, and the sepulchre is full of swindling. [11]

Old Muslin D. Laine, who smiles and smirks and bows to and fawns upon his customers, and grinds his clerks into the dust; who hands My Lady to her carriage with gracious, grinning suavity, and grinds the noses of his employees; who irritates, goads and worries his clerks with regulations as petty as they are tyrannical; who exacts constant, unremitting toil to the uttermost second, alike in rain and sunshine, in a store full of customers and a store empty; who pays a man well for doing woman's work, and pays a woman a pittance for doing the same; who plays the petty tyrant over the slaves of his counter—he is a whited sepulchre, and his sepulchre is full of those who will confront him at the Great Assize.

Rev. Augustus Fitz-Herbert, who pays more attention to his linen than to his text; who parts his hair with more care than he writes his discourses; who is sweet at a wedding and ravenish at a funeral; who toadies to his wealthy parishioners; who consigns the poor devil to eternal torment and glosses over the failings of Crœsus; who takes to the young ladies' aid societies and neglects the maternal meetings; who, in the capacity of a shepherd, prefers a tender young ewe to a faithful old sheep; who feeds fat on the good things of earth and forgets those in the highways and byways; who can tell you the last new ritualistic fashion of robe, but knows little of the spiritual fashion of the great congregation—he is a whited sepulchre, and his sepulchre is full of deceit.

[12] Young Boosey, who is the product of the tailor and the bootmaker, and never saw either of their autographs; who wears immaculate mutton-chops and swallow-tails; who varies with each changing wind of fashion; who simpers and lolls in your opera-box, my Dear Child, talks very softly in your ear, and is vulgar and profane away from you; whose highest ambition reaches his neck-tie and whose idea of Paradise is a place where all the good fellows go, to dress and show themselves to the female cherubs and angels—he is a whited sepulchre and his sepulchre is full of nothing.

There are other whited sepulchres, my dear Aurelia, whom you may detect by slight observation. They cannot conceal the fact that they are whited. Their exteriors are not even plausible, so dense is the growth of noxious weeds about them. You can easily test your true gentleman. He carries his colors in his face, in his walk, in his clothes, in his manners. You will not do well to accept every St. Elmo who comes along under the impression that he will turn out to be a parson. The St. Elmos who start off as scoundrels always remain so, Miss Evans notwithstanding. Cain was not the only man who had his forehead branded. And, if you look carefully, my dear, at the whited sepulchres, which are full of vice, you will discover the sign on the front door.

Aurelia, during the latter part of my homily, was a little fidgetty. She explained the cause of it to me. She had accepted young Boosey's invitation to Trovatore on Monday night. I consoled her by reminding her that his whited sepulchre was perfectly harmless. She might pick off all the roses and honeysuckles without detriment.

May 18, 1867.

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[13]

NOTHING AND BABIES.

TO write about Something is no extraordinary feat; to write about Nothing is a feat not so easily performed.

I propose to write about Nothing, as I have Nothing to write.

Any one can be Something in the world. It requires genius to be Nothing.

There are a very few people who have succeeded in being Nothing. In order to be Nothing it is not necessary to know Nothing. In fact, it requires a great deal of knowledge to be Nothing. By assiduous effort for the past quarter of a century, more or less, I have thoroughly succeeded in being Nothing, and I am now quietly enjoying the *otium cum dignitate* which appertains to that blessed condition, and can quietly philosophize on nullity under my fig-tree, lying flat on my back gazing at Nothing. You restless people who are Something can have no idea of the absolute ecstasy—an ecstasy more intoxicating than Hasheesh or Cannabis Indica, and not so brutal and vulgar as Opium—which results from being Nothing—with Nothing on your mind, Nothing in your pockets, Nothing to think of, Nothing to do.

But I fancy old Scroggs, who has been doing Something all his life, and thereby has been a [14]

nuisance all his life, and Mrs. Scroggs, who is Chairwoman of the Society for the Regeneration of Fourth Avenue, and is more of a nuisance than old Scroggs—I fancy them saying that I am of no use in the world.

Am I not?

Suppose I think Nothing, then at least I think no evil of any one. Suppose I say Nothing good of any one, I say Nothing bad. If I have Nothing, I have no taxes to pay; no interest to collect; no houses to burn; nobody to gouge or harass, and nobody to gouge or harass me. Which is cheerful. If I am Nothing, no one cares for me, and equally I care for no one, so that no one and I are on good terms. Thus, you see, being Nothing, although I may accomplish no good in the world, I accomplish no evil. Every evil, every misery, every war, every misfortune, all the high taxes, all the poor operas, all the tough beefsteaks, all the sour Green Seal, all the fires, murders, explosions, and other such cheerful casualties, are the direct result of the efforts of these people who are Something.

Then, from a theological point of view, remember that if we were all Nothings, the Devil would have Nothing to do, and would have to let his fires go down and hang up his pitchforks, which would be a blessed thing for some of these people who are Somethings.

Nullity is the primal state of man. The Rev. Dr. Homilectics tries to impress upon me, each Sunday, the importance of going back to the days when Adam and Eve, in the latest cut of fig-leaves, played Romeo and Juliet under the apple-trees in Eden. He never stops to think that their [15] innocence was the immediate result of being Nothing and doing Nothing, and that just as soon as they set out to be Something, they entailed the curse of work upon all mankind.

But I go further back than Adam and Eve. In the good old days of chaos, Nothing was in all its glory. It existed everywhere. No sight, no sound, no smell, no taste, No-thing. This was the normal condition.

And of what use was it? says Mrs. Increase, who is bringing up a large family of children, to be used hereafter as grindstones for other people's noses.

Why, my dear woman of facts and figures and spheres of usefulness, God Almighty took it and made this great world out of it, with all its mountains and rocks and rivers, its sunsets and rainbows and stars, its panorama of beauty by day and night, and you yourself, although you are, probably, but a very small and a very ugly part of this creation. Yes, madame, you and I came from this Nothing. I have retained this Nothing with great success. You, on the other hand, have been striving to change your normal condition by being Something. It is not for me to say whether you have succeeded. A great many people who think they are Something are really Nothing, and a poor kind of Nothing at that.

If I have said Nothing in writing on this subject, it was because I had Nothing to say. When one is writing about Nothing, you know, he is not expected to say anything.

Which reminds me of a baby. If you ask me how it reminds me, I cannot tell you. I only know that it reminds me of those little but important animals.

[16] It is cheerful news for the future census-takers that babies have become fashionable in Paris. The "idea" will, of course, come immediately into fashion here. I do not mean French babies, but babies in the abstract. A baby is a good thing, a blessed thing. I cannot conceive what I should have done if I hadn't, once upon a time, been a baby. A baby is a well-spring, and the quantity of lacteal fluid, lumps of sugar, soothing syrups, paregoric, squills, squalls, walking the floor in your long-tailed night shirts, mother's loves, lovey-doveys, and square spanking that one of those well-springs will absorb is astonishing to one who has not had a baby. I have had several; at least, I own stock in several.

Would I sell my experience, past, present or future, in babies?

Not much.

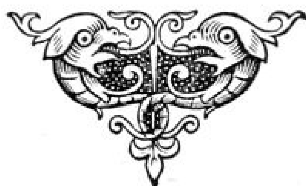
Therefore, I am glad babies are going to come into fashion. Just think of the new topics of conversation, when Mrs. Brown takes her little three-months up to see Mrs. Jones and her two-months, and the two Dear Creatures compare colics. The little cherubs will mollify conversation, and sympathy will take the place of severity. Instead of gossiping on poor Mrs. Cauliflower's unfortunate but innocent *faux pas*, the Dear Creatures will soothingly compare notes on the baby question and discuss the merits of quieting syrups and puff-boxes. And then there will be the baby reunions, when the great parlor will be filled with baby chairs, and in each chair will be a baby in blue ribbon and white muslin, and in each little rosebud of a mouth will be thrust a dimpled fist. How pleasant it will be to listen to the artless conversation. When Mrs. Jones' baby says "goo," Mrs. Brown's baby will answer "goo, goo," and Mrs. Thompson's baby, whose mother [17] is very talkative, will "goo" a steady stream for five minutes; and then, when one of the cherubs is affected to tears by the point of a pin, or an unusually sharp stroke of the colic, which by so many confiding young mothers has been taken for an angel talking to the little one, how will they all be affected to tears and the room resound with the dear little trebles.

But I must draw a veil over the picture. In the universal rush which will ensue for babies and the competitive result which will inevitably follow between ward and ward and street and street, there must be discrimination used. When Mrs. Thompson and Mrs. Johnson sign articles of agreement as to an x number of babies in x time, Miss Aurelia and Miss Celeste must remember

that, by the rules of the B. R., they are counted out. I would not advise all to adopt the fashion, but there are many, and there will be more, unless they adopt Swedenborg's notion of affinities, who can safely take up the new fashion.

And I recommend all such to adopt it immediately. As I said before, I don't know what I should have done if I hadn't been a baby.

June 8, 1867.



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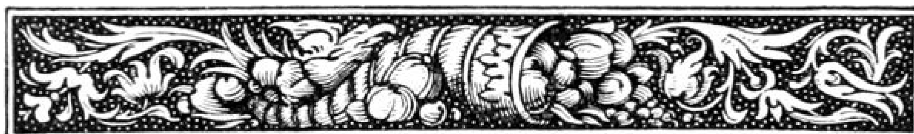

THE CIRCUS.

T is safe to say that nine men out of ten—and the tenth man is to be sincerely pitied—looking back, find their starting point in a circus. Next to the maternal shoe, which hung *in terrorem* over the Lares and Penates, and which will never fade from the memory, my most distant recollection is beneath the canvass. Was there ever such a funny man as the clown? I hung upon his stale wit as Hamlet hung upon Yorick. Were there ever such angels as those ethereal, beautiful, gauzy, smiling women who rode round the ring—now, alas, bandy-legged, lath-armed, tinseled, painted, disconsolate looking creatures, whose whole world is within the narrow limits of the ring?

Did Arabia produce such fiery steeds, brave in gaily caparisoned trappings—now, poor old hacks, full of the spirit of the tread-mill—not all the yells of rider, clown and ringmaster, not all the brutal lashings of whip and thong, can force beyond their customary gait?

Were there ever such candies and cakes and pop corn as that boy peddled whom I used to envy?

Name the sum I would not have given to have been the bugle man who blew "Silver Moon" so gorgeously!

And then I passed from one sphere of Elysium to another when, after the circus, I went to the side-show and saw the fat woman, and the skeleton man, and the calf with three legs, and the dog with two heads, the man who swallowed the sword and the man who took the snake's head in [19] his mouth. And I went home and dreamed that I was ring-master, gorgeous in silver lace, with a long whip which I snapped at the clown, and, rapture of raptures, did I not help the angels to mount their horses? Talk not of the realities of life by the side of that circus, which was an enchanted land!

As I look back to that circus, I see my first original sin or concatenation of sins.

Am I not he who informed my parents that I was going to see another little boy?

Am I not he who stole a watermelon from our neighbor's patch?

Am I not he who took it to old Bliffkins, who lived under the hill, and sold it to him for a shilling?

Am I not he who with the shilling walked two miles, and then found it cost a quarter to get into the circus? Was there ever such a monster as the man at the door, who wouldn't let me in?

I have never known such griefs as my grief that day. I hung round the outside of that tent as sinners are supposed to hang round the walls of Heaven. I heard the music and the hip-hips and the cheers and the snaps of the whips, and in my desperation I tried to look under the canvass, but was detected in the act by the monster at the door, and obliged to fly for my life. I have never known a grief so poignant as that.

I pity the man who has not sinned in his boyhood, all for a circus. He has missed one of the luxuries of life which can hardly find compensation in an æon of virtue.

June 15, 1867.

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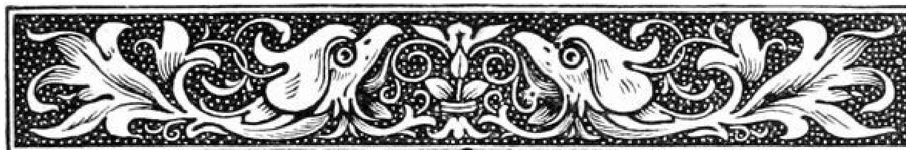


BEFORE THE WEDDING.

HAVE already intimated in these columns that Aurelia is about to be married. Young Peplum, who is so well known as the gentlemanly clerk at ——'s dry goods store, and who is heir apparent to a snug hundred thousand, when his uncle dies, is the fortunate man who will have the pleasure of supplying her with millinery hereafter, and of being known as the husband of Mrs. Aurelia ——.

Aurelia, at present, is in a frightful crisis of dry goods, and is driving to the very verge of distraction a score of dress-makers, milliners and cloak-makers, who are sitting around the house like so many Patiences on monuments. Fractions of bridal dresses, traveling dresses, morning wrappers, cloaks, basques and basquines, immaculate and mysterious white garments with the most *spirituel* ruffles and frills foaming over them, cobwebby handkerchiefs and articles in the *sanctum sanctorum* of the toilet, the meaning of which I suspect but dare not mention—are all over the house from the garret to the cellarage; on chairs, on tables, on beds, on the piano, on lounges, on everything. I had rather undertake to walk through an acre of eggs, without breaking one of them, than to go through the house without setting my No. 11 boot heel into some frail [21] gossamer of a dress, and rending its gauzy fabric and Aurelia's heart at the same time.

All the expectations, the hopes, the responsibilities, the aims and ambitions of Aurelia's life, if not of all human lives, now depend on the difference of shade in two ribbons or the relative reflections in two different silks, on both of which she has set her heart.

They are sweet pretty—but O dear!

She has wept bitter tears over the total depravity of a bias and the literally infernal unreliability of a sewing machine, which will skip stitches in crises of awful importance. Three long nights she lay awake, haunted with the dreadful suspicion that her shoemaker was an impostor, and that he had not given her the latest style of slipper-tie.

How could she assume the grave responsibilities of married life, if her slipper-tie were not the very latest?

Of course she couldn't.

She is thoroughly convinced that if anything should go wrong in the preparations for the ceremony, or in the ceremony itself, the world would cease its diurnal revolutions; there would be no further use for its axis; seed time and harvest would be alike immaterial to the farmer; ships and ledgers to the merchant; the anvil and loom to the mechanic; there would be nothing more worth living for; her career might as well be ended, the curtain come down, the lights go out, and the audience go home, without stopping for the close of the play.

I pitied the Dear Child, and so, yesterday, after she had consulted the marriage column of the Tribune, to see if any other person in the city had undergone her tribulations, I invited her to my [22] den, that I might administer some consolation to her, wading in such deep waters. She gave the Patiences some parting injunctions, and each of them, from their respective monuments, looked down with weary eyes and nodded acquiescence.

She sat down by my Minerva, paying little heed, however, to those wise, solemn eyes which looked out from the marble with a sort of pity at her. I lighted my meerschaum, just commencing to be flecked with delicate amber streaks, and I said to her, as she listlessly pulled a bouquet to pieces, scattering the petals upon the floor, as if they were the ghosts of little dead hopes:

My Dear Aurelia, I need not tell you that you are about to enter upon a very important phase of your life, which hitherto has been of about as much importance as your canary's; that you are about to assume the responsibility of knowing a porter-house from a tenderloin, peas from beans, and the mysteries of soup and salad; that you are about entering the arcana of the washboard, the mangle, and the sideboard; and that you are to fit yourself for the companionship of the young ladies who will stand to you in the relation of domestics: for all of which you will find a recompense and sweet solace in your husband's pocket-book. In view of these solemn responsibilities of the present, and small anxieties which may accrue in the hereafter, it is eminently proper that you should approach the altar with a certain degree of reverence—

(At this point Minerva distinctly winked her left eye at Aurelia, but Aurelia did not notice it, [23] whereupon the Goddess resumed her wise look, and I continued):

I am only afraid, my Dear Child, that in making all these preparations, you are rather making them for Mrs. Grundy than for yourself, against which mistake I would caution you for several reasons.

It is not probable that the great world will care much for your marriage.

(Aurelia astonished, and Minerva winking both eyes.)

I presume to say that horse races, billiard and base-ball matches will take place just as they always have; that Napoleon will quarrel with Bismarck after your marriage as he did before; that the Eastern Question will continue to trouble political philosophers, and that your neighbors will go on eating, drinking, driving, gossiping and pouring out the small beer of their lives much the same as they have always done, and that the world will continue to turn round, and that you and your husband and your rainbows, orange flowers, Cupids and moonbeams will go round with it, just as if you had never been married.

My Dear Child, this world is nothing but an ant-hill, and we are quite insignificant ants, each toiling along with his or her little burden, and when one ant gets another to help carry the load, the other ants don't mind it much, but push on with their burdens. Some day we go out of sight into the alluvium of the hill, burden and all, and forget to come out again, but even then, strange to say, the other ants don't miss us or stop to look after us, but keep pushing on, this way and that, and running over each other, and quarrelling about burdens. Therefore, my dear, I would advise you to let Mrs. Grundy carry her burden and pay no attention to her. Take your meals [24] regularly and your usual allowance of sleep. It will be better for your peace and your digestion.

And again, my dear Aurelia, I am afraid you are going to make a splurge. A splurge is a good thing if you can keep splurging. If, when you set off like a rocket, you can keep going like a rocket, brilliant and beautiful, it will be a very good thing to do. But if you start like a rocket, and come down like a poor, miserable stick, with a wad of burned pasteboard on the end of you, you had better never have been touched off, because everybody will say they knew it would be so, and you yourself will sit in ashes all your life, clothing yourself with sackcloth, and lamenting your silliness in trying to make a splurge.

Now your future husband is making a comfortable living, and by the practice of ordinary economy you and he may get along very comfortably. In regard to your legacy there is no certainty. Your uncle's lungs and liver are much better than your husband's, and even if your husband should outlive him, there may be nothing left to give you, so that after spreading your choice dishes for your guests you may have to come down to potsherds yourself. Do not splurge, therefore, unless you are ready to keep up your splurge. Beware of going into the large end of the horn and coming out of the little end, for you will be very thin when you come out, and Mrs. Grundy will laugh at you. I think it is better, if there is any uncertainty about your prospects, to go in at the little end, and then when you come out at the large end, you can come out in style [25] and with plenty of room. But, under any and all circumstances, splurging is dangerous, and in nine cases out of ten will land you, heels upwards, kicking at space. You, yourself, my dear, will remember that on one occasion, when you were a little late at church and had on that new hat, you tried to splurge up the aisle and sat down suddenly upon the floor, with the whole congregation looking at you. Just so will it be all through life. If you have a weak point about you —and, my Dear Child, you have many (here Minerva actually nodded assent)—a splurge will be sure to discover that point to the spectator. Therefore I would advise you and your husband to launch your craft very quietly. You will then have the right, when you can afford it, to do and be something in the world, and when your husband goes into the ant-hill out of sight, some other ant will tell in the papers, for the other ants to read, how he commenced poor but honest, and worked his way up, and some little ants with very large burdens will take courage thereat and ply their legs more vigorously than ever.

In another respect it is well not to make a splurge. If you make a public wedding and issue a large number of invitations, astonishing as the event may seem to you, it will be quite a common affair to most of us. The young people will criticise you most unmercifully. If there is an orange flower awry upon your veil, if there is a bit of ribbon or lace out of gear, if your hair is not exactly *a la mode*, they will find it out. Your looks and responses also, my dear, will be canvassed by charming young creatures, and as they weep such pearly tears of sorrow over your misfortunes, and are dying of envy that they haven't an opportunity of looking interesting, because they could [26] do it so much prettier than you, they will mentally take a catalogue of all your adornments and discuss them for many days to come. The old married people who come, I assure you, will do the operation much as they do their dinners. Bless you, they have seen weddings before, many a time, and if they have one interested thought about this ceremony, which you suppose all the world is looking at, it is that they did this sort of thing better in their day. Then in your list of invitations, when you make it general, there will always be the old lady who goes to funerals and weddings because she likes to, and thinks it her duty. She is equally solemn on both occasions, refers frequently to this vale of tears, and can weep with a fluency only equalled by a water-spout. You will do well to keep on her good side, which you can do by feeding her well; for in spite of the fact which she so frequently announces, that this is a vale of tears, she can eat a square meal with a success only equalled by young Boosey, whom you will have to invite, and who will come only to gormandize on your cake and wine and grow eloquent over your Russe. It would be better for you, therefore, to avoid a large gathering, and still better to make your party a family one.

Again, I would urge upon you, my Dear Child, not to attempt to look interesting. By all means avoid this rock upon which young brides are apt to split. I have seen scores of brides go off the stocks and I have never seen one yet who tried to look interesting, who didn't resemble a wax figure in a hair store or a goose in a paddock. You had better look like yourself. Remember that [27] you are a woman. Listen to the minister and answer his questions sensibly and not go off in a paroxysm of smiles, quirks, simpers and pianissimo lisping, as if you were the ghost of a rose leaf, which you are not, my dear.

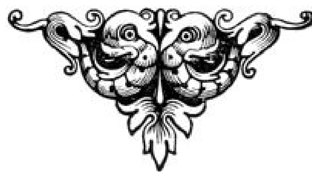
Also, have a perfect understanding with your husband-to-be. You have been living on moonbeams long enough. Sink your romance sufficiently to get at realities, and it will save you heartburns, headaches and red eyes hereafter. Your husband, who has a stomach like other men, will get sick of living on moonshine in an incredibly short space of time. He accomplished the purpose of moonshine, my Dear Child, when he got you, and he will immediately return to the more substantial things of the earth. And you yourself will be astonished how quickly the realities of married life will take the romantic starch out of you, and at the suddenness with which you will tumble, (like the man who came down too soon to inquire the way to Norwich,) from your enchanted world to the commonplaces of beefsteak, baby-baskets and washboards. It will be best, therefore, for you to exactly understand each other, because one of you cannot live in the moon and the other on the earth.

Lastly. I would solemnly caution you against making the mistake that you are the only woman in the world who ever got married. My dear Aurelia, singular as it may seem to you, thousands and millions have been married before you, and thousands and millions will be married after you, and thousands and millions will care as little for your marriage as you do for your grandmother's. (Minerva at this point nodded assent so vigorously that she lost her balance and fell at the feet of my Venus di Medici, and was exceedingly shocked at the latter.) [28]

I was about to conclude my morning talk with an impressive peroration on the duties, trials and pleasures of wedded life, and rose to relight my pipe, when I found that Aurelia was fast asleep.

I was saddened at the discovery, but I quietly slipped out and told the Patiences on the monuments of it, and they one and all rested, and this explains the reason why the work got behind-hand, and Aurelia had to postpone the wedding one day.

June 22, 1867.



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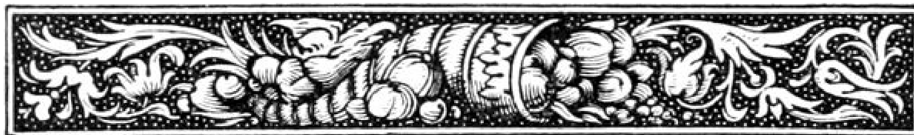
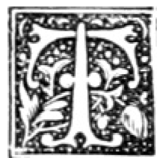


THE WEDDING.



HE great event of the week has not been the Fourth of July, as is vulgarly supposed, but the marriage of Aurelia to young Peplum, the gentlemanly clerk at ——'s dry goods store, heir apparent to $100,000, etc.

I regret to say that Aurelia paid no regard to the advice I gave her two weeks ago. In spite of all my efforts to persuade her to the contrary, she persisted in the hallucination that she was the first woman who had ever been torn away from distracted parents and led, a garlanded victim, to the matrimonial altar. I think she was disappointed that the heavens were not hung with white favors, and that deputations were not present from the various races of the globe, and that business was not suspended. The number of invitations was only limited by the capacity of the house. Everyone of the young ladies invited was a very dear friend, not to have invited whom would have given mortal offence, and sundered friendships, in many cases of several weeks' existence, without which life would have been a blank—Sahara without an oasis—Heaven without a star.

M. Arsene Houssaye, rash man, says that woman is the fourth theologic virtue and the eighth mortal sin. Upon this standard it is safe to say there was present a frightful amount of theologic virtue and mortal sin. I am sure of the latter fact. [30]

The hour for the ceremony had been appointed at 6 P.M. Deeply impressed as was Aurelia with the idea that Columbus, discovering the New World; Galileo, fixing the motion of the earth round the sun; Newton, discovering the laws of gravitation, and Harvey, finding the circulation of the blood—were but every-day common-places compared with this event,—she had, nevertheless, found it impossible to convince the Directors of the Michigan Central Railroad of that fact. The result was that trains ran at the usual hour, and would not wait, even one little minute, and it was vulgarly necessary, therefore, to have the wedding promptly at six.

After the wedding was over, I invited old Blobbs up to my den to smoke, and we compared notes on this occasion, and mutually arrived at this result: That the good old-fashioned custom of a large family wedding, celebrated in hospitable style, followed up with wit, sociality, games, and a dance, the guests departing at a seasonable time, well lined with capon and punch, trusting to Providence and instinct that the young couple would find their way through the night, somehow,

to the breakfast table the next morning, the bride dressed in the rosiest of blushes, and the groom very plucky and defiant, each commencing the race in life from the starting point of home, was much more sensible than this modern custom of gathering together all their dear friends, hurrying through the ceremony, and then running off a thousand miles, as if the couple had done something they were ashamed of.

[31] And then we compared the comfort of home with a sleeping car: your own snugly furnished and beautifully adorned room, cosy, quiet, dreamy and mysterious, with the vulgar, rattling, smoking, baby-crying, enjoyed-in-common, dirty-counterpaned, cindery, head-smashing, waked-up-every-hour bunks of the sleeping car; the breakfast of cream and honey and strawberries, fragrant Mocha and snowy rolls, with the dirt, dust, cinders, smoke, tough beefsteaks and mahogany coffee of a sleeping car.

"*De gustibus non est disputandum*," said I.

"Ditto," said Blobbs.

From early morn until dewy eve, the dressmakers, mantau-makers, milliners, hair-dressers and chambermaids had been laboring on Aurelia. They modelled her, shaped her, powdered her, painted her, twisted her, pulled her, laced her, unlaced her, fixed her, took her to pieces and put her together again, behind carefully locked doors, while that poor devil Peplum, in a seven-by-nine room, with a two-by-three looking glass, two brushes and a comb, went at himself with fear and trembling, and although he was more lavish than ever of Macassar and Day & Martin, and split three pairs of kids and looked very red in the face, still he looked like himself, which is more than I can say of Aurelia.

In the meantime the guests were assembled, one hundred of whom were young ladies and all dear friends, looking very much like pinks in a parterre; fifty young gentlemen who looked as if they had something on their minds and were suspicious of the integrity of their cravats—(I know of nothing more terrible than to be in the company of very dear friends when you have a suspicion of the integrity of your outer man); a handful of old people who resembled feathery [32] dandelion-tufts in a field of red and white clover; and Rev. Fitz-Herbert Evelyn, the sweet young associate of old Dr. Homilectics, who does up the weddings, youthful funerals, evening meetings, and morning calls, is sound on lunch, convenient in doctrine, and orthodox in raiment. For a set sermon on the rationalistic errors in Transubstantiation, the old doctor can beat him out of sight, but he has given up weddings as he is no longer sweet, and has been known to have talked common sense on such occasions, which is as much out of place as honesty in a Legislature. Consequently, the young ladies prefer the sweet, young Fitz-Herbert, who would sleep uneasily should he find a rose leaf under him edge upward, who rushes through the ceremony daintily, with the tips of his fingers, and after having tied the young lambs together with a thread, cooly dares anybody to put them asunder.

When the bridal couple entered the room, they immediately became the foci of three hundred or more eyes. They had scarcely got into position, when one hundred noses were elevated just a trifle, from which I judged that Aurelia, although fearfully and wonderfully made, was not altogether a success to her dear young friends. One hundred upper lips curled up, and fifty elbows of dear friends nudged in concert the corsets of fifty other dear friends, at what I afterwards found to be a spot upon her veil, left by one of the bridesmaids who was addicted to chewing spruce gum.

Aurelia commenced to look interesting, and, to my horror, so did young Peplum, and they succeeded admirably in looking like a young man and a young woman detected in the act of [33] stealing green apples from a corner grocery. Sweet Mr. Evelyn stepped up, and after running his hand through his raven hair and passing it over his marble brow once or twice, thereby setting off to more advantage that amethyst ring which Blanche Jessamine gave him at the last meeting of the Young Ladies' Aid Society, he commenced looking very saintly and talking very sweetly.

After the customary promises, Fitz-Herbert began a beautiful exordium, feelingly alluding to the journey of life; touching upon the launching of the craft; alluding to calm seas; solemnly describing the mutual partnership of joys and sorrows; mentioning cups of bliss, sprinkling roses and boldly deprecating thorns. And when he said, in a solemn but sweet tone of voice: "My dear young friends, you are about to enter upon a pathway," etc., all the dear friends were visibly affected. One hundred lace handkerchiefs went up to two hundred eyes. The old maid who goes to all the weddings and funerals for lachrymal purposes went off like a waterspout. As she afterwards told me it did her a power of good, and that she hadn't enjoyed the blessing of tears so much since Podgers died.

(Podgers was a distant relative of her's on her mother's side, and was so confused at the time of his decease, that he forgot to mention her in his will.)

Mrs. Carbuncle, the woman in red hair and blue Thibet, who went to see Booth in Othello, because she doted on the Irish drama, had her child with her, who had served his purpose thus far in supplying some of the rash young fellows present with significant jokes. The child, seeing [34] all the rest of the company in a lachrymose state, also lifted up his voice and wept out of sympathy. Mrs. Carbuncle's efforts to quiet him only made matters worse, and the youthful Carbuncle, kicking and weeping, was carried off in disgrace to an upper chamber, where, for half an hour afterwards, he manifested his poignant grief, by refusing to be comforted, and bumping the back of his head against a cottage bedstead.

Sweet Fitz-Herbert, who has a gift at weddings, but a keen appreciation of fees, was very brief in his ceremony, much to young Boosey's delight, who was dying to get at the supper table, around which Biddy was hovering in transports of delight like a bee round a hollyhock, being engaged at the same time in an internecine war with some men and brethren who had invaded her domains, in which war she was assisted by all the Biddies of the neighborhood, whom she had smuggled in by the back entrance to see the tables.

The ceremony having been concluded, congratulations were in order, when Mrs. Flamingo burst in, in a state of perspiration and general *deshabille*. For being just two minutes late, and for sleeping over on important occasions, that woman is a prodigy. In the natural history of society, she is the Great American Snail. If she ever dies, she will have to change her present habits, and in any event will sleep over when Gabriel blows his trumpet. If she had lived in the days of Noah, she would have been drowned within hailing distance of the ark. She is the woman who always comes late at the concerts and has to be waked by the door-keeper when he puts out the lights, and is always vigorous in pursuit of the last car of a railroad train.

[35] It is hardly necessary for me to describe the wedding supper: the cakes, crowned with sugar cherubs straddling white roses and chasing golden butterflies among silver leaves; sugar Cupids, hovering on the brink of an ocean of Charlotte Russe; the huge pyramid of small syllabubs, which a man and brother, losing his presence of mind in waiting upon young Boosey, upset in all directions; the saucer of ice cream which another man, etc., upset upon Mrs. Carbuncle's head; the Heidseck which ruined Celeste's silk; the customary sentiment of sweet Fitz-Herbert, which I give entire: "Our dear young friends, who this night enter the pathway of life: May their cup of bliss always be full and their journey strewn with roses without a thorn. And if we never meet here, may we meet hereafter where they neither marry nor are given in marriage." Greatest of all, need I describe how Boosey and the crying old maid commenced at one end of the table and ate and drank through to the other without a single skip, or how Boosey retired from the fray, confused in his mind and uncertain in his legs, after proposing as a sentiment: "Here's to Peplum and Mrs. Peplum—j-j-jolly good fe-fe-fe-fellows. Dr-dr-dr-drink hearty."

The most astonishing event of the evening was the utter indifference of the hackman, who took the bride and Mr. Peplum to the depot. He was not aware of the importance of the event, and even dared to growl up to the fifth trunk, and swear in a low tone of voice at the sixth and last—the four-story Saratoga, and in a satirical tone of voice asked if he should drive to the freight depot.

That wretched man knew not that he carried the first woman ever married.

[36] The guests finally departed—Mr. and Mrs. Peplum to the uncertainties of the sleeping car; sweet Fitz-Herbert leaving a Night-Blooming Cereus odor of sanctity behind him; the dear young friends; the old dandelion tops; the old maid still weeping; the disgraced child; Boosey on his winding way; and Mrs. Flamingo, who was found asleep near the ruins of the supper table, when Biddy was putting out the lights.

And I went to my den and lit my pipe and looked out of the window. The moon was still shining. The stars winked at me. A romantic young man was practising "Oft in the Stilly Night" on a cracked trumpet. Terrence and Bridget were sitting up at the next gate. The wind blew. The leaves rustled. My pipe glowed. The world revolved. I existed. And yet Aurelia had been married that very night.

If I have said little about Mr. Peplum, it is because Mr. Peplum seemed to have very little to do with it.

July 6, 1867.

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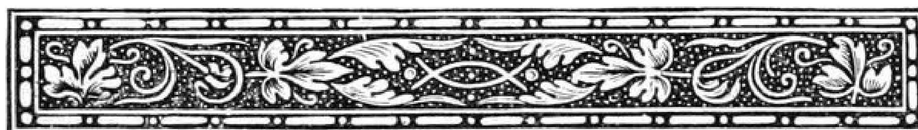
[37]



MUSCULAR CHRISTIANITY.

ARE you a base-ballist? If not, take my word and retire from the world.

You are a nullity, a nothing, a 0.

The cholera of 1866 is among us, but it has assumed the base-ball type. It is malignant, zymotic and infectious. Its results are not so fatal as last year, and

manifest themselves in the shape of disjointed fingers, lame legs, discolored noses, and walking sticks.

The disease is prevalent among all classes. Editors, actors, aldermen, clerks, lumbermen, commission men, butchers, book-sellers, doctors and undertakers have it, and many of them have it bad.

Even the tailors tried to make up a club, but as they found it took eighty-one men to make up a nine they gave it up.

The only class not yet represented is the clerical.

More's the pity.

They would derive many advantages from the game. You see they would learn the value of the short stop. That is an important point on warm Sundays. They would also learn to hit hard. There are lots of old sinners who need to be hit that way. This continual pelting away with little theological pop-guns at old sinners whose epidermis is as thick as an elephant's, is of no consequence whatever. The shot rattle off like hailstones from a roof. They must learn to hit hard [38] —hit so it will hurt—hit right between the eyes—fetch their man down, and rather than take such another theological bombshell, he will reconstruct.

There isn't a minister in this city who wouldn't preach better next Sunday for a square game of base-ball. This Christianity of the soft, flaccid, womanish, alabaster, die-away muscle kind, is pretty, but it isn't worth a cent in a stand-up fight with the Devil.

The Devil is not only a hard hitter with the bat, but he is a quick fielder, and he will pick a soul right off the bat of one of these soft muscle men while S. M. is wasting his strength on the air. He has another advantage over our clergymen. Most of them are confined to one base. The Devil plays on all the bases at once, and he can take the hottest kind of a ball without winking. Our ministers ought to get so they can do the same thing.

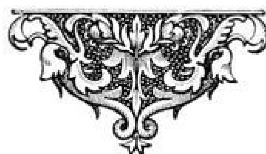
Melancthon was one of the soft muscle kind. He was gentle, sweet, amiable, gracious, and all that, but if he had been compelled to carry the Reformation on his shoulders, he never would have left his home base. While old Luther, a man of iron muscle, a hard hitter and a hard talker, who keeled the Devil over with his inkstand, and kicked Popes and Popes' theses, bulls and fulmina to the winds, made home runs every time, and left a clean score for the Reformation.

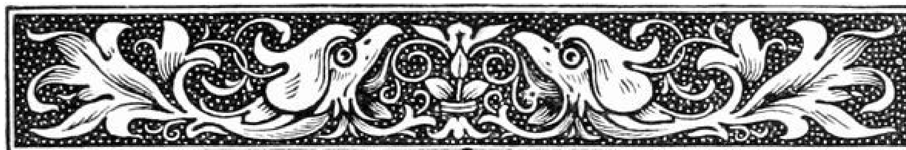
A great many of our ministers have bones—some, rather dry bones—nerves, sinews and muscles, just as an infant has, but they want development. They need blood which goes bounding through the veins and arteries, and tingles to the finger tips. Their sinews must stiffen up, their nerves [39] toughen and their muscles harden. This process can be obtained by base-ball. It will settle their stomachs and livers, and when these are settled, their brains will be clear. They won't have to travel to cure the bronchitis, and won't be so peevish over good sister Thompson, who needs a great deal of consolation, owing to her nervous system.

Now, I would like to see two ministerial nines in the field. Robert Collyer at the bat would be a splendid hitter, and would send the Liberal ball hot to Brother Hatfield, on the short stop, and I would stake all my money that he couldn't make it so hot that Brother H. wouldn't stop it. These two clergymen wouldn't need to practice much, because they represent my idea of muscular Christians. Whenever they hit, they hit hard, and I pity the soft-muscled parson that gets into a controversy with either of them. But then they would get all the rest of the nines into good trim and harden up the muscles of Dr. Ryder and Robert Laird Collier, Father Butler, Dr. Patton, and Revs. Everts and Patterson, and the rest. To be sure, the clerical fingers would sting, and the clerical legs would be stiff, and the clerical backs would ache for a few days, but it would take all the headaches and dizziness, and dyspepsia and liver complaints, and heartburns out of the system. Their inner men would be refreshed, and their outer men regenerated, and they would go into their pulpits with firmer step, and their sermons would be full of blood and muscle, and they would kick the old musty tomes on one side and preach right out of their consciousness and hearts, man to man, and all would get their salaries increased and a month's vacation to go to the seaside.

[40] I tell you, my brethren, in this city of Chicago, the Devil is getting the upper hand, and you must go in on your muscle. Get your backs up. Stiffen your muscles and then hit like a sledge-hammer. If old Crœsus, in your congregation, is a whiskey-seller, don't be afraid of him. Hit him on the head so it will hurt. If Free-on-Board is a professional grain gambler, hit him on the head. If old Skinflint acts dirtily with his tenants, tell him he is a miserable old devil. Don't be afraid of him. He will like you all the better for it. If he won't get down on his knees by fair talking, take hold of his coat-collar and put him upon his knees.

August 17, 1869.





THE BOSTON GIRL.

HE Boston girl, necessarily, was born in Boston. Necessarily, also, her ancestors, and she can trace back her lineage to that Thankful Osgood, who came over in 1640, and owned the cow that laid out the streets of Boston. The wolf that suckled Romulus was held in no more respect by the Latins than is the bronzed image of that cow, cast by Mr. Ball, the sculptor, upon a commission from her father, a solid man, who lives on Beacon street, in a brown stone front with two "bow" windows and a brass knocker.

The ambition of every Boston girl is to live in a brown stone front with two "bow" windows and a brass knocker, before she dies. Having accomplished that, and attended a course of medical lectures, she is ready to depart in peace, for after that, all is vanity.

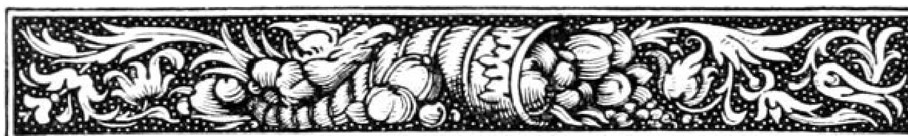
There are three episodes in the life of every Boston girl, viz., the Frog Pond, the Natural History Rooms, and the Fraternity Lectures. In her infancy, if so majestic a creature ever had an infancy, she sailed small boats on the Frog Pond, and was several times rescued from drowning in its depths, by the same policeman, who to-day wanders along its stone coping, watching the reflection of his star in the water, as he did a quarter of a century ago. She visits the pond daily on her way to the Natural History Rooms, where she inspects with diurnal increase of solicitude the bones of the megatherium and the nondescript fœti of human and animal births, preserved in Boston bottles, filled with Boston spirits.

But the series of Fraternity Lectures is the great fact of the Boston girl's life. She dotes on Phillips, idolizes Weiss' social problems, goes into a fine frenzy over Emerson's transcendentalism, and worships Gail Hamilton and her airy nothings.

The Boston girl is of medium height, with a pale, intellectual face, light hair, blue eyes, wears eye-glasses, squints a little, rather *deshabille* in dress, slight traces of ink on her second finger, blue as to her hose and large as to her feet. Of physical beauty she is no boaster, but of intellectual she is the paragon of animals. Gather a dandelion by the roadside, she will only recognize it as *Leontodon taraxacum*, and discourse to you learnedly of fructification by winged seeds. She will describe to you the relative voicings of the organs of Boston and the size of the stops in the Big one. She will analyze the difference in Beethoven's and Mendelssohn's treatment of an *allegro con moto*. She will learnedly point out to you the theological differences in the conservative and radical schools of Unitarianism, and she has her views on the rights of woman, including her sphere and mission. But I doubt whether the beauty of the flower, the essence of music, the sublimity of Beethoven and Mendelssohn, or the inspiration of theology, ever find their way into her science-laden skull, or whether her spectacled eyes ever see the way to the core of nature and art.

The Boston girl is a shell. She never ripens into a matured flesh and blood woman. She is cold, hard, dry and juiceless. Gail Hamilton is a type of the Boston girl at maturity. Abby Kelly Foster was a type of the Boston girl gone to seed. If Gail Hamilton lives as long as did Abby, she will carry a blue cotton umbrella, wear a Lowell calico, and make speeches on the wrongs of woman and the abuses of the Tyrant Man. If the Boston girl ever marries, she gives birth to a dictionary, or to a melancholy young intellect, who is fed exclusively on vegetables, at the age of six has mastered logarithms and zoology, is well up in the carboniferous and fossiliferous periods, falls into the Frog Pond a few times, dies when he is eight years of age, and sleeps beneath a learned epitaph and the *Leontodon taraxacum*.

September 7, 1867.



THE DEAD.

AS a live man any rights which a dead man is bound to respect?

I ask this question with due consideration for the feelings of a dead man. I know it is an unpleasant thing to be a dead man. There are no corner-lots, no operas, no new novels, no latest styles, no duck-shooting, no sensations on the other bank of the Styx.

I never appreciated that poet who would not live always. I would.

Neither that other poet who wanted to die in the summer time. I am so little particular about the time, as to prefer not to die at any time.

Neither those gushing young women who pine for a willow tree, with a nightingale "into it," at the headboard, and trim daisies at the foot-board.

My sepulchro-botanical yearnings are overpowered by a very strong friendship for this superb old world.

Which reminds me to again ask the question: Has a live man any rights which a dead man is bound to respect?

And this suggests, first, Tombstones.

I am prepared to make a wager with any responsible party that in a match for the championship of lying, a tombstone would beat Ananias with Sapphira thrown in, and will give odds. *Hic jacet* is literally true, and about the only true thing the majority of tombstones say. If the ghosts of the late deceased—who are always eminent—are permitted to stroll about cemeteries at their leisure, their astonishment at reading their epitaphs must be of the most supernatural character. [45]

A miser, whose small soul in his earthly life could not have been found with a microscope, is astonished to discover, that he was a liberal-hearted man and a benefactor, with distant allusions to the possibility of his having been an angel in disguise.

A man who went through the world without the responsibility of a single moral principle under his vest, suddenly finds that he was possessed of all the cardinal virtues, and is written down on cool marble as an exemplar for the rising generation.

A woman who, in the earthly tabernacle, was the lingual scourge of her neighborhood, discovers that she was the loveliest of her sex, and is now an angel with the handsomest wings to be found in the whole ornithological tribe of the upper air.

A man whose highest ambition was to go through life quietly, doing as much good as he could for his fellows, and to go out of life like a gentleman, finds himself kicking up posthumous dust under a huge monument of the most elaborate description, gaudy with gilding, wreaths, chaplets, urns, torches and flowers.

Considering the number of nuisances among the living, the quantity of angels and cherubs in every graveyard is appalling, and it becomes a question worthy of consideration by the Academy of Sciences—the ultimate destination of the sinners and poor devils. All known grave yards are devoted exclusively to saints. In what *ignota terra* rest the bones of the sinners? [46]

Now, I submit that a live man has some rights which a tombstone is bound to respect, and that when old Sniffles, who swindled me unmercifully, the other day, without any compunction, shuffles off his miserable coil, his tombstone shall not tell me he was a pink of honesty.

And again, are we not overdoing the thing in regard to funerals? I have already shown in these letters that one can hardly afford to die now-a-days, owing to the expense. This expense grows out of the fact that we are letting fashion act as mistress of ceremonies on these occasions. It is not enough that fashion has made asses of us, and tricked us out with her fantastic nonsense all our lives, but, even after the curtain has fallen, the lights are turned off, the audience have gone home, and the house is shut up, fashion still persists in hanging its gewgaws upon the outside walls.

Accordingly, every respectable deceased must be buried in a casket—a pretty casket of the most approved shape, and the costlier the material, the better. The nails must be silver-headed to be *au fait*, and the handles classic in design and silver beyond suspicion. The inside must correspond with the outside, and, after the late deceased is laid out, it is then eminently proper to smother him or her with flowers, crosses, wreaths, anchors and other emblematic designs. The climax will be capped if the deceased is clad in the latest style of the *beau monde*, and carries with him or her into the long sleep, the exact cut or style of garment in which death overtook him or her.

[47] I am not inveighing against respect to the dead. I believe that nothing is so appropriate for a dead child as flowers, nothing so typical of beauty and purity, nothing which so becomes the young life, frail as the flowers themselves. I only object to the frivolous, foolish, indecorous displays which fashion compels the survivors to make. If a man has lived through life like a gentleman, let him be buried like a gentleman, without fashion's tricking-out. I submit that when a man or woman has got through with life, he or she has got through with fashion, and that it is the height of folly for friends of the family to allow officious tradesmen the opportunity of displaying their fashionable wares, on an occasion when simplicity and solemnity are most befitting.

Which brings me to another point in considering whether a live man has any rights a dead man is

bound to respect. And that point is—Mourning.

On general principles, I claim that we have no right to advertise our griefs to the world by mourning apparel. Of all griefs, those of death should be the most delicate, the most personal. If we must do it at all, I think the Chinese custom of wearing white is the most sensible. Why must we go in sables and obtrude our crape into the blessed light of the sun, and our black sorrow into the eyes of the world, when all is light where our friend has gone?

But this custom could be endured if fashion had not seized it. Fashion regulates our sorrow, measures our grief, and bounds our mourning within prescribed limits. Heartfelt grief goes in deep black. Good average grief in half black. Mitigated grief contents itself in a black-bordered [48] handkerchief, and advertises itself to correspondents in a black-bordered envelope. Hopeful grief will get along with a jet pin, and for just the smallest amount of grief in the world, a dark figure in the dress, and a week's abstinence from the opera will do; while for the tribe of relatives whom you never saw and never wanted to see, any milliner or tailor can regulate your grief with a yardstick or hat-body.

If I were a blessed, viewless spirit, and found a friend of mine indulging in mitigated grief for me with handkerchief edging, I would indulge in spiritual manifestations which would put the Fox sisters to their trumps.

In the name of our common humanity, do we not play pranks enough with the living to let the dead rest? Why vex their memories with the foolery of fashion? Why make ourselves walking sign-boards, announcing to the world, that does not care a whit about it, that we are in this or that stage of grief?

With our fashionable mourning, we are putting a libel on immortality, and lowering to the vulgar level of common notoriety what should be most sacred and strictly private.

And now I suppose that, in answer to all this, somebody will fling at me that stupid old apothegm —*De mortuis nil nisi bonum.* It is time that maxim was exploded, or, at least, dissected, so that it may have proper application. A, who has been a rascal all his life, dies, and immediately we are all so tender of his reputation that we very nearly canonize him. As soon as a man dies, it is the universal outcry to let him rest. I do not see the slightest danger of disturbing his rest by anything we can say or do. He will probably lie quite as still as if we are silent. It is not probable [49] that he will grow indignant if we tell the exact truth about him, or exhibit any large amount of gratification over our eulogies. In this upper world it is quite a common thing for us to assail our dear friends as soon as their coat-tails are over our thresholds, when this backbiting may be cruelly unjust, and there are some of us who require a very light stock of material to do a thriving business in slander. We pursue our friends with defamation while living, and while it will injure them, but when dead and past all injury, we grow suddenly reticent and commence the rather ungracious task of eulogy, and we usually outdo ourselves in the latter direction. Let equal justice be done. Hold up the dead man's virtues to emulation, and his vices to abhorrence. He is quite beyond any harm we can do him, and if we have any tenderness to bestow on reputation, let us bestow it on the living.

October 26, 1867.

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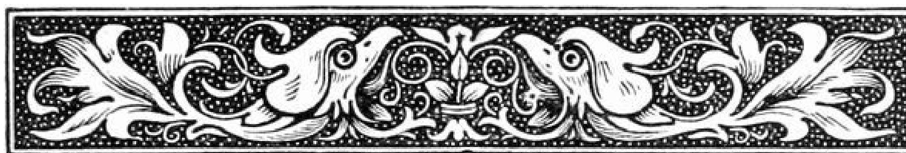
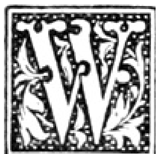


OUR THANKSGIVING.



WE had just got up from dinner table on Thanksgiving Day and retired to the parlor to chat—Celeste and Boosey, Aurelia and her husband and infant, Mignon and Blanche, Old Blobbs and Mrs. Blobbs and myself.

We were all very thankful, although in divers ways. Boosey was thankful that he had had enough to eat, and that Celeste had got out of the Sorosis; while Celeste was thankful that Boosey had got through the dinner safely and soberly, and had brought her home a new hat the night before. Aurelia and Mr. Peplum were thankful for a small stranger, who dropped in upon them a few weeks since, spoken of above as the infant, and commonly reputed in our set to be the handsomest and smartest baby that has had the bad luck to be born into this world of fleeting show. Mignon was thankful that in these silent days of the year, there is so

much beauty left, and Blanche was as thankful as a bobolink on a spray for all good things. Old Blobbs was thankful Mrs. Blobbs had omitted her customary morning lecture, and Mrs. Blobbs was thankful that Old Blobbs had managed to get through his dinner without saying any disagreeable things.

As for myself, I was thankful that I was not obliged to be thankful again for a year. It is hard upon a man to be thankful on the basis of turkey in various culinary stages. I have not the slightest doubt one can be thankful to Divine Providence, Who has vouchsafed, etc., from the depths of his stomach, and can measure his gratitude by the pile of bones on his platter, but it involves dyspeptic possibilities which are fearful to contemplate, and in point of thankfulness leaves a man nowhere in comparison with a hog. [51]

I must acknowledge, further, that it is difficult for me to see the connection between bountiful harvests, and let us have peace, and the mastication of turkey. Gentlemen may cry peace, peace, but there is no peace after a Thanksgiving dinner. One might eat a bald eagle and grow patriotic, or a goose and obtain wisdom; but why the turkey should be singled out as the emblem of gratitude, and why we should be called upon to express that gratitude by filling ourselves to the brim with the self-conceited coxcomb of the barn-yard, passes my comprehension. It seems to me that we mistake gluttony for gratitude, and that in the immensity of our gratitude we are killing off turkeys at a rate which must be highly unsatisfactory to the gobblers, who are most interested in the matter. If we are to be thankful by wholesale in this manner on Thanksgiving, why not carry the same principle into our retail gratitude? For instance, if Potter Palmer should come to me and say: "My dear boy, I have no further use for that shanty on the corner of State and Washington streets; take it," I might go at once and eat an oyster stew as a token of my gratitude, and if he should throw in that man and a brother with the horizontal coat-tails, I might go one better also, and eat half a dozen raw. [52] When Blanche sends Mignon a little token of love and esteem, Mignon might eat a Charlotte Russe as a proof of her gratitude, and range from a Russe up to a moderate lunch, according to the value of the gift. Gifts of pocket-handkerchiefs could be paid for by eating a pickle, embroideries in Berlin wool might range as high as a chicken wing, a volume of Tupper be atoned for by a boiled onion; while, to express my thanks for a corner lot with a full furnished house on it, I would risk a moderately-filled dish of pork and cabbage.

I haven't much confidence in that gratitude which strikes to a man's stomach, or that sense of thankfulness which can only be expressed *via* the stomach.

This was not what we talked about when we got into the parlor, but we undoubtedly should have discussed this topic had not Old Blobbs suddenly broken out on his favorite theory that the world was wrong side up. He does not believe in the present arrangement of things at all, and I sometimes think he is more than half right. Aurelia, Mr. Peplum and the little one were in a corner together, making a very cozy-looking trio; Celeste and Boosey were just about to commence a game of backgammon; Blanche was at the piano, listlessly running her white fingers over the keys, as if she were trying to recall some old melody which had been lost among them in departed days; Mignon sat in the window just under the parlor ivy, which seemed to be trying to reach down to her with its graceful curves as to something akin to it in grace and beauty, when Old Blobbs suddenly broke out: "If I had the management of this world, things would change places. Nothing is in its right place." [53]

"And how would you change them, my dear Blobbs?" said I.

"Change them!" said he. "If I could arrange men and things as they ought to be, you would see some very poor men living in very handsome houses, and some very rich men uncertain where they would get their next meal. You would see some parishioners in the pulpit and some preachers in the pews. You would see some car horses on the front platform and some drivers harnessed to the pole. You would see some men running down the street with tin kettles tied to their tails, and some dogs looking on approvingly. You would see my Lady So-and-So, who can go to the opera every night quite brave in her laces, and diamonds, and head-gear, with no more comprehension of, or care for, what is going on than a cow has of true and undefiled religion, change place with some poor soul to whom music comes full of consolation, and rest, and sympathy, and who cannot go at all. Yes, sir," said Old Blobbs, reddening with rage, "the whole world is wrong, all wrong. Incompetence stands in the shoes of competence. The weak go to the wall. Dishonesty comes out ahead. Brass passes for gold, and tin for silver. One paltry dollar will go further and make more knees bend than all the concentrated honesty and decency of the world since Adam delved and Eve spun. *Vive la humbug!* The kettles and pots go swimming down the stream because they are empty. A piece of pure, solid metal, no matter how small, goes to the bottom."

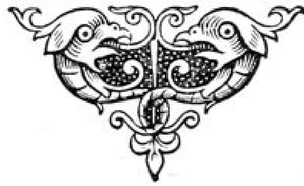
"But," said I, "the world keeps turning round, and some day the right must come uppermost." [54]

Blobbs admitted that, but added: "What is the use of a man's coming uppermost a century or two after he is dead, when there is nothing left of him but a bone here and there, and, perhaps, nothing but a handful of dirt, to enjoy the sensation? Why not have the world so arranged that a decent man may, now and then, see some inducement to continue decent, and that real merit may find its recompense without being obliged to attain it through quackery, or enjoy it as a blessed ghost, two or three hundred years from now?"

And all the time Blobbs was delivering his little speech, Blanche was still hunting for the lost melody on the keys, and the ivy was still trying to put its pretty green arms around Mignon's neck, and Celeste was throwing double-sixes with Boosey, and Aurelia was playing with that

wonderful baby.

November 28, 1868.



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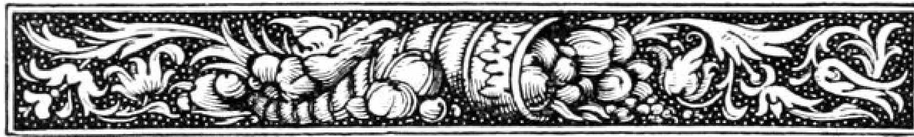


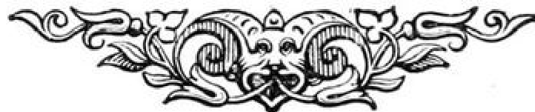
MRS. GRUNDY.

LET me whisper in your ear and tell you that Mrs. Grundy is a humbug. I think it would be the most blessed thing that could happen in this vale of tears if Mrs. Grundy should die. What a relief it would be to all of us! Existence would be a boon instead of a bore.

While Mrs. Grundy lives, every man and woman is an arrant hypocrite. While that fearful woman stands looking at us, every man and woman is an arrant coward. We flatter ourselves, or attempt to flatter ourselves—for there is not a man or woman who really believes it—that we are saying and doing things from principle, when in reality we are saying and doing them because Mrs. Grundy, in the shape of our next door neighbor, is looking at us and talking about us. You and I go to church and sit through services which may be the essence of stupidity, and we put on serious faces, and sit very primly, and regard our mortal enemy in the next slip with a lenient face, and pretend to listen to Dr. Creamcheese's commonplaces, and go out very solemnly—and all because Mrs. Grundy is looking at us from every direction, and when we get home, out of Mrs. Grundy's sight, we are ourselves again. We go through the formalities of a fast, [56] and rigidly abstain from the good things while Mrs. Grundy's eyes are upon us, but the moment they are removed, we go into the larder and indulge in the best it affords. Celeste meets with another Dear Creature and lavishes all her affections upon her, when she does not care a snap of her pretty little finger about her, merely because Mrs. Grundy is looking at her. We are all of us, every day of our lives, going through with tedious conventionalities, which we know are conventionalities, which we do not believe in, merely because that woman Grundy is looking at us. She makes us hypocrites in every function of life. Thackeray struck Mrs. Grundy a blow in the face when he drew with his satirical and powerful pencil Louis XI. in his royal robes and Louis XI. in *puris naturalibus*. In one picture we saw Louis XI. in the light of Mrs. Grundy. In the other we saw him as himself. We wear a double suit; one which we know is a lie, for the world; the other, which we know is the truth, for ourselves.

The world will get very near to the millenium when Mrs. Grundy dies. Until that time the lion and the lamb will not lie down together. If they do, the lion will try to convince himself that he is a lamb, although he is aching to breakfast on him, and the lamb will try to convince himself *he* is a lion.

November 30, 1867.



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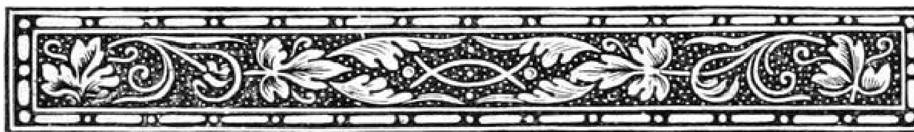


BEHIND THE SCENES.

SO few people have any definite idea of the stage behind the scenes, or of the little busy world that congregates there nightly, in the production of a great spectacle like "Undine," requiring all the resources of music, scenery, the drama and the ballet, that, a few evenings since, I conceived it to be my duty to expose myself to demoralization for the public good.

The great public in front of the curtain only see the beautiful effects and the smooth movements, with no idea of the powers that are in exercise and the hidden springs that set at work all this great machinery. I shall not attempt to expose these secrets, but at the same time hope to give you some conception of life on the stage.

Upon expressing my wish to the management to be demoralized for this laudable purpose, they gave me their hearty approval, and on Tuesday night, at half-past seven, I bade good-bye for a brief evening to the great world outside, and passed within the realms of romance, clad in double-proof mail of morality, invulnerable to the combined attacks of naiads, coryphees and Amazons.

[58] Has chaos come again? Will order ever come out of this wilderness of scenes, ropes, weights, pulleys, calcium burners, step ladders, gauze waters, tinseled cars, demon masks, gas tubes, sceptres, levers, crowns, eccentric iron rods, goblets, the fabulous Rhine treasures, tables, lounges, gongs and pistols? What secret charm is to resolve all these into their proper places and make them fill their parts in the production of grace and beauty?

There are few people visible on the stage. Two or three Amazons are sitting on the banquet-table, discussing a question in political economy, as to the relative profit of running sewing-machines and making warlike marches under the Rhine. Two demons are engaged in a friendly game of euchre on the Lurlei Berg, for the stage discipline has not yet commenced. Undoubtedly, after they have accomplished their unearthly mission, and the audience goes home, one of these demons will enjoy stewed oysters and ale in the upper world at the expense of the other. A coryphee is testing her pretty little toes in Sir Hubert's skiff. The seneschal and a scene-shifter are rehearsing Macbeth in the triumphal car which is shortly to ascend to Heaven with Sir Hubert and Undine. There is, as yet, little life on the stage, but it is very busy below in the dressing-rooms. The last stitches are being made, the last touches of rouge—for even the immortals use the same color that flushes the cheeks of Aurelia and Celeste—are being put on. Sir Hubert is cursing his refractory red tights. Undine is in despair over the loss of her crown, which she will find on the stage in the possession of an Amazon, who is strutting the boards for a brief minute as the Water Queen. [59] Kuhleborn is arraying himself in his spotted mail, and the large green-room is swarming with naiads, fays and elves. The bell tinkles for the orchestra. The call-boy rushes down the stairs and cries "All up and dressed for the first act." His voice finds an echo above in the prompter, who shouts "Clear the stage." How that stage was cleared still remains a mystery to me. All the *disjecta membra* are in place. Outside you hear the overture, and now and then the buzz of the audience; and an inquisitive coryphee, who has cautiously pulled the curtain a trifle aside, informs me that it is a splendid house. The prompter is at the first entrance. The gas man is at the wheels. The property man is everywhere. The scene-shifters are in the wings. Way up in the flies, in a wilderness of ropes, men are taking their places. The calcium men are arranging their reflectors, which will soon flood the stage with their powerful, rich light. The trap men are at their stations. The banquet scene is set. Hubert, Baptiste, the Pilgrim and the Knights are in the narrow space between it and the curtain.

The Water Lily Ballet are in the wings on both sides, rattling away in French and German, standing upon their toes, stretching their limbs and preparing themselves for the dance. Westmael will have a solo, but she looks dejected, faint and spiritless, and a racking cough tells a sad story of the toil and weariness and excitement of the ballet. She is sick to-night. Another leans her head against a side-scene totally unmindful of what is going on in the physical pain she is suffering. Still others look weary and sad-eyed, while some are merry and voluble. But the great audience will know nothing of the aches and pains, the weariness and suffering. [60] The strong will, the excitement and the rivalry will hide all this behind the temporary smile and the coquetry and fascinations of the dance. The ballet-master is hopping about from wing to wing with the proverbial Gallic sprightliness, which will, before the evening is over, change to utter distraction and tearing of hair at the possibility of a *faux pas* in the ballet or the total depravity of some leading instruments in the orchestra, which will be tearing a rhythm to tatters.

The orchestral prelude ceases. The stage manager casts his quick eye over the stage and gives the word. The gas man turns on the light. The bell tinkles and the curtain rises. While the banquet scene is progressing, the frightful declivity of the Lurlei Berg goes into position, and the gauzy waters of the Rhine are set, across which the moon is sending a tinsel shimmer.

Undine hurries through the wing and mounts to the dizzy height of the Lurlei Berg, in the meantime holding an animated conversation with the young man below, who will gallantly help her down the sloat, below the blue waters of the Rhine, to the Stalactite Cave, which a score of busy hands are already preparing for her reception. A young man in the opposite wing is preparing to play the invisible boatman for Sir Hubert and Baptiste, while I quietly go to the bottom of the Rhine by the down-stairs route, and anticipate the arrival of the trio, who do not express any astonishment whatever at finding me in the Naiad's home, but converse with each other very much in the strain of ordinary mortals.

In the meantime, overhead, the Stalactite Cave is set, and I hear the feet of the ballet dancers skimming over the floor. [61] I get into the outskirts of the Cave by means of the stairs again, meeting a mortal on the way, eating a substantial Spitzenberg, and that Nemesis, the call-boy, in search of some of the Immortals, to find the Water Lily Ballet in full operation. There are no signs of weariness or dejection now. Every face is full of expression. Every limb is posed in elegance. There is pleasure for pain; smiles for dejection; fascination for weariness; coquetry for listlessness; and the Westmael, who looked so sad and weary, is flashing across the stage like a

will o' the wisp, compelling, with her wonderful steps upon her toes, her pirouettes and postures, round upon round of applause from the audience, which comes to me behind the scenes like the pattering of rain upon the shingles, what time her rival, Venturola, already dressed for her solo in the Fish Ballet of the next act, is standing near me, closely scrutinizing, with her keen black eyes and nervous manner, every step of her great rival. Westmael comes off, panting like a deer in the chase. All the smiles and fascinations have gone, and in their place the weariness and sadness return to her face, and even Venturola regards her with pity, and the other dancers speak to her in low tones. She passes slowly, almost feebly, to her dressing-room, dropping the bouquet upon the floor which a frantic young man in front, with crimson face, has tossed to her.

Will it comfort that frantic young man to know that an Amazon picks up the emblem of his devotion at the shrine of Terpsichore, and that she will probably convey it to her home on Archer Avenue, where it will waste its sweetness on the desert air? I would not ruthlessly turn iconoclast to his aspirations by intimating that all his bouquets have gone to Amazonian abodes on that avenue. I would let him down easily from the heights of aspiration and the stars of devotion to the depths of content and the earth of common regard. His bouquet has helped to swell the triumph, to set the seal of success. That ends its little mission. It will hardly be preserved in wax for an eternity of memory. Its delicate beauty will not long survive in the warlike abodes of the Amazons. [62]

But the ballet is over, and Undine and the good Knight, Sir Hubert, mount the triumphal car, which has just arrived from the bottom of the Rhine, and commence going to Heaven, with which ascent the men in the wilderness of ropes, up in the roof-tree, have some mysterious connection. The audience desiring a second view, the vehicle kindly pauses in its upward flight for a minute, and the curtain falls.

For the information of the audience, I am warranted in stating that they did not get to Heaven, as I was on the Lurlei Berg when they descended, and have reason to know that both Undine and Sir Hubert went by the down-stairs route to the bottom of the Rhine again, to make ready for another act, what time the Nemesis of a call-boy shall make his appearance among the Immortals and summon them again to their work.

While John Henry in the audience steps out to see a man; while Young Boosey is telling Celestina his experiences at the *Biche au Bois*, in Paris; while the newly-married couple from Kankakee, who have never done the ballet before, are discussing its propriety, and the policy of not mentioning it to the old folks, the orchestra has drawn itself into its room, as a turtle draws its head into its shell, and proceeds immediately to beer. [63]

If there is one part of the music which the orchestra can execute better than another, it is the moistening of the whistle. To an unbiased observer, the amount of beer which the trombone and double-bass, for instance, can absorb is simply remarkable, while the quantity which the small first violins and piccolo can hold, is appalling to the aforesaid unbiased observer, but calculated to induce cheerfulness on the part of heavy brewers and a sense of gratitude to the makers of that class of porous instruments.

The Lurlei Berg with its dangerous descent, the boat practical and all that part of the country about the Rhine is put out of the way for the evening, for in the next act we shall all be at the bottom of the Rhine, among the fish, who are now arraying themselves for the dance, in spangles and scaly armor of gold and silver. Meantime the call-boy is sent up for Undine and the gas-man for Sir Hubert, and the demons are rehearsing at them. A mild young man with whom I was talking on the Lurlei Berg, a few minutes ago, as we stood together and watched the moonlight wavering in the ripples of the Rhine, who might from his looks have been one of those good young men who die early, is in the infuriated crowd, with a nugget of silver for a head, nondescript raiment on his body, and a huge club in hand rushing wildly towards me and looking like an exaggerated type of the Jibbenainosay.

Which is only another mournful instance of the truth of the remark that "things are not what they seem."

In the middle of the stage, exposed to the view of all, at the bottom of the Rhine, are fabulous piles of gold, silver and jewels, heaped up on a table, and carelessly left without any watchman. [64] The amount and value of these treasures I would not like to estimate, nor the temptation which I experienced to appropriate a solitary jewel, which might have made my fortune when I returned to the upper earth. As I am meditating on the expediency of it, two ruffianly looking demons of the most hideous description mount the table and significantly lean upon their clubs, as if inviting somebody to try it on. One of them glances at me, and I decline the experiment.

John Henry having seen his man, and the orchestra having returned from their beer, the scenery being in readiness, and the ubiquitous call-boy having again summoned the fish and other people to be up for the second act, the wings are full of fish. That little wasp, Venturola, is to have a solo, and that there may not be anything to offend her dainty feet, she seizes the broom and sweeps the bottom of the Rhine clear of all obstructions, for she is going to try to outdo Westmael to-night. The curtain rises, and my friends, the demons, have the stage. Kuhleborn, like a shot from a cannon ball, flies up through the star trap. Had there been a slight variation in the working of the nice machinery of the trap, poor Kuhleborn's brains would have been dashed out by the heavy counter-weights, which, in their descent, force him up; but the working is so well graduated that Kuhleborn is in no danger of injury, save from the apices of the triangular sections of the trap, which upon every exit manage to take off a small piece of his nose, whereupon, being a demon,

he is excusable for indulging in slight expletives, such as are used by the Rhine demons. As the square trap, through which he shuts himself up like a jack-knife and disappears, also manages to take off a small piece of his back and shoulders, it would prove an interesting study to calculate how much of Kuhleborn will be left at the expiration of the allotted six weeks. [65]

The preliminary scene over, the Fish Ballet commences. This is Venturola's opportunity. A little more resin on her pretty feet. A little impatiently she waves aside the Amazons and Naiads, who have congregated in her wing to see the dance, and bounds upon the stage like a ball hot from the striker, amid the applause of the audience. But not even her own fine effort, nor the graceful posturing of the coryphees, nor the acrobatic and unique dancing of Kuhleborn, in his oil-cloth fish-skin, secure for her an encore. She does not even get a bouquet.

Frantic young man! Where were you at this critical moment?

She comes off the stage, and there is a snapping of those black eyes as she brushes through the crowd down stairs to her dressing-room and slams the door. Westmael must look out for her laurels in the grand ballet of the next act, when the solo tests come.

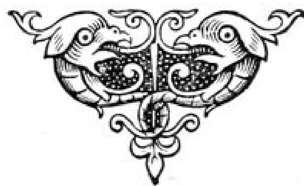
I pass to the grand ballet. The stage is full of the Amazons and coryphees, and all the premiers are in the wings, Westmael looking sadder and more weary than ever; Venturola full of determination and talking chain-lightning at the ballet master; Fontana quietly walking about, and now and then rising on her toes; Mazzeri, Adrian, Oberti, Negri and Guerrero, all anxious, for thunderbolts have fallen ere this out of the clear sky, and who knows but one of them may get an [66] encore? Little Schlager has already had her encore and gone off the stage with an approving pat on the head from the ballet-master, with her mother's face beaming with satisfaction, and her own lit up with triumph. Encore is the magic word which incites them all.

The ballet is drawing to a close. Only Venturola and Westmael are left. Venturola has outdone herself, and her fine *diminuendo* whirl has gained for her not only a bouquet but the coveted encore. She is satisfied, and in her nervous manner she chatters French, German and English to everybody. The familiar music of Westmael's brief closing solo strikes up. She is standing, as at the first, quietly in the wing. She has paid no attention to the dance. By a stranger she would have been taken only for a listless observer. She is evidently in pain and very sick to-night, and the hard, dry cough grates upon the ear, but at the first bar of the music her face lights up and she springs upon the stage with no trace of trouble. Every movement is perfect, from the dainty, spirited, bold walk upon the toes to the final pose, and there is no mistaking the encore that follows. The encore does not seem to have any charm for her to-night, but the audience compel it, and by a tremendous effort of the will she repeats. I say by a tremendous effort, for as she returns she instantly relapses into her old state. Her breath comes and goes spasmodically and her chest is thumping as if a sledge-hammer were at work within it. She staggers along a few steps and faints, and pitying hands carry her to her room. To-morrow night she will be herself again, but to-night it has been a burden.

It would not be proper for me to disclose the workings of the last, or Transformation Scene; and if it were, I would not strip off the romance, grace and beauty that surround and pervade it. I can only admire the skill, taste and knowledge of effects—the genius which with the slightest of materials can produce an illusion so brilliant and captivating, both to the eye and ear. It requires a genius akin to that of the best worker in oils, and a taste and imagination of the highest order. [67]

The calcium lights are extinguished. The colored fires have burned down. The prompter closes his book. The figures of the tableaux descend from their graceful but uncomfortable positions. The property man is looking after his properties. The manager is thanking "you, ladies, very well done." The lights are turned off. Rhine land and Rhine River vanish, and I leave the stage for this upper world.

December 14, 1867.



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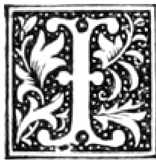
[68]

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

IN the year 1 of our blessed Lord, a carpenter came with his wife to Bethlehem to pay his taxes,



and it is to be hoped he did not have to shut his eyes and grit his teeth as I did when I paid mine in the year 1867 of our blessed Lord.

If the taxes at Bethlehem were on the scale of the taxes at Chicago, it is no wonder that the carpenter and his wife lodged in a stable.

On that night a Child was born among the cattle, and the angels opened the doors of Heaven and flooded the whole Bethlehem Plain with music, what time the shepherds leaned upon their staves to listen, and the sheep knelt down upon their knees in adoration. And wise, long-bearded Magi of the Orient came upon their camels, bearing gifts with them and following the star which never tarried until it stood over the young Child.

And from that Christmas to this Christmas, do I solemnly believe, that on each recurrence of the birthday of our blessed Lord, the angels open wide the doors of Heaven and smile upon each young child, and that some star still stands over each young child to guide Santa Claus on his beautiful errand.

Now I know that old Midas, who never had an aspiration of soul that soared higher than a quintal of codfish, nor an imagination that was not regularly ruled and indexed with a Dr. on one side, and a Cr. on the other, and a $ all over it; and that Mrs. Midas, whose theory of life is bounded by a bonnet-string and colored with the latest Bismarck shade, will shrug shoulders at the idea. And well they may, for I think it exceedingly doubtful whether the smallest star in the canopy would find it worth while to stand over either of them. And yet do I believe that there are choice spirits over whom a star stands, raining down blessed influences and ever bringing them closer together. [69]

And thus the first Christmas was celebrated in that Bethlehem stable one thousand eight hundred and sixty-seven years ago, and when it was over, the carpenter took his tax receipt, unvexed by special assessments for lamp posts, Nicolson pavements, plank sidewalks, etc., and went on his way rejoicing.

It seems to me, furthermore, that I hang up my stocking—that stocking which all the rest of the year has held only a foot, terror to shoemakers, and a bunion worthy its namesake, the immortal Tinker—on the most beautiful day of the year. It comes set like a jewel in the very heart of winter; when all nature is at rest; when the days are shortest and the nights are darkest; when every bird is silent upon the hillside; when no leaf is green but the holly, and the ivy, and the winter-green; when the weather is bleakest without but cheeriest within; when the storms sweep through the streets and the house-fires glow ruddiest on the hearths; when the grayest sky is made bright by Santa Claus, Kriss Kringle and the Christ-Kindchen; and Christmas-tide runs joyfully with wassail and taper-lighted tree, and song and dance. New Year has come to be [70] hedged in by fashion. Fourth of July is a matter of buncombe. Thanksgiving is dear to the stomach. But Christmas is the day of all days—the best and the brightest of the year.

I would like to be a little child, or an old woman, it matters little which, to really enjoy Christmas. I would like to have back all the angles which friction with the world has rubbed off, and to thoroughly believe in the existence of that Laplander who drives his team of reindeer athwart the housetops, tethers them to the chimneys, and fills up the small stockings on the bed-posts; and to stand before a Christmas tree under the firm conviction that there never was anything so beautiful in the world before.

Or I would like to be an old woman, to sit, with my feet to the fire, in the arm-chair, with my best cap on, and just one gray curl escaping from it—that identical curl which played the deuce with gouty, rheumatic, splenetic, dear old John Anderson, in the chair opposite, half a century ago, when we were the pride of the whole country-side; with not a single wrinkle on my smooth face; with my silk gown on, which will stand alone; with my flock of children, and grandchildren, and great-grandchildren trooping about me; with blessed memories of a long and well-spent life: with tender recollections of eighty Christmases, dead and under the snow, whose ghosts flit by me in the ashes; with the beautiful privilege of extending my hands over the young heads and blessing them, as the Lord Christ stretches his hands in benediction over the earth each Christmas, and confers upon it the gift of his grace.

Even the crisp brown goose, smoking upon the platter, down whose streaming sides the little rivulets of rich gravy are trickling, his breast bursting with all savory essences, happy in his side pieces and doubly blessed in his second joints, is to be congratulated on his culinary canonization. The bald eagle, flying from the Atlantic to the Pacific, gazing at the sun because it don't hurt him a particle, and stealing chickens and other small deer from the barnyards; and the strutting turkey of Thanksgiving, with his shrivelled, chippy breast and stringy legs, are unworthy of mention by the side of the Christmas goose. Is it not well worth the while of any feathered biped to be a fool through life, the scoff and scorn of dogs and men, if haply he may achieve an apotheosis like that of the Christmas goose? He dies that we may dine. He dies in the flesh to resurrect in the oven. He passes from mortal sight to reappear in *pate de foie gras*. He gives his head cheerfully to the block that his body may be the crowning glory and the holocaust of Christmas-tide. His life, homely and foolish as it is, is not altogether in vain. How many of us bipeds without feathers may lay claim to the same merits? [71]

If there is a sad spot in all the earth, on Christmas morning, it must be the house where there are no children; over which no star stops; in which there is no small stocking to be filled; in which no juvenile carnival will be celebrated. The giving of gifts is one of the most blessed privileges of the day. Blessed, too, on that day, is the bachelor uncle or brother, who can confer gifts upon the

little ones, and thrice blessed the good sister of every neighborhood, who makes glad so many little hearts. If there is a wretched person on earth, it must be the man who can't or won't make a Christmas gift. [72]

And, in all our Christmas giving, let us remember this, that under many roofs no Christmas-tree will blaze, and on many hearths the ashes will be gray and cold; that in many homes the voice of the angel, proclaiming the Bethlehem message, "Peace on earth, and good will to men," will be silenced by the wolf at the door; that many little feet will be cold upon the pavement, wandering about in quest of food; that many little eyes will peer into the windows and wonder at the strange sights and sounds; that poverty, hunger and despair will be the only visitants at many firesides in this Christian land of ours, filled with feasting and plenty. Let us therefore in all our giving remember that "the greatest of these is charity." Let us remember that the abodes of poverty are doubly dear to us on this day of all the year. Let us cheer them with our bounty, and vivify them with words of joy and hope. Let us make our star stand over these homes. Let us remember the poor, for the first Christmas was celebrated in a stable among the cattle, and the Christ-child was born in a manger, for the carpenter and his wife, who came down to pay taxes, were very poor.

My carol would not be closed without my Christmas wishes. And therefore a merry Christmas-tide to all gentle people, and a blotting out of all enmities on Christmas morn. A merry Christmas to all, saints and sinners. A merry Christmas to Aurelia and Celeste basking in the sunshine, and to Bridget in the shade. A merry Christmas to my enemy, whom I forgive, and to my friend, in [73] whose heart I live. A merry Christmas to all children whose little lips will syllable the sweet utterances of childhood. A merry Christmas to the homeless, and the outcasts, and the Pariahs—God help them. A merry Christmas to my creditors, and many returns of the same. A merry Christmas and a full wassail bowl to all good fellows. A merry Christmas to the Tribune and all its readers, and, Mr. Editor, a merry Christmas to you upon your tripod, and may your stockings be well filled.

And "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace, and good will to men."

December 25, 1867.

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[74]

THE NEW YEAR.

THE closing of the year offers some epistolary temptations which it is hard to resist. One fiend says "write;" the other says "don't."

One fiend shows me the admirable things I might say, as, for instance: The old man going out sadly, and the young man coming in gleefully. This, done up with allusions to biers and shrouds and angels and roses, would be a stunner.

Again, I could make a strong point out of the hour-glass, with the grains of sand slipping through, skilfully keeping up the interest until I got to the last grain, which I could manipulate up to a thrilling denouement.

And then what a touching picture I might draw of 1867 frozen on his bier, his crown tumbled off and his sceptre broken; and what a bacchanalian revelry I might paint in introducing the birth of 1868.

And again, I might draw a strong draft on the tears of tender readers by recalling recollections of the Old year and casting the horoscope of the New.

And think of the magnificent material I might have to use in doing all this: the dark shores of Eternity, the waves of Styx, old Charon, all the cheerful paraphernalia of the undertaker, and the appliances of the *accoucheur*, which would form the *piece de resistance*, not to speak of the [75] garnitures of regrets, tears, sighs, resolutions, prophesies, flowers, cherubs, broken harp-strings and other properties which might be mixed in indiscriminately, and with a sort of blue-fire effect, which would be telling.

And as there is nothing else to write about, it shows that I have a good deal of moral courage when I solemnly assert that I am not going to say a word about them.

For, *cui bono*?

The world will continue to turn on its axis every twenty-four hours. Old Midas will continue to crust his soul over with $ marks, until he gets them on so thickly that he won't be able to give an account of himself on the Day of Judgment, without referring to his ledger or sending for his confidential clerk. Mrs. Midas will go on saying ungracious things about her next-door neighbor, who can "see" her bonnet and go ten dollars better every time. Celeste will continue to distract her pretty little empty head in solving the problem of a new bias. Aurelia and Mr. Peplum will continue to have their little differences over the muffins, which will begin to abate with the soup, and disappear in a torrent of regrets over the mediatory Souchong. Railroads will continue to cook people alive without a pang of remorse. Men and women will continue to air their dirty linen and haul each other through the mud of the divorce courts, under the insane idea that other people will be interested in their small vices, just as if other people hadn't any of their own which were just as interesting.

The coming year will be very like the going year, and thus the world will keep going round the sun for us, until the Great Manager sends the call-boy to summon us up for the last act. We shall then make our parting bow—pray God, all of us like gentlemen, and the curtain will come down. [76]

But because our little stage grows suddenly dark, it does not follow that the great audience in front of the curtain will break up and go home, or that other actors will not play their parts on the same grand stage of life.

And a hundred years hence it is not altogether improbable that our little ant-hill, over which we have made such a fuss, and up and down which we have paraded so often, and on which we have expended so much effort to make it larger than the next hill, will be utterly forgotten; and that, in those far-off days, we may be blowing down Clark street on some fine, breezy, spring day, or sold in the form of cabbage from some itinerant Teuton's cart; or, if we have been good children, that we may be blossoming in a daisy, or looking out of the blue eyes of a violet at the great, white, lying slab close by, in a maze of wonder at the saints we were a hundred years ago.

You see all these things are to be considered in deciding whether to say anything about New Year's. And as I have before stated that I am not going to say anything about it, this relieves me from alluding to New Year's calls.

Because if I were to say anything about them I should have to hurt the feelings of the Dear Creatures. It would be unkind, for instance, to go to work deliberately and catalogue Aurelia's callers; Old Gunnybags, who carries into effect his business regulations, atoning on that day, by wholesale, his little retail visiting sins of the year; the bashful young man who remarks that it is a very fine day to-day, that it was remarkable weather yesterday, and that he shouldn't be surprised at pleasant weather to-morrow; and who, having fired off his little speech, falls back in good order to the refreshments; the mental leisure which Titmouse enjoys, who does a smashing day's business on a small capital by establishing a reputation for wit in three hundred families, upon whom he has palmed off the same brilliant remarks, the same carefully drawn out repartee and the same conundrum; the young man of florid complexion and rather heavy build, who makes the duration of his call conditional upon the character of refreshments, and who will not fail to mention your sins of omission to Mrs. Brown, next door, who has spread herself on London sherry and boned turkey; the bore who never calls but once a year, and then tries to become a permanent boarder; the nuisance whom you never saw before and never want to see again; old Deacon Glum, who tenderly inquires after your soul, in a business sort of way remarks on the brevity of time, and throws in a lot of those pretty metaphors which I threw out at the commencement of this letter; young FitzHenry, who has a wine supper for six wagered that he will do his four hundred calls before six o'clock, and is now on his last heat; that fellow Boodle, with the long nose and little eyes, who is making up a collection of small gossip which he will dish up for the next six months. It would be unfair to catalogue all these nice people, and I will spare Aurelia's feelings by refusing to do it. [77]

Neither do I propose on this occasion to allude to the astounding number of resolutions which I make on the first day of the year and break regularly before I reach the second week of January. If I have one faculty better developed than another, it is that of making and breaking resolutions. Didn't I firmly resolve the first of last January that I would be very temperate in the use of the King's English for the space of three hundred and sixty-five days? And when two hours later I slipped down on the sidewalk, and in the operation sat down on my new hat and looked up to see a thoughtless young man laughing at me, didn't I break that resolution and address some remarks to that thoughtless young man which were rather more emphatic than elegant? [78]

I fancy I did.

Equally when I was a little boy did I not resolve one New Year's Day that I would keep the whole Ten Commandments, and was I not caught in the preserve closet the same day and subjected to a degree of corporal punishment which made me break nearly all the rest of them before night?

I never saw but one person who succeeded in keeping a New Year's resolution, and he had pined away so rapidly in his physical and grown so abnormally in his moral man, that it was really painful to look at him. He was the nearest approach to an angel on half rations I ever expect to see. A good meal would have made him sick, but I really believe he would have bolted at one gulp the entire nine tons of tracts which some New York individual has kindly forwarded to the Young Men's Christian Association.

I cannot but admire the theological cheek of this man. His brass is of no ordinary description. It is sonorous, stately, magnificent. Nine tons of tracts! Twenty thousand one hundred and sixty pounds of appeal to the ungodly! Three hundred and twenty-two thousand five hundred and sixty ounces of the essence of doctrine! About thirty miles of grace! [79]

December 28, 1867.

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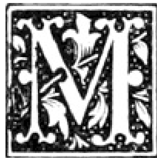
[80]

OLE BULL.

Y last recollection of Farwell Hall is connected with a tall, graceful, sweet-faced old man, his head lovingly bending over a violin that old Stradivarius made centuries ago, his eyes closed, transfigured in a vision of music, until he seemed to me to wear the face that Beethoven, the Master, might have worn. In his hands the dull wood was again in life. It was part of an organism, and it told the old man of the rustle of leaves in the summer gales; of the songs of birds in the branches; of the brawling waters of the brooks that moistened the roots; of the rude winds that smote the tree on Italian hills; of the star that looked down upon it in delicious Italian nights; of the vernal thrill, the summer glow, the autumnal decay, and the wintry death in life—the great miracle which Nature performs for us each year; and the old man interpreted it in bewitching strains to some who gave themselves up to the spell and were drawn nearer together by the sympathy which music produces, to some who heard the sound and not the soul, and to some who heard neither, in the sound of their own small gabble.

And the next day, when a heap of smoking bricks, and charred beams, and twisted iron was all that was left of the beautiful hall, it seemed to me that I had met with an irreparable loss—that [81] some friend had suddenly vanished.

January 11, 1868.

One of the most charmingly chatty things Leigh Hunt ever wrote was his "Earth Upon Heaven," in which he imagined himself following out his earthly occupations in the upper world; dining with all the good fellows of past ages; reading new plays of Shakspeare and new novels of Scott; eating sugar that was not sanded, and drinking milk from celestial cows in the Milky Way.

It is to be hoped the earthly concert nuisances will be abated there also, and that we may hope to hear the Malibrans and the Linds, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Bach and Gluck in new and diviner symphonies and songs (think of that!), without being annoyed by a garrulous angel behind us commenting on the cut of this angel's wings, the color of that angel's feathers, and the awkward manner in which some other angel flies to her seat, and the dreadfully stupid way in which young Highflier sat down upon Blanche's wings. It would be horrible to think of an eternity of music with an eternity of nuisance.

Ibid.

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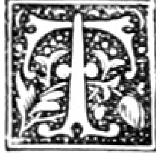
[82]

SMALL TALK.

HERE are two kinds of small talk—one which is very silly, and when it does not run to twaddle, takes the worse form of slander and cruel gossip. These two phases are not inconsistent with each other, for it takes a very silly person to be a good gossiper. The greater amount of nonsense that a woman can talk to your face, the worse will be the gossip that she will talk behind you. Her wits may be very small in one direction, but they will be very sharp in the other.

The other kind of small talk is very delightful. It is chatty, sunny, spicy and brilliant. It may not be as deep as the ocean, but is not a little brook, singing over the pebbles, flashing in the sunlight, and whispering pretty little stories it learned from the naiads in the fountain where it was born, to the scarlet cardinals and golden-rods that lean over to listen, just as delightful as the uncertain depths of the ocean with dim suggestions of dirty sea-weed, slimy monsters, ribs of argosies and dead men's bones? Is not the little brook which can take the most distant star right into its heart, just as beautiful as the heavy ocean into whose depths no star beam can penetrate?

This kind of small talk is an eloquent art, and fortunate are the favored few who have mastered it. [83] It may commence with the weather, which you discover is not threadbare, for it is the weather which breaks the ice for you, and it runs from the weather to the opera, from opera to music in general, from music to art, art to books, and from books to men and women. Neat little criticisms; characteristic observations; flashes of wit; pleasant satire which never wounds—fragmentary yet always polished—superficial, perhaps, yet here and there giving you indications of lower depths which would be worth exploring at the proper time. These are the main characteristics of accomplished small talk.

This species of small talk can only exist between the opposite sexes. Between women, small talk becomes silly or it runs to confidences. In the one case it is soon exhausted, in the other it is vulgarly supposed to be eternal; and the amount of smothered grief, of heart-rending woe, of poignant anguish, of amorous doubts, of Sphynx-like mysteries, of secret grief which cannot be whispered even to her pillow, which one young woman will confide to four hundred other young women, is only equalled by the rapidity with which the latter will dispossess themselves of *les confidences* and the fertile imagination which will clothe them entirely new even before they are divulged for the second time.

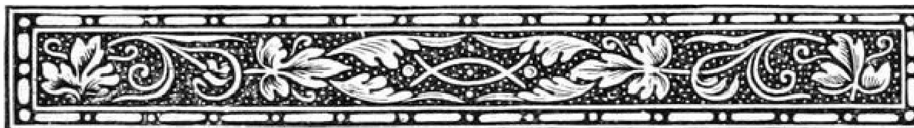
Between men, small talk is simply idiotic.

You pass an evening with Serafina, and you get only simpers and syllabubs. She will not give you the ghost of a thought, although her tongue has been running like a mill-clapper for two mortal hours. She will run the whole gamut of talk, and you shall never once get a taste of the amber wine beneath the foam.

Per contra, in an evening with Blanche, she will dive like a humming bird into every flower, sweet [84] or bitter, beautiful or ugly, and extract honey from each. She does not linger long on anything. She does not go too deep to be tiresome, and yet you are aware that she would lead you a terrible chase into the real if you gave the word. With that infinite tact which no one but a clever woman possesses, she will draw you out and give you cues for conversation without your ever dreaming of it. If you have a hobby, she will quietly saddle it and help you to mount, and spur it up to a rattling pace with little ingenuous confessions of ignorance, and implied flatteries which show you at once your superiority over the rest of mankind; and she will take you off your hobby and turn him out to grass so gracefully that you will be thoroughly satisfied with your ride. She will read you a charming little homily on her gold cross, which "Jews might kiss or infidels adore," and she will lead you with that narrow edge of lace around her pretty throat, which a rude breath might dissipate, through meadows of talk, where every flower is "a thing of beauty" and "a joy forever."

But to effectually do this, she must have no hobbies, and she must assume an ignorance if she have it not. Ignorance is one of the strongest weapons in the female armory, and if the small talk assumes the form of an argument, a graceful yielding, especially if one is obstinate, is also politic.

January 18, 1868.



FLAT ON THE BACK.

I WRITE to you to-day with a sugar-coated pill and a small bottle of suspicious-looking fluid, which Æsculapius has designated with the cabalistic abbreviations "*Aq. Cret. Rhu. Pulv. 2 jiii*," between myself and the delirious chaos of fever.

My surroundings are not of a character to induce extravagant cheerfulness, or to resolve a very decided precipitate out of the mixture of virtue and necessity—a severely chemico-moral test I have been working at for the past three days.

I think a man might dig into a cucumber for sunbeams or a mushroom for moonlight, with better chances of success, than I shall have in attempting to extract humor from the scanty material at hand, viz: Several wet towels, ice water, a mustard plaster, sundry hot bricks, pills, potions and lotions *ad libitum*, and a small piece of toasted cracker.

The last item is the connecting link between myself and the good goddess Hygeia, and I regard it with an interest I never knew before, considering the clutch with which Febris has seized me.

Thus, skirting along the shore of Febris, sufficiently near to catch with full force the burning simooms which blow across its miasmatic lands—near enough to burn from its equator and to freeze from its poles, to feel its clamps and hooks, with which it is tugging at bone and muscle, [86] while the soul has gone visiting, and not even left the Will at home to resist disease—near enough all night long, as I sail in the darkness, to see the will-o'-the-wisps, and goblins, and chimeras, the skeletons of dead fancies, the ghosts of dreams and the realities of horror which are the only inhabitants of this land over which Febris reigns—behind me the very bright light of day, and before, only a very uncertain star—under a red-hot bed quilt, flanked with a small drug store—the great world outside only recognizable by a confused hum—isolated from complete sights and sounds—I vegetate and moralize.

If one should feed luxuriously on almond paste and comfits all his life, he would never appreciate the products of sour apple trees and the extracts of much-maligned herbs. So also if one should forever pursue the beaten track of good health, which is only the case in perfection among buffaloes and Digger Indians, one would never know the luxury and the blessing of being sick. We must have, now and then, a cessation of the good to appreciate the bad.

I can conceive that it would be the height of wretchedness to be compelled to live with a saint on earth. This world was not made for saints, and those who have made the foolish attempt to be saints, have wisely climbed pillars, gone into caves or wandered in deserts, getting as far out of the world as possible. Those who have persisted in being saints and remaining in the world, have usually been hanged or burned by other saints.

[87] Equally, the man who is always well, becomes a nuisance after a time. His ruddy face hangs out a constant banner of presumptuous defiance, and the only person who can conscientiously love him is a life insurance agent. He never knows the soft ministrations of small female hands, or the hygienic virtue in the hem of an old lady's robe. Consequently his milk of human kindness is very apt to freeze up. He can have but small sympathy, for no one can sympathize, who has not learned sympathy by experience. At this present moment I fairly burn with pity, and extend a red right hand of sympathy to every man, woman and child, who has ever had a fever, who has a fever now, or who is going to have a fever. In his great, strong animal existence he goes crashing and smashing about like a whale among minnows, with this difference—that the whale is bent upon legitimate prey, while your healthy man is simply trying to show that he *is* a whale.

As who should say, "Here am I, Mr. Merryman, the great American Healthist. Any lady or gentleman in the audience, wishing to show liver, lights or lungs, will please step forward into the arena."

But, of course, there are compensations for all this. In the next world our healthy friend will probably take twice as much punishment as some of the poor devils who took half of theirs before they went there.

A person whose wings have sprouted and grown, and who has become a precocious angel in the prescribed three score and ten, is certainly leaving a very narrow margin for angelic growth hereafter, and, equally, a man who goes through his three score and ten without any terrene ails, I fancy will need Hippocrates and Galen when he gets to the other shore.

At least, so it seems to a man flat on his back.

* * * * * * * * * [88]

Which stars are to be considered equivalent to the time consumed in taking the sugar-coated pill before referred to, reminding one, in its passage down the æsophagus, of the cathartic literature which St. John swallowed, sweet above and bitter below.

Which recalls to me that the most of us are more or less sugar-coated—sweet outside, but quite

bitter, or quite sad, or quite bad inside.

The partition between body and soul with some of us is so thin that the light shines through easily.

Some of us, again, cover up our little sepulchres so thickly with vines and roses, and fix such a laughing mask on the door, that we pass for very Ariels, God help us!

While others of us still, living in ourselves, isolated from all intimate relations, carry in our faces no sign of the toil and the weariness and the struggle. It is all blank on the outside; on the inside, it is isolation, death and expiation.

But, then, there are some of us who get our pills coated so badly that a child wouldn't touch them. For instance, good Deacon Jones, who slept all through Parson Primrose's sermon, and told Deacon Brown, who didn't sleep, that the Parson's doctrine was correct; Prof. Blather, who hitches himself to the tail of every high-flying kite, hoping thereby to be brought before the popular eyes; old Mrs. Peacock, who still persists in being young, making admirers, mincing through her spavined paces, leering with her faded eyes out of that painted face, when all Japonicadom knows there is not a genuine feather about her. And so one might go on for hours, [89] for the number of these badly coated pills is legion.

At least, so it seems to a man flat on his back.

* * * * * * * * *

More stars for the Doctor who has been to see me. He is a jolly, sanguine dog, and assures me I shall be up in time for the opera—if not for the whole season, at least that I shall have two days off—one for Bellini's *Englishman* and one for Hermanns' *Mephisto*.

What a blessing these jolly doctors are. They give one an invoice of moral courage, wherewith to make a stout fight against disease. They light up your room as beautifully as the sun this morning kindled my frosty window-panes with burning gold. And my jolly doctor will not take it unkindly of me if I say that I have more confidence in his jolliness than in his cabalistic abbreviations.

On the other hand, I can conceive that if I were compelled to receive the attentions of one of those solemn, owl-like doctors—those funereal-looking personages in deep black, whose noses and chins meet—who wear heavy canes, the knobs of which do heavy thinking for the wearers—whose only remark is an ominous shake of the head, and the preparation of a bill at the neighboring drug store—who have made the very sunlight look mercurial, and who cut off the supply of that delicious Muscat which Blanche sent in—I think, after one visit from such a walking Bolus, I should say, with Elijah of old: "It is enough; now let me die. You may call in your friend Sir." For I should know that as soon as he came into the house Death would sneak after him, and wait outside the door.

At least, so it seems to a man flat on his back. [90]

* * * * * * * * *

Another night in the darkness, sailing along these shores of Febris, and this crystal Saturday morning, it seems all bright and clear ahead. I feel no more the breath of the burning gales, but in its place an ecstasy of pain. My hand wearies and the head tires with this trifling work which has run through three days of nullity.

At least, so it seems to a man flat on his back.

January 31, 1868.

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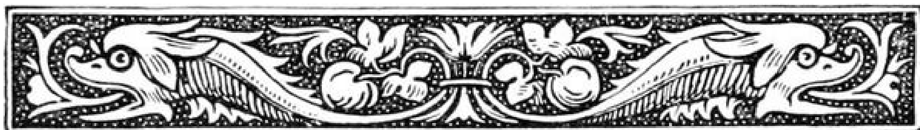
[91]



GETTING OUT OF BED.

GETTING out of bed is one of the little circumstances which shows man in his abstract essence. He is then a pure animal with all his instincts on the surface. There is no dignity in him then, no majesty, no true religion, no concealment of his nature. In fact he is worse off than the lower orders of the brute creation, as they awake in the full plenitude of their life. A butterfly, which

has slept all night in a tulip, rises from his gorgeously curtained couch just as beautiful as he is under the noonday sun, when he lazily flutters among the languid roses. Man, when he rises, is a fragmentary being and has to be set up piece by piece and arrayed in his conventional garments before he can say good morning to the world.

There are various methods of getting out of bed. One man in a thousand wakes up all over at once, kicks off his bedclothes and bounds out of bed as Minerva bounded out of Jupiter's brain, armed and equipped as the law directs. He never tasted lotus in his life. He owns no real estate in Spain, but a good deal of outside city property. He never saw the point of a joke in his life. He never dreams. He is fiendishly healthy, and will, therefore, have much to answer for in the next world. He has no idea of the *dolce far niente*. If he has imagination, he clipped its wings long ago. A *post mortem* examination of his internal economy would reveal nothing to speak of but columns [92] of logarithms, interest tables and bills of lading in his skull, a complete set of office furniture in his stomach, and his abdominal canal crowded with cargoes of lumber and perches of stone. And he is apt to forget to say his prayers.

There are men who get out of bed a little at a time. The first symptoms of life are uneasy movements and a gentle rustling of the bedclothes. Slowly one arm appears from under the coverlid, and is thrown over the head. Then out comes another arm, disposed of in a similar manner. His legs are uneasy. One eye opens in a very uncertain manner and blinks, and the other opens and winks, and then both blink and wink for some minutes. He then commences to uncoil himself and straighten himself out. This is the stretching process. He mutters to himself incoherent nothings. He tries to go to sleep again, but the charm is broken. He yawns, and the process fairly opens his eyes. He sneezes, and the grand currents of life are once more in motion. One more stretch all over, and he accepts the hard necessity of nature which condemns him to quit his lotus to feed on hash, and he slowly gets out of bed as one utterly disgusted.

There is another class of men who always get out of bed over the footboard, and are uncomfortable all day after it. Their idea of happiness is realized in making somebody wretched, and they are singularly fortunate in the realization of that idea. They are sour in aspect and in disposition. No one has any rights they are bound to respect. Mrs. Gilliflower and her daughter, who always come late and go away early from the concerts, get out over the footboard. The man who mistakes a horse car for a hog pen and acts accordingly, although in some respects he is not [93] much mistaken, gets out over the footboard. The man who worries his butcher or his baker over an insignificant trifle, and is too mean to have the snow shoveled off his sidewalk; the man who makes his lady clerks stand on their feet all day whether engaged or not; the woman who has a keen scent for ferreting out other persons' foibles and attending to other persons' business; the woman who is constantly lamenting over the wickedness and follies of the times; the man whose clumsiness trips him over and who then anathematizes an innocent curbstone; the man who raises a domestic war every morning over a lost button which he ripped off the night before, over an open window which he left open himself, over the discovery of his boots under the bed, where he placed them himself, over a dried up beefsteak which has been waiting an hour for him; the man whose pious nose goes heavenward at the sight of innocent pleasure, and who doesn't give his clerks time enough for dinner; the man who is sour himself and sours everything he touches—all these people get up over the footboard, and they won't get up any other way. If the footboard was forty feet high they would go over it with a step ladder, and curse every rung of it all the way up.

Then, there are men who get up only half awake, and don't fairly wake up until it is time to go to bed again. These are the unlucky ones, against whom fate and nature have a grudge. In the grand lottery of life they draw all the blanks. They usually receive all the broken limbs and fractured legs. They have come within a hair's breadth of making a fortune a number of times, [94] but the hair was always too much. Such a man is always the one killed on a railway train. If he hears of a case of small-pox in West Wheeling, he will catch it. He is always the man in the great crowd who loses his pocket-book, and although he is one of the best of fellows, it will be just his luck to be overlooked by St. Peter at the gate of Heaven.

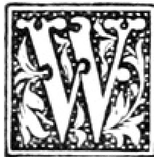
My favorite way of getting out of bed is to wake up, bid good morning to the newly created day, quietly turn over and go to sleep again without disturbing any one, and sleep the sleep of the just. In that second nap, I visit my Spanish castles. Their architecture is more elaborate and ethereal than ever Wren dreamed of, and they float always in an amber haze just over the Pyrenees. I have leased them all to a goodly company of ladies and gentlemen, and they are the best of pay. Among them are the fair Rosamund; poor Beatrice Cenci; that other Beatrice, who has come down from her shining beatitudes and occupies one of the best of them with Dante; the yellow-haired Gretchen and Faust; the rare and radiant Countess Irma; Spenser's Fairy Queen and Titania; Aspasia, still reclining on beds of roses; Dame Durden, whose house is no longer bleak; Cinderella, with her tiny slipper; Joan of Domremy, still talking with the angels; Undine, bathing in eternal streams; Colonel Newcome, and that prince of good fellows, George Warrington; Wilkins Micawber and Samuel Weller, who are living together—(Uriah Heep and Mr. Chadband made application for one castle, but their references were not good)—Wilhelm Meister and Nathan the Wise; the Lady of Shallott and Hiawatha, who have become firm friends; the fair Florinda and the Princess Scherezade, who amuse each other with rare stories; Sinbad and [95] Aladdin and Rasselas; and Donatello, who never can agree with Werter. When I arrive, they hang out the banners, and such music as Malibran and Sontag sing, which Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Schubert have been writing for them, you don't hear in our concert halls. All the charming women and good fellows, of all times, come in to breakfast and we drink ambrosial wines,

sweeter than the honey of Hymettus, and breakfast on fruits which have mellowed in the hanging gardens. There is no such lotus, by the bye, on the Nile banks as grows in those gardens. Time would fail me to narrate the sonnets that Dante is writing; the good jokes that George Warrington and Sam Weller have with each other over Wilkins, who is still waiting for something to turn up; the philosophical speculations of Rasselas, and the Munchausenisms of Sinbad; to tell you of a magnificent Spanish symphony that Beethoven has just finished, and the delight with which he listens to a new Ave Maria by Schubert, for the grand old master's hearing has been restored; the songs of Irma, as she looks down upon the mountains of her transfiguration; and the great joy of Faust and Gretchen, who have deciphered the vital problem they could not solve in the baneful shadow of Mephisto. The most beautiful castle is reserved for the friend who died years ago and passed away from me, but who is now like the living, because he greets me every morning in my castle with the warm grip of the hand and the cheery voice and the pleasant face of old times. He has not grown old since then, and I....

February 15, 1868.

[96]

THE TEAPOT.



E were all sitting at the table together. All told, we were ten, viz: Celeste and her maiden aunt, who had a sorrow when she was young, a blighted affection, or something of that sort; Aurelia, now Mrs. Peplum; Mr. Peplum, who has become much more sedate since his family affair with Aurelia; Aurelia's mother, who is getting old and rather fussy; Blanche, and young Boosey, who is sweet on Blanche; Old Blobbs, the Water street indigo merchant, and Mrs. Blobbs; and myself.

"As I was about to say when I was interrupted, the teapot...."

Here I was again interrupted by young Boosey, who was filling himself to repletion with brandied peaches, and who rather scornfully remarked to Old Blobbs that tea might do well enough for old women, but that, for a steady diet, he preferred champagne punches. Old Blobbs silenced him by telling him that if he spent less for champagne punches, it would be for the interest of his landlady.

The rebuke was severe, but just.

As I was about to say when I was interrupted the second time, the teapot is one of the strongest links in the chain of society. If my friend Blobbs, across the way, will recall his youthful days, he [97] will confess that all his subsequent prosperity and happiness are due to the teapot. He will remember that in those days, when, strange as it may seem, he was addicted to Byronic collars and bad rhymes, he accompanied the future Mrs. Blobbs home from singing-school one June night, and that, as they went across the fields instead of by the straight road, he felt excessively foolish at the manner in which the stars winked and blinked at each other. You see, my friend Blobbs thought that he was the first man in the world who had ever done that sort of thing; and my dear Mrs. Blobbs will pardon me if I say that she was excessively sheepish also over the fancy that, for the first time in the world, she was receiving the attentions of a young man. But the stars were used to it, and knew what would come of it. Ever since they peeped through the branches of the Tree of Knowledge and saw Adam sitting up with Eve, they had been looking at a young man and a young woman rehearsing this same old story, and, my dear Blobbs, long after you and I are under the daisies, they will shine down upon young men and young women, going across the fields and telling the same old story. It is the only story which can't be printed fast enough to supply the demand.

And my friend Blobbs will also remember that when they reached the gate, the air was full of the perfume of apple-blossoms and roses; that the bell of the village church over on the hill was striking eleven, and that its tones were borne on the night air, across the meadows, as softly and soothingly as if they were the audible pulsations of the moonlight; that an officious little insect, [98] shrouded in the gloom of the fir tree in the front yard, was continually informing him that Katy-did; that, before they parted, they chose a mutual star which should ever be their symbol and souvenir; and that when at last he took her little white hand in his—it *was* a pretty hand in those days, you know, Blobbs—she said: "Won't you come over to tea to-morrow night, Mr. Blobbs?" Did you refuse, Mr. Blobbs?

He will furthermore be so good as to remember that he walked on air as he went home; that he whistled as he went; that all the stars in Heaven, except that particular one, were laughing at him, and that he wouldn't have taken a thousand dollars for himself.

Now I put it to you, Mr. Blobbs, as a man of honor, if that teapot, the next evening, did not do the

business and make a man of you all the rest of your life.

Blobbs looked rather uncomfortable, but I thought I detected some of the brilliancy of those days shining through all the conventionalities and financial callouses of his life, as he assented; and if a tear stood in the corner of Mrs. B.'s eye, as she looked at her consort in the indigo trade, it dropped immediately into the quince sauce and dissolved into sweetness.

And as I passed my cup to Aurelia's mother the second time, with a deprecating look at Boosey, I continued: I know of no pleasanter sight in the world than a steaming teapot upon the tray and five or six old ladies gathered about it, who have just dropped over and brought their knitting. They have all made the voyage of life, weathered the storms and gone into old age's winter quarters. Life's spring will never come for them again. The roses will not bloom for them, and the birds will miss them, but the frosts and the keen winter winds touch them kindly; and if they sometimes regard the blue, lichen-covered slate stones with the unutterable thoughts of old age, it is only because they feel the first breath of the gales blowing from the eternal springs, inhale the faint perfumes of the asphodels and the lilies on the banks of the River of Life, and hear, as in a dream, the sounds of music from the golden harps over the battlements of Heaven. [99]

And as the cups go round and the dear old creatures become inspired with the delicate aroma, how they will compare their rheumatisms, and backaches, and headaches, and neuralgias—those inevitable signs that the silver cords are growing looser, and that the pitchers will soon be broken at the fountains! How they will yearn after the days when they were young, and lament the decadence of the present! How they will recall the scenes of fifty years ago! (Here the maiden aunt let her eyes fall, and I fancied her lips quivered some). How they will indulge in just the slightest gossip in the world, meantime mysteriously shaking their frosty heads, but just as harmless as the rage of Mignon's canary! How they will analyze and dissect the last new baby in the neighborhood, and lament over the weakness of its mother who will allow it to eat anything and everything! How they will deprecate the new-fangled notions of the young pastor who has just succeeded old Parson Tenthly, lately called home!

It is a mortifying fact that young Pastor Primrose *does* prefer to visit Blanche and Celeste, who dote upon him and make book-marks and slippers for him, rather than be obliged to listen to the catalogues of the old ladies' physical and theological complaints. You see, Blanche and Celeste are not a severe tax upon his theological resources, while the old ladies are. Neither can the old ladies see why it is necessary that the young clergyman should be so particular about his back hair and the immaculateness of his neck-tie. [100]

February 22, 1868.

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[101]

A MASQUE.

DID you ask me if the Masquerade, this week, was a success?

Considering that nine-tenths of the people who go to balls are idiots; that carnival folly without carnival license is Hamlet without Hamlet; that only they in whose veins the blood is tropical understand the real *esprit* of the *bal masque*; and that among our masques every man insists upon being a Harlequin and every woman a nondescript, showing the inevitable tendency of human nature;—it was a success.

It is impossible for Boosey in a masque to feel tropical. Champagne, and not blood, is the natural current through his veins. Disguised as a gorgeous Harlequin, in cap and bells, he is not at home. He is inchoate, crude and lonesome. He may talk soft things to the unknown Blanche, hanging upon his arm in the black tarletan, gold stars and crescent, but the liquid eyes and beaming face tell no story through the grinning, goggle-eyed pasteboard, and do not disturb the placidity of the manly breast of Harlequin, or make any intellectual impression upon him, further than to confirm us in our original statement that he is an idiot. What Boosey may do when the masques are off and church-yards begin to yawn, as he and the unknown Blanche say matins at the shrine of the jolly King Gambrinus, concerns us not. [102]

Neither does it concern you who are reading these lines, who never take your masque off at all.

Although my German friends sandwiched their carnival into a funny place, making sin follow

repentance, and mixing up scarlet Mardi Gras and gray Ash Wednesday with a frightful negligence of proprieties, it was enjoyable and delightfully sinful. Celeste, when she came to my confessional the other day, complained of it. She was clad in russet and serge, had sprinkled herself with ashes, was mortifying the flesh by concealing those white shoulders and marble arms, which are the envy of our set, and eating lentils as if she liked them. Could I do anything but pity her when she cried *peccavi, mea culpa, mea culpa*. And as she told me, with those pretty lips, of her melon-colored dress, how superbly it hung; of her pearl neck-lace, which actually looked dark on her neck; of an unknown cavalier, who whispered something transporting over his bouquet, and then vanished; of the wild waltz with Mephisto, whose sneering gibes were alchemized into delicious flattery—and as the Dear Creature told me that she had followed too much the devices and desires of her own heart, and that all was vanity, was it a wonder that I, even in the garb of the confessor, cheered and consoled her, and said:

My dear young friend, the only trouble with you is that Divine Providence, instead of Canova, made you, and, in making you, gave you a human nature. He was also at fault in making flowers that die of their own sweetness, and grapes that burst of their own voluptuousness, and swans that expire in their own melody. The moralists have got hold of you, my dear, and, with their mallets and chisels, are trying to make you into a cold, senseless, white statue of virtue, while all the while the blood is bounding to your finger-tips, and every pulsation of your heart is in waltz *tempo*. Enjoy your carnivals, my dear, for soon come the snow and the chilling winds, which will wrinkle your pretty face, and film your bright eyes, and turn those white shoulders to parchment, and deaden all the fire of life. Then may you wrap yourself in your black robes and weep over the dead carnivals in the gray ashes. [103]

And if you know of any of your friends who are so miserably unfortunate as to be without fault, let them cast stones at you. I may say, *entre nous*, that I do not think you will be much hurt. The stone-throwing will be the feeblest you ever saw.

And the Dear Creature went away, as one not utterly bereft of consolation.

March 7, 1868.

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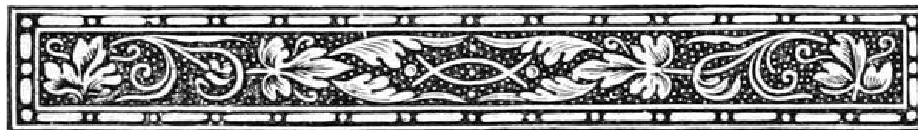
[104]



THE MIRACLE OF CREATION.

E were sitting at the opera the other evening, Celeste and I. Celeste was *ennuyee*. Not even the Garden music of Faust—music which so deftly pictures the grand struggle between the Angel and the Fiend, which is waged on the battle-field of each man's soul—music which so vividly paints the lapse from guilelessness to guilt; not even the closing duo, an outburst of sensuous rapture with an under-tone of the wildest despair, seemed to have any effect upon her. So she twirled her fan impatiently, flirted with Fitz-Herbert opposite, through her lorgnette, and listlessly pulled the waxen petals out of the camelia in her bouquet.

And she turned to me and said: "Don't you think this is very stupid? Everything is so *blase*. I would give a year of my life for a new sensation. How happy Eve must have been, when everything was bright and fresh and new, and for the first time;" and, the camelia destroyed, she commenced upon roses and heliotropes.

And, after the opera, I freed my mind to the Dear Creature, upon the foolish idea—which not only she but the majority of people have—that the world was any brighter or fresher, or any more for the first time, in the days of Adam and Eve than now, speaking somewhat after the following fashion:

[105] My dear Celeste, the fault is not in the world, but in yourself, that nothing seems bright, and fresh, and new. The miracle of creation and the process of life are new every morning and every evening, and are performed for the first time for each human being, yourself included. But you have allowed conventionality and form and artificiality to dim your eyes, destroy your taste, and blunt all your sensibilities. The world is just as beautiful, the mountains just as grand, the flowers just as lovely, the streams just as sparkling, the songs of the birds just as sweet, this spring day of 1868, *Anno Domini*, as they were on the same spring day of the year 1, *Ante Christum*. Adam and Eve saw them for the first time, and you are seeing them for the first time. The first sunrise which Adam and Eve saw, as they took their morning walk in the garden, was not a whit more beautiful than the sunrise this morning; and if that was given to them for the first time, this was

given to you for the first time—only your eyes, albeit they are very pretty, are totally blind to the fact; and, equally, the light of the sunset which filtered through the leaves of the trees, and stained the whole flowery floor of the Garden with golden glory, what time the first man and woman said vespers in God's grand temple of Nature, was not more golden than that which flooded the earth last evening, what time, my dear, you were yawningly doing up your back-hair, preparatory to Mrs. Fitz-Boodle's hop, utterly unconscious that there was a sun in the heavens, or that Nature was painting for you for the first time the miracle of a sunset, which she did for Adam for the first time.

[106] The same analogy holds good in all the operations of life. Eve, holding the wicked Cain in the cradle of her arms, experienced the same joys and griefs of maternity; the same concentration of all that is beautiful in the world, in the blue eyes of the nestling; the same mysterious yearnings; the same strong, deep love; the same foreboding pain that is experienced by the last fair-browed mother "in marble halls," or by some tawny, wild-eyed Indian mother, crooning weird songs to her little one under torrid palms.

And when, my dear Madame, you laid your little Johnny or Susie, all covered with immortelles and rosebuds, under the violets; or when you received a letter, written in a strange hand, that your first and only one, who had grown to man's estate, and who went sailing over the seas, was down among the sea-tangles and the corals; when, as by a sudden breath, every light of joy was blown out; when that terrible silence of death lay on the household; when, in the night watches, you listened for some tidings from that far-off shore of the To Be, whither the child had sailed all alone, without your watchful care over him; when it seemed to you that the heavens should be hung with black, and you wondered that the sun could shine, and the birds sing, and men and women come and go as if nothing had occurred—when all this happened, you were experiencing, for the first time, the same feelings that Eve experienced for the first time, as she looked into the stark face of Abel.

March 24, 1868.

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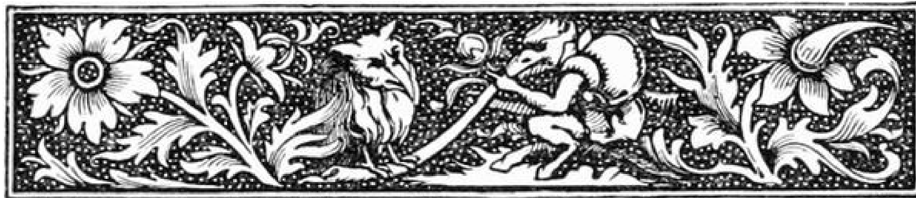
[107]



FASHIONABLE WEDDINGS.

I WAS sitting last evening in the library, absorbed in that wonderful book of Auerbach's—"On the Heights"—a book which always has the charm of being new whenever I take it up, and always gives me some fresh insight into the beauties of this world, and the sublimity of human nature. It was twilight, the time to read it. Minerva on the one shelf was drowsily nodding at Clytie on the other, and Dante on his bracket was looking out of the window into the sky, as if momentarily expecting Beatrice to float luminously down in shining garments. The flowers in the window were shutting up their petals for the night. And thus we sat there—Auerbach, Clytie, Minerva, Dante, the flowers, and I; and as the lines of the book dimmed over in the receding light, our star appeared goldening in the Western sky, just over the crimson of the dying day.

When who should walk in but the Dear Children, Boosey and Celeste, arm in arm! Minerva at once woke up and looked wisely at B., and my calla, which always recognizes Celeste as a butterfly, leaned lovingly towards her, as if inviting her to fly into her milk-white bosom and sleep there for the night.

[108] They cautiously and modestly informed me of their engagement, and had come to ask me for some advice relative to the wedding and how it should be celebrated. Whereupon I laid Auerbach down, and spoke to them somewhat after the following manner:

My Dear Children, I will give you some views on weddings in general, which you may apply to your own case. While it is eminently proper to invite personal friends to a wedding, and the more the merrier, avoid publicity. Publicity in private matters inevitably tends towards snobbishness, and often towards vulgarity. You may lay the gilt on vulgarity just as thickly as you please and it will only make it the more glaring, just as the process of varnishing a poor picture makes its defects more obvious. A wedding will always be public enough without any courting of publicity, and it is a very poor way of starting off in life, by trying to outdo some one else in the way of show and expense. It is like throwing out your ace of trumps without stopping to see whether you have got suit in your hand to win the game with. The lavish expenditure of money on a wedding,

merely to outdo some one else, is only for popular effect, and what is done only for popular effect is very apt to be vulgar. By vulgarity, of course I do not mean anything that is morally wrong, but simply common and snobbish. The motive is a very cheap one, and is apparent to the most superficial observer; and the least justifiable occasion for the exercise of that motive is a wedding, which should be free from tinsel and frippery. An event so important, and in a certain degree so sacred, should be celebrated with a delicacy and dignity befitting its character. It is the turning-point for weal or wo in two lives, and it is not well to make it a public show. The [109] occasions in society-life for display of gilt and gingerbread, sugar candy and gewgaws, are amply sufficient, without seizing upon the hymeneal altar and exhibiting the sacred fire to a curious public, with blare of trumpets and glare of trappings.

One of the worst features of our fashionable weddings is the insane desire of the parties to it to make their appearance in the public prints, and figure with stunning head-lines among the announcements of the last raid upon gamblers, police court trials, sensational divorces, murders, rapes and suicides. The avidity with which this publicity is sought will be astonishing to the general reader. In some instances printed, and in others written invitations, have been sent to the reporters of the daily press, stating the exact time and place when and where they can visit the dressmaker and have the mysteries of the bridal toilet explained to them, when and where they can inspect other toilets, and when and where they can see the wedding gifts and be informed of their nature and cost; all of which, of course, will be unfolded in due time to the admiring public, and small female vanity and large female curiosity will be gratified.

Unless, as is always the case, reporters are human and printers capricious; whereupon it happens that great expectations are not always realized—as, for instance, when that diamond pin, which cost $2,000, appears in print at the ridiculously small figure of $200; when Mrs. Crœsus, who has devoted days of toil and nights of anxiety, and has distracted her dressmakers over her superb silk—who has flattered herself upon the sensation her point lace will make, and [110] the universal admiration which will greet her diamond set—appears in print clad in blue tarletan, with Brussels lace and pearl jewelry; when the two thousand invitations appear on paper as two hundred; when the reporter, who came late, mistakes a bridesmaid for the bride, and goes into glowing raptures over the loveliness of the young creature; when another reporter, who has not had an opportunity of writing up the gifts beforehand, gets into a chaos of ormolu clocks, bronzes, and silverware, and mixes them up indiscriminately; when John Thomas, the family driver, who is not free from the failings of human nature any more than his superiors, by a quiet little reportorial bribe, or a secret visit to the place so dear to every well-organized reporter—the wine cellar—gets his name mentioned for the graceful manner in which he presided over the white ribbons and the rosetted steeds; when all these things happen, as happen they will, and people laugh, then the great expectations are not realized; and Mrs. Midas, who lives next door to Mrs. Croesus, had a small difficulty with her and was not invited to the wedding, has her revenge.

On general principles, this avidity of people to get their garments advertised in the public prints, while it may minister to their foolish vanity, is pernicious in its effects, and a positive injury to society. It has one of two effects. It will either keep a great many ladies away from places of public amusement, who cannot afford to dress in a showy manner, and are too sensitive to have their plain toilets spread before the universal eye; or it will encourage them to foolishly fling away money, in order that they may make a presentable appearance. And beyond these effects, it [111] directly encourages, or rather compels a competition in dress which is ruinous to good taste, not to speak of purses.

And now, my Dear Children, let me advise you to avoid all show. A house full of wedding presents and dear friends, and detectives to watch the costly presents, lest the dear friends steal them, is not desirable. A wedding *trousseau* constructed regardless of expense, to outdo some other *trousseau* and to create popular effect, is very vulgar. A lavish display of diamonds and silver, and glittering gewgaws, exhibited merely for ostentation, may make your curious friends envious, but it will make your judicious friends grieve. A clean flag-stone walk to the church will not injure your dainty feet any more than the Brussels carpet, and I would not favor your feet too much, for they may have to walk in some very flinty places yet. It is well, also, to have some regard to the proprieties of the church itself, and not transform it so much, that if St. Paul should happen to drop in, he wouldn't know whether he was in a circus or a menagerie.

I always tremble for the bride who starts off in life in this manner. We cannot always float smoothly along, reclining on velvet cushions, with favoring winds swelling silken sails, and golden oars keeping time to music. It has been discreetly ordered that reverses shall overtake us all before we get into the snug haven of old age. And in that night of tempests, when the whole heavens seem shutting grimly down, and not a star of hope can peep through the wild wrack, the fate of a Canary bird in a thunder-storm is the fate of this bride. The first move is the key to all [112] the rest. It is well, therefore, to have that move made calmly, deliberately and thoughtfully, without any reference to the opinions or the curiosities of others, with all the contingencies of life steadily in view, and with the two lives in one, braced and fortified to meet them.

My say was ended, and as Boosey and Celeste thanked me and went out seriously, she with a little faster hold upon his arm, and he with a firmer look of resolution upon his face, as if he were mentally bidding good bye to his follies, I sent my blessing out with them, for I was sure that he would get the vessel into such good trim that he and the Butterfly would be uninjured in any storm.

March 28, 1868.

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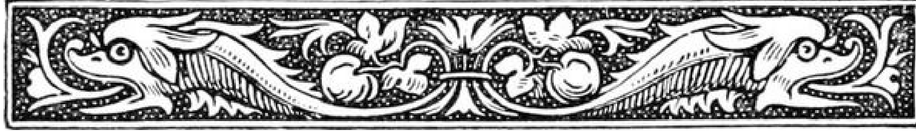
[113]



APRIL.

LTHOUGH this snivelling humbug, April, as I write, has spread out one of the bluest and softest of skies, and is coaxing the leaves to unroll their little green packages, and the grass to shoot up through the brown sod, and the birds to come up from the warm South, I can only say with the Rabbi in Uriel Acosta, "We have seen all this before."

She has dallied so long with that wild roysterer, March, that there is suspicion in the hem of her garments. She has indulged in boisterous and disgraceful revelries with him. She has listened to his bold license of speech. She has allowed him entrance at unseasonable hours. And she comes from the contact, no longer the coy, bashful, weeping maiden of yore, but a bold, unblushing hoyden, clothing herself to-day in her old beauty and softness, but still with the vile breath of March upon her lips.

And, worst of all, while couched in the fierce passion of March, she forgot her old friends who have never forgotten her, and so the buds were blasted, and the birds who had listened to her syren song died, and the flowers turned over and went back to their odorous sleep; and the arbutus which should be now showing its little pink and white face, under the dead leaves, [114] shrunk back affrighted from her, as she went noisily through the woods, boasting her shame in the robes with which March covered her nakedness as he thrust her away.

It is only a few Sundays ago that I told you of the little blue trumpeter who was heralding spring from the dry boughs. He, too, was sacrificed, and yesterday I saw him lying upon his back in the brown stubble, his claws bent with the pain of the cold, the light of his eyes quenched, his song forever hushed, and his soul fled to the Bird Heaven, where all the good blue birds, robins, orioles, and nightingales go; where they sing forever among the asphodels and in the lotuses to those who loved them and cared for them among the elms and the oaks; and where all the little captives who are caged here below regain their liberty and soar and sing untrammelled.

The blue trumpeter suffered the fate of all reformers. He came before his time. He was heralding the truth before the world was ready for it, and he died unheard and neglected. And hundreds of other heralds are lying dead to-day in the fields, victims to the merciless rigor of the rain and the snow and the cold.

And I therefore plead for all the birds who have come to us from the South. Shelter them whenever you can. Feed them and care for them. Summer, without its choir of birds, will be as blank as heaven without stars, a house without a child, a garden without flowers. The clearest indications of Paradise we get on earth, are the birds, the flowers, and the little children, and the man or woman who doesn't love them will have a trying time in Paradise, if he or she ever gets there.

I have never seen it recorded that they have any of these things in the other place. [115]

Therefore, again I say, deal gently with the birds and the flowers, for not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice, and Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like the lilies of the fields.

April 17, 1868.

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[116]

A SUMMER REVERIE.

AN you inform me why it was necessary for every man, woman and child whom I have met to-day, to remind me that it was hot? Why had all these people the right to assume that I did not know it was hot?

I am serious on this subject. I have been used this way before. I am continually informed by somebody that it is hot, or it is cold, or it rains, or it snows. To be informed once in the course of twenty-four hours that it is hot, is bad enough of itself; but to be apprised of that fact by every person you meet, is an improper interference with the funeral.

Now, for the benefit of the public at large, which is so eager to inform me that it is hot, I want to announce that I know it is hot. My knowledge on that score is positive, large and satisfactory. I am prepared, if necessary, to make a statement in writing that it is hot; to get me to a notary and make affidavit that it is hot.

Do I not know that it is hot, sitting here, with a vista of brick walls on every side, from which the sun glares at me; fanned through the open window by zephyrs, which bear on their wings nothing less cooling than coal smoke and caloric; with the hot whirling of machinery on one side and the [117] rumble of the dusty, sweltering street on the other? Through an open space in the walls, I can see a patch of sky as large as a lady's pocket-handkerchief, across which bits of cloud go with thoughts of rain in them; and with the infinite longing with which poor Marie Stuart watched the clouds which were floating across from her prison to France, and as she, prisoned in Fotheringay, sent her thoughts and wishes by those cloudy messengers, with that kind of longing, I think of distant fields and woods, of cooling waters and leafy shades to which they are hastening, and so I send messages to the trees, and the rocks, and the flowers, and to the least living thing that "praises God by rubbing its legs together," as Thackeray so finely puts it.

On such a day as this, it would be supreme delight to eat lotus in the woods; to lie, stretched prone upon the grass, in the grateful shade, with no heavier task than to watch a sluggish beetle, or an ant carrying its burden, in imminent danger of collision with every tiny stalk; to listen to all the sounds in nature's orchestra, the stringed instruments of the insects floating in the air, and the reeds of the insects crawling in the grass, the flutes of the birds, the horns of the wind blowing through the tree-tops, and all those sweet, indefinable sounds you only hear when your ear is close to the ground, but which play their part in the grand symphony; to lie upon the grass, with not a sound from the great world jarring upon your Arcadia; to dream of Satyrs, and Fauns, and wood-nymphs, and water-nymphs, and the great god Pan, piping upon his pastoral reeds; to [118] think of absent friends who are thinking of you, and will return, and of absent friends who are thinking of you, but will never return, as no road leads back from that country whither they have journeyed, and the daisies tell no stories, nor even the rustle of the grass which grows above them; to remember a chord of music long forgotten, and let its subtle melancholy weave a vision in the Past, when the chord was a sound and not a sigh, and the vision was a reality and not a shadow.

And to let the little bugs crawl in your ear and shiver the whole beautiful Dream-Fabric.

June 13, 1868.

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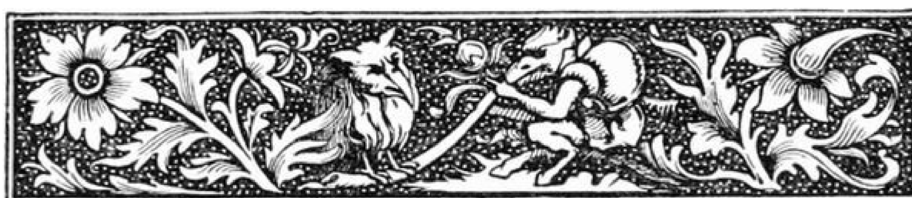
[119]



THE GERMANS AND MUSIC.

TO make a good German, four things are requisite, viz: Music, beer, Rhine wine and *Gemuethlichkeit*. In regard to the first and last qualities, I think that I am half a German. For four

days past, I have been trying to achieve the other two qualities, and thus Teutonize myself *in toto*.

I have fought the white beer of Berlin with an energy worthy of a better cause. I have wrestled with the red beer of Chicago. I have struggled with Hocheimer, Rudesheimer and Johannisberg, until I was Black, White and Red in the face, and hung out the German flag in my countenance. I have wished, with Mein Herr Von Dunk, that my trough was as deep as the rolling Zuyder Zee. But when I had accomplished my fifth glass of the mantling beer with internal satisfaction, and then beheld a German friend call for his thirtieth, just by way of an appetizer for the half barrel he had ordered, I saw at once the futility of my undertaking.

In fact, I was not equal to the beer capacity of a small German baby, and when I saw great, jolly Teutons, flaxen-haired, deep-lunged and stout-handed, with a whole case of Rhenish hidden away under their jackets, is it proper for me to allude to the poor little bottle of Steinberger I had [120] demolished, or to have any other feeling in regard to that feat than one of intense mortification? The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak. Nature was against me.

On the tenth glass of beer, the German is serene; on the twentieth, he is philosophical and will discuss the problem of how many angels can stand upon the point of a needle; on the thirtieth, he is full of *Bruderlichkeit*; on the fortieth, he reaches *Freiheit*; on the fiftieth, he will troll you a *Trinklied* in the manner of Hermanns with his Golden Calf; on the sixtieth he is a little weary, but his heart is in the right place, and he pronounces *zwei glass* with a strong emphasis on the *zwei*; on the seventieth, he is tired, but he recovers from it with the eightieth; on the ninetieth, he feels *gut*; and on the hundredth he is himself again, *frisch, frei und froh*, and is then prepared to drink some beer with you, to sing you one of Abt's best, to criticise a statue, or discuss the everlasting essence of the negative pole of infinity. Set him down to the glorious Rhenish vintages and the pile of old bottles he will leave behind him would have gone a great ways towards building the tower of Babel.

Your German is essentially a talker, and it is astonishing, considering the "schs," and "achs," and "ichs," and other gutturals distressing to an American windpipe, which are continually in his way, how much ground he will talk over in an hour. He talks with his tongue, his arms and his legs, and throws in the punctuation points as he goes along, with nods of his head. When he is the most social and affectionate, when his heart warms towards you, then he appears as if he were immediately about to demolish you, and the more affectionate he grows, the more alarmed you [121] become for your personal safety and anxious to inform your family that you may be brought home feet foremost. A company of Germans together, when they are inspired with *Gemuethlichkeit*, and when social feeling is at its highest temperature, exactly resemble Americans at the other extreme, preparing for a general fight, and you wonder the police do not interfere. And *vice versa*, when the German is excited to pugnacity, he does not seem to be excited at all. He appears to be serene, but beneath all the calm outside there is a terrible rage.

The German is addicted to Fatherland, and if any human being on the face of the earth has a right to be, it is the German. If any other nationality has a better literature, grander poets, more inspired dreamers, sublimer musicians, better artists, or deeper thinkers, I have not heard of it. The ties which bind him to the Fatherland are too strong ever to be broken, and on the invisible strings which stretch from his heart to Germany are continually sounding the home melodies. Could any more beautiful idea be conceived than the fact that on Friday evening, when the grand chorus at the Fest Hall[1] were singing the glorious German poem, "What is the German's Fatherland," in every part of Germany, in every city, village and hamlet, wherever there was a singing society, this same song was being sung on the same evening, in honor of their brethren assembled at Chicago?

[122] We may laugh at the peculiarities of the Germans, but when we approach German art, it must give us pause. Berlioz and Scribe took the skull of a fool, who had once laughed at the incantation music of Der Freischutz, and when the orchestra had reached that point, placed it before them and said: "Now, laugh if you dare. The music of Von Weber is thundering round you." No man who was not destitute of a soul, and utterly wedded to all gross things, could have felt any other than a religious feeling in the great swell of human voices on Thursday evening, as it surged in great waves of harmony, as it rose like the march of a storm in the Battle Hymn of Rienzi, full of martial inspiration and clarion cries, or died away in the gentle and placid melody of the Lindenbaum of Schubert, sweetest of all song-writers. The man who could go away from that concert without feeling that he was a better man, without having recognized that human nature may soar to the infinite on the wings of song, has sunk his soul so far into the uncleaness of life, that Gabriel will have some difficulty in finding it, what time he sounds his final trumpet call.

The Fest was a notable event, from the bare fact that it gave us the immortal Seventh Symphony of Beethoven, about which the critics and rhapsodists have loved to dream in searching for its hidden meaning, and around which they have woven so many delicate and tender fancies. No two persons probably will ever agree upon the exact event it is intended to illustrate, but it seems to me that there is one idea which must be patent to all. To me, the Seventh Symphony appears to be a true picture of a beautiful life—its *allegro* full of the longings and joyousness of youth; its *allegretto* filled with the delicious melancholy of love; its *scherzo* buoyant with the gladness and [123] ecstasy of living; and its final *allegro* summing all up in a climax of contentment and hope. It seems to me that when the grand old Master, the Jupiter Tonans of music, whose soul pierced the sublimity of the infinite, wrote this symphony, he must have forgotten all the trials and troubles

of life. All the joy of nature, her sunlight and breezes, and the hidden melodies of inanimate things; all the glow and elasticity of life's morning; a passionate love for some golden-haired Gretchen; a rhythm to which fairies might have danced in the moonlight, seem to me to be expressed in this wonderful production—the whole bathed in sunlight and clothed with supernatural beauty. In the Seventh Symphony, Beethoven does not sadden you with the profound melancholy, or inspire you with the sublimity of some of his works, but he gives you new ideas of the beauty and joy of living. And as I sat listening to the masterly performance of the *Allegretto* by the great orchestra—every player's face lit up with the enthusiasm of the music—every instrument moving in perfect precision—the whole air full of the bewitching, almost supernatural music—there occurred to me a letter which I have received this week, in which the writer wants to know if it is the duty of a Christian to encourage the Saengerfest. Although the letter was signed "A Christian,"—in the presence of the great Master's work the question seemed to me utterly profane. Why! Music is full of religion! The first tidings that ever came from Heaven to man came in music on the plains of Bethlehem. It reaches far down into the soul. It fills it with longings for the Unknown. It reveals the Infinite more clearly than the spoken word. Its tendency [124] is upward. It gives birth to aspirations. It makes a true man, truer. It makes a bad man, better.

If the writer of that letter does not appreciate music, let me commend to him the dictum of the father of modern Protestantism:

"Who loves not wine, woman and song,
Remains a fool his whole life long."

I should not care to deny that Martin Luther was a Christian, even in the face of his rather generous platform—in fact, his specifications would rather go to show that he was. I would advise my letter-writing friend, therefore, if he cannot love wine and woman, at least to love song, and see if it does not make a better Christian out of him. I think he could love every plank in Martin Luther's platform, and still be as good a Christian as Martin Luther was, and pitch ink-stands at the devil quite as vigorously. Before a man is thoroughly fitted for Heaven, he ought to be thoroughly fitted for earth. A great many people who think themselves good enough for Heaven, and are all the time wanting to go there, are not half good enough for earth. It is sheer ingratitude to Divine Providence—this lifting of the eyes so high as never to see the sublime world He has placed you in, with its never-ending scenes of beauty and sublimity, and never to see this life with its joys and possibilities. Fling your theologies to the winds. Unloosen your stiff neck. Don't forever snuff evil in everything around you. Up, and out into the world. Throw yourself into the arms of the loving mother, Nature, and see if there is no religion in her eyes. Get to the secret heart of music, and see if it is not anchored hard by the eternal throne. Draw [125] yourself closer to humanity and to universal brotherhood, and see if there is no religion in it. If your soul does not expand in the operation, and if it does not make a better Christian out of you, then you are hardly good enough for this world, and the sooner you are out of it the better.

June 20, 1868.

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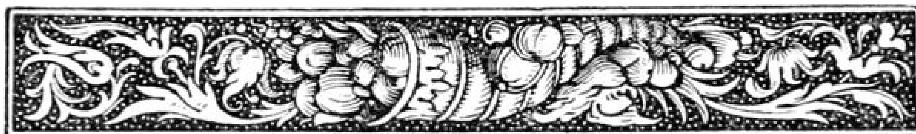
[126]



THE OLD STORY.

IN these fast days of the period, when human life is of so little account that we sever its frail thread with as little compunction as we would pick a flower from its stem; when, in our hot haste, we drain the cup clear to the bitter lees, and, disappointed, plunge ourselves into the outer darkness; when a mist of error and frenzy settles down upon us, so dense that it hides from our gaze all that is True and Beautiful; when, in all the heavens, there is only the angriness of driving clouds, and no star shining—in these fast days, the mere recital of a solitary case, where a tired human being has gone to rest voluntarily, rather than bear the great burden of agony and scorn upon her weak shoulders any longer, only causes the indulgence of a moment's curiosity and wonderment. The case published in the columns of the Tribune this morning, of the suicide of "Augusta," seems to me, however, one over which we should pause and think.

Very little is given of her history, and yet enough to indicate that she was but eighteen years of age—that time in life when the world is clad in its brightest colors, when the heart is full of hope and the body full of the buoyancy of youth; that she was very intelligent; that she was very pretty; [127]

that she was very amiable, and beloved by all who knew her; that she had been utterly deserted by a brute; and that she still wanted to live—for, in her sad note, she says: "And yet, if there seemed the shadow of a hope to regain your love, once so true and tender, I would longer suffer the agony you have so ruthlessly thrown upon me."

To me, there is something inexpressibly sad in that last note:

"My Darling Percy: The dark clouds are gathering around the little girl you once loved, and who still clings to you in hope that your heart will soften; but, oh! dear one, to suffer the agony of this suspense is worse than death. You trifled with my susceptible heart, but I forgive you. I court death; and yet, if there seemed the shadow of a hope to regain your love, once so true and tender, I would longer suffer the agony you have so ruthlessly thrown upon me. O, come, come! Press me to your heart again, and then let me die.

Loving and true,

AUGUSTA."

Deserted! And, alone in the world, she attempts to ward off, with her weak, little hands, those dark clouds gathering around her. Deserted! She still clings to all he has left her—a bitter memory. Deserted! She bears an agony which is worse than death. Deserted! She still loves and forgives him, who has utterly blotted out her bright young life. Deserted! She would still bear the great agony, if there was only the shadow of a hope that, at some day, she might regain that love. Deserted! And from her white lips comes that last mournful appeal—"Come! come! and let me die"—and then utter despair sets in, which is only another name for utter madness, for when hope dies, the light of reason goes out, too, and she goes to her death, "rashly importunate," out of the world, and out of life, to the arms of the Great Father. [128]

To the Great Father, notwithstanding the technical notions of my theological brethren, whose cold, hard formulæ, in a case like this, must give way. They dare not assert them in the presence of this little girl, around whom the clouds are gathering. If they should, it would only argue a soul which has run entirely to brain.

Her last words, "loving and true," have nothing of the romantic about them, no flavor of the boarding-school, no characteristic of the gushing young misses just into their teens and chignons. It is the full strength of a woman's love, which knows no abatement, even in the face of scorn, abuse and desertion. If, by an exceedingly remote possibility, this little girl should meet her betrayer in Paradise, I do not believe she would avert her face. The vine clings to the tree when its trunk is sturdy with sap and its branches are full of leaves and nests, and it clings to it, also, when it is only a jagged stump, riven and shattered by the lightnings.

The force of this passion is best illustrated by the fact that there could be no compensation but death, for the loss of its object; no compensation in all this great world, with its beauty of sunrises, woods, rivers and mountains. The flowers bloomed no longer for her. There was no soothing in the melancholy of music. The stars in Heaven went out. All sweet sounds grew strangely silent. It was a living death. She stretched out her hand for help, and it only met the cold hand of a dead love. She could only see in the darkness the ghost of a memory. There was only one escape out of this passion, and that way she fled—and it led out of life. [129]

The great world moves on undisturbed. The great woods are not disturbed when a single leaf drops off a tree and flutters down to its death. The eagle, in his flight, does not miss a feather that drops from his plumage. Men will still buy and sell, and women will gossip and dress. We shall all walk, and talk, and sing, and dance, and flirt, and laugh, each in our own little world, happy as ever, so long as dark Care does not ride behind the horseman.

But among us there will be one who can never again go companionless. There is a ghost forever chained to him, which he cannot shake off. It will sit by him and follow him into the land of dreams. It will walk by his side. It will echo his faintest whisper and his loudest laugh. He may wander like Ahasuerus, but he cannot escape from it. He may plunge into excess, but he will see its face at the bottom of every cup. There is no place so remote, under the blessed heavens, where he can escape from it. There is no darkness so intense that he will not see its sad, reproachful eyes looking at him. It will follow him here, to meet him There. He carries his punishment with him forever. In Faustus, there is an account of a memorable banquet given by Satan, at which the viands were composed of souls cooked in divers ways, and the wines were the tears of those who had suffered on earth—a glowing story it is, told in excellent fashion, which I would commend to him. I need not urge this handsomely-named man to think sometimes of his victim. He will have no difficulty in remembering, but very much in forgetting. A man who commits murder is not very apt to forget. Society conveniently glosses over these crimes with mild names, but the crime is just the same. Society individually knows, and he knows, that he has committed murder, just as surely as if he had plunged a knife into his victim, whose only crime was love. [130]

I think it would be an excellent practice, in these cases, to place upon the tombstone some such epitaph as this:

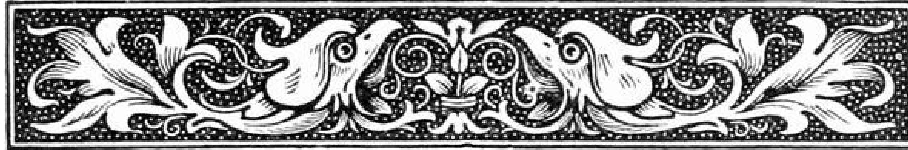
Sacred to the Memory

OF

AUGUSTA,

Murdered in her 18th year by Percy.

She was Beautiful, Intelligent and Amiable, but was guilty of
LOVE.



IN MEMORIAM.

TO-DAY, in this crystal atmosphere, in these glorious, invigorating breaths from the North, full of suggestions of cool pine woods—of brooks dancing over the shallows—of rivers flashing down to the great lakes—of a fisherman rocking upon the waves—of breezes which have journeyed all the way from the pole, whispering stories to the trees of the weird things done in the Northern glow—in this perfection of a new-created day, created for the first time for you and for me, thus ever renewing the wonder of the first morning, life is no longer a burden, but a blessing. Not the life social, mental or moral, but the life physical. The mere fact of living, of breathing, of feeling the blood coursing in your veins, of allying yourself with the waves of the lake, which are sparkling with smiles; with the leaves, which are dancing on the tree-tops; with the flowers bursting into richer bloom, and lifting up their drooping cups to catch the wine of the morning; with the birds, curving through the invigorating air; with the insects, no longer droning their hot, dry notes in the burnt grass, but making a Babel of little sweet sounds in every hillock; the mere fact of living in this world, when every tint, from the Iris in a foam-bell to the haze on a hill-side, is perfect; when every [132] sound, from the buzz of a grasshopper to the diapason of the waves or the swell of the wind-smitten trees, is in unison, is a blessing. On such a day, Donatello, the Faun, would have called the animals to him with that universal language which makes us and them kin. On such a day, Memnon sings more grandly to the sun. On such a day, Heine's pine tree in the northern snows dreams of the palm in the burning sands. Such a day comes like a benediction, after the long, tedious sermon, and it brings with it benisons from the Great Father to the parched, burning leaves, to the poor sufferers tossing upon beds of pain, to tired, toiling humanity.

The last week has been a reign of terror. It is stated that the birds have never died so fast, especially the singing birds. The flowers, too, have died. And with the flowers and the birds, their companions, the little children have passed away, until it makes one sad to think into how many homes a shadow has come within the past short week. Death, like another Herod, has knocked at every door, save where some protecting angel guards the threshold. We fain would have kept him out, but our hands were powerless, and in almost every household where he entered, he smote the youngest and the fairest—little eyes, in which the light of Heaven had never faded—little hands, untaxed by any of life's burdens—little feet, unstained by any of the dust of life's highway, in which we elder ones are so sadly begrimed that we have lost much of the semblance of our former selves. And I think this morning that, if earth is sadder for the loss of the children, Heaven must be brighter and more beautiful for the troops of little ones that have passed through the [133] Gate Beautiful, and now walk in Paradise, among the birds and flowers which died when they died. And I think that, along the invisible strings which stretch from our hearts to the little green waves of turf in the Acres of God, and thence reach heavenward, will come songs in the night-watches, and pulses of music we shall recognize, and, recognizing, become better men and better women.

I am sure that some loving angel will tenderly watch each of these new mounds of earth, and that, on each recurring spring, we shall see the blue of their eyes in the blue of the violet, and the gold of their hair in the gold of the daisies; that we shall hear their voices in the songs of the robin, and that they will live for us evermore, in all things beautiful.

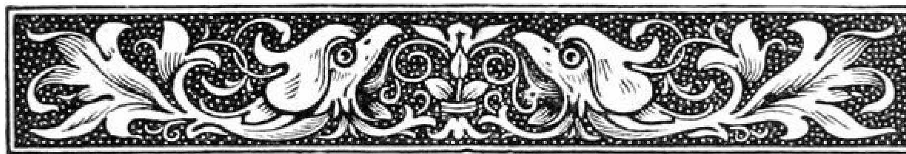
And may the Great Father stretch His hands in infinite tenderness and blessing over all bowed heads and darkened homes, and in benison over all beds of suffering.

July 25, 1868.

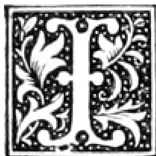
Last summer, in those hot days, when the cruel weather killed the birds, and flowers, and little children, I wrote to you of the death of a little one, as fragile as the rose-bud she held in her little waxen hand, and how the sunshine was extinguished in the house when we carried her out and tenderly laid her away under the turf, on which the golden and scarlet glories of autumn have fallen, the storms of winter have beaten, and the promises of spring are now brightening. There were with us, on that sad day, those to whom Heaven had consigned a little one, and now the messenger has come for it and taken it home again. In the mysterious dispensations of the Great Father, it was ordained that the little life of the one should flash out and expire like the light of the glow-worm; that the other should wear his life slowly out through a weary year and pass away, trying to fashion the words "Papa" and "Mamma" on his thin lips. The one went when the birds went and the flowers were fading—when the reapers were among the sheaves, and the golden glow of summer was dissolving into the purple haze of autumn. She never saw the spring, except in that land where the spring is eternal; just across that River we sometimes hear in the mists of the Valley of the Shadow, and shall some day see. The other went away when the birds were coming, and the leaves were bursting into emerald bloom on the trees, and the flowers were opening their cups to catch the sunshine and the rain. And to-day, on this blessed Sabbath, the two are together again in that far-off land which is brought so near to us when the little ones go there. [134]

May 29, 1869.

[135]



LAKE MICHIGAN.



NEED not tell you of the general appearance of Lake Michigan. I take it for granted everyone knows it, but how many have studied it in its details, watched its rare combinations with the clouds, or discovered the subtle changes and colors, all the time at work upon its surface?

How many, for instance, have seen the Lake when it was apparently all green—not its ordinary green, but a peculiar, light green which it only wears on state occasions, and especially at this season of the year? Your first glance leads you to suppose it is simply green, but look steadily at it, and you will find that the green is suffused with purple, giving a color which I do not think can be matched elsewhere in nature. You may possibly find it in some of the endless varieties of color in wild roses. This is the royal color of the Lake, because the rarest. You may look for weeks and months and not see it, for it requires a peculiar combination of cloud, and wind, and sunlight to produce it. But if you are only patient, some day it will flash upon you in all its beauty, and richly repay you for waiting.

There are days, when the hour is about sunset, and a gentle north-east wind is blowing, that the Lake is of a light green, except a blue strip in the far north. The eastern horizon joins the water [136] by an almost indefinable white line, as if they had been welded together, but all is vague and indistinct and vailed in a haze into which a vessel here and there melts like a phantom. There is hardly wind enough to form waves, but there is regular motion of the water—as regular as the rhythm of music—and in the distance you will see, now and then, a wave breaking white upon the shore, like the white hand of some spent swimmer, clutching at the sand in mortal agony. In the eastern sky, the lower strata of clouds are ragged and angular in shape, and dark gray in color, and only afford you glimpses, here and there, of the clouds above them, which are round and billowy, and would be white but for the roseate glow with which they are suffused by the sun, which is sinking into an angry bank of clouds, such as Dore loves to paint, like a great crimson stain upon the sky. Wherever the tips of these upper clouds appear, they cast a faint reflection upon the green of the water, not producing a duplicate of color, but bronzing the water in spots, which are continually changing. Sometimes, for a moment, the lower clouds part, and reveal a golden glory behind them, which, for only an instant, illumines the water beneath. This is peculiarly the dreamy feeling of the Lake. There is a dreamy tone in the wash of the waves. The rhythm is perfectly uniform, and the key is in accord with melancholy and tenderness. The flow is peaceful, only now and then you may hear a tone in the hazy distance, a little louder than the rest, like a drum-beat in a far-off orchestra. You may be so near the Lake that the foam of the spent waves will crawl over your feet, and their sound will still be dreamy, and apparently in the [137] distance. It is like nothing so much as the voices and the faces which come to you in the night out

of the Past. Its cadence is mournful and yet beautiful. It is then the time to be alone, to cast yourself upon the sand and listen to the stories of these waves—stories of the sailors who sailed the Spanish main, and never came home again—of vessels which went down, and left no one to tell the tale—of phantom ships, which suddenly loom up before affrighted sailors in the darkness—of storms, driving their black chariots over the deep—of Mermaids, and Sirens, and Undines, luring on their victims to destruction, with their white bosoms and voluptuous melodies—of the beautiful fabrics you reared years ago—all gone, as the wave washes out the print of your feet in the sands. And, as you lie there and dream, the moon, yet silvery-gray in the early evening, passes behind a cloud. The distant city is hidden by a curtain of gray mist—hidden, with all its men and women, toiling, struggling, loving, cursing and praying—hidden, with all its squat misery in the alleys and by-ways, and with all its splendid wretchedness in the high places. All sounds die away. The cruel mist creeps over the water, and you are alone upon the sand, with only the melancholy moaning of the immemorial waves, which will moan thus when you and I are gone—which have moaned thus since the youth of the years.

Have you seen the Lake when thunder-storms are brooding all around the horizon, and the wrath of the tempest is sweeping up from the west, where, in thundering caverns, the Titans are forging the bolts? You may, now and then, hear the clang of their hammers, and see the fire from [138] their anvils, what time gigantic masses of clouds, assuming fantastic shapes and dark forms of demons, come tearing their way to the zenith. In the east all is quiet, and the fleecy, cumulous clouds, towering up like peaks of snow, and illuminated by the waning sun, send straight pink shafts of light across the dull, blue surface of the Lake. In the distance, this blue is changed to the most delicate green. Watch it, and in a moment it will change to blue again, and then again to green; and the shafts of pink light on its surface will come and go like the blushes upon a girl's cheek. Never mind the near approach of the storm. You cannot afford to lose the Lake yet. As the black clouds gather in the east, the blues and the greens disappear, and the Lake turns to black, reflecting the wrath of the clouds above. The darts of the lightning descend into it, and the crash of the thunder borne over its surface is almost deafening. The sound of the waves dies away. Long, smooth, irregular patches appear, looking as if the air had died above them. A few heavy spats of rain strike here and there. A dense mist begins to settle down. Faster and faster the rain-drops fall, and now the mad gods are all abroad; and in the mists there, the lightnings are rending the bosom of the Lake. But, in the midst of all the din, if you only listen acutely, you will hear the steady patter of the rain in the water—a soothing, tranquilizing sound; and in some dense forest, if you were lying upon the needle-covered ground, you would hear exactly the same sound made by the wind in the tree-tops. And now, if you could sleep in some old-fashioned attic, without a care or a trouble in your breast, where you could hear the rain playing its merry [139] fantasie on the shingles, you would sleep the most refreshing of all sleeps.

And then there are days when the heavens are cloudless, the temperature cool, and the breeze blowing briskly and steadily from the north, that the Lake is a very kaleidoscope of colors, and puts on a habit it has borrowed from fairy-land. Start with the extreme eastern limit, and you may trace nearly all the primitive colors of the prism, with their variations at intervals—blue, light green, grass-green, and the green of the waters in which the icebergs float, light and dark bronze, silvery gray, pink and purple, and a dull, dead gray color, close by you. Let but the breeze be strong enough to comb the crest of the waves into foam, and a more beautiful sight it would be impossible to conceive. These colors are not fixed. The smallest cloud which passes over the sky will agitate and intermingle them in a very chaos of beauty, but as the cloud disappears they will return to their original order. Sometimes a larger cloud will hurry across the sky, fleeing from its shadow, which skims over the lake, as you have seen the same shadows skim over a meadow, and this shadow will absorb color after color and leave a new one in its place, so that the whole of them will often be reversed. In such seasons, the lake is a perfect picture of life, with its phases of trouble, of mirth, of youthful vivacity, of ambition, of hope, and of despair. Your life and my life are there, with all the dreams we have dreamed and the loves we have loved—with the bubbles which fancy has blown, and the castles we have built in the air—with the ties which have been formed and been broken—with the fates which have brought you and me together, like ships upon the ocean, to meet for a minute and hold converse, and then sail again [140] and apart into the opposite horizons; and yet always teaching the lesson that, in the darkest moments, there is compensation in the great beauty and blessing of nature, and that the Great Mother, who always clothes every material wreck with loveliness, and makes it beautiful and sacred to the eye, can also bring balm to every wrecked life, if we only approach her with loving hearts and outstretched arms.

There is another aspect of the Lake, which I hope you will never see. It is when the air is sultry and heavy with moisture; when a chill, penetrating wind has settled down upon it, as in the late falls; when you can see only a stone's throw from the shore; when the water is of a dull, milky color, and its wash against the sand is sullen and despondent, and there is not a pleasant sound or sight. The Lake then is suicidal in its tendencies, and is deliberately inviting you or Atropos to sever the thread in your web of life. Keep away from the Lake at such times, for it is a very monster, and you can have no good thoughts in its presence.

August 1, 1868.

[141]

RIP VAN WINKLE.

IN this world of amusement in which we dwell, palpably the finest piece of dramatic art is the "Rip Van Winkle" of Mr. Joseph Jefferson. We are accustomed to compare the personations of other actors. We establish degrees of merit in the efforts of Booth, Adams, Couldock, and Forrest, in tragedy, and Warren, Hackett, Owens, and Brougham in comedy. But when we come to Mr. Jefferson's "Rip," comparisons cease. It stands by itself, as sharply defined, as superbly drawn, as the Venus di Medici in statuary, one of Raphael's cartoons in painting, or Jenny Lind's Bird Song in music; and, if we ransack the records of the stage, we find nothing to which we can compare it.

For the reason that his personation belongs to an entirely new school. It is the commencement of that dramatic era which Shakspeare foreshadowed in his advice to the players. It is the dissolution of that system against which Charles Lamb and Addison wrote so powerfully in "Elia" and the "Spectator." I verily believe if Charles Lamb had seen Jefferson's "Rip Van Winkle," although he was denouncing such great artists as Garrick and Mrs. Siddons, he would never have written that essay on the plays of Shakspeare; and that, if Addison had seen it, the "Spectator" [142] would have been minus some of those sketchy papers on the playhouses. I believe that gentle soul, Charles Lamb, would have taken his sister to see "Rip," and that they would have talked to each other as no two ever talked before; that great-hearted Addison would have taken off his hat and made his best bow to him; that watery Sterne would have shed a Niagara of tears over the simple narrative, and Steele would have gone and got drunk, out of sheer inability to do justice to the subject in any other way.

Mr. Jefferson's personation is totally unlike anything on the modern stage. Matilda Heron's "Camille," in her younger days, approximated to it somewhat, but at present there is nothing that resembles it on the stage. Mr. Jefferson has quietly ignored all the rules, regulations and precedents of the stage. The stereotyped stage-walk—a sort of comico-heroic strut, which has been pressed into service for all sorts of characters, from "Harlequin" to "Hamlet;" the stage gestures; the stage attitudes, which "Mrs. Toodles," curtain-lecturing her intoxicated spouse, and "Lucrezia Borgia," shielding "Genarro" from the "Duke," both assume; the rolling of the eyes in a fine frenzy; the mouthing of phrases in a set manner, to catch the praise of the groundlings; the hackneyed entrances and exits; the rant, and the making of points, are all foreign to Mr. Jefferson. With him, the stage is merely an accident and no more essential to his personation than it was to Irving's conception.

This school of acting which Mr. Jefferson has adopted is the very highest form of dramatic art. In it, he realizes the truth of the old adage, that it is the province of art to conceal art. [143] *He completely identifies himself with the character.* That is the secret of his success—of his potent sway over the emotions of his auditors. It is this faculty which enables him so to blend humor with pathos that smiles follow tears in as quick succession as light follows shadow over a field on a summer afternoon. It is, perhaps, impossible for any person who has seen Booth to form any original conception of Hamlet. He invariably connects Hamlet with Booth, and the result is a theatrical Hamlet; and the poor Ghost always walks into our memories with a theatrical stride, and smells of the calcium. So with Couldock's "Luke Fielding," Charlotte Cushman's "Meg Merrilies," Forrest's "Coriolanus," or Burton's "Toodles." All these personations were unusually fine, but the actors could not always merge themselves in the characters, because there was always the partition of theatrical necessities and precedents in the way. This is not the case with Mr. Jefferson. We do not connect "Rip Van Winkle" with Jefferson, but Jefferson with "Rip Van Winkle." The transformation is complete. He acts, talks, walks, laughs, rejoices and mourns just as "Rip Van Winkle" would have done—just as any human being would have done in "Rip Van Winkle's" place. In looking at this personation—and I own to having laughed and cried over it many times—I never think of Jefferson. I never think of his art. I never get "enthused" enough even to applaud, for I should never think of applauding "Rip," were he alive and walking to-day the streets of the village of Falling Waters. To me, there is no Jefferson on the stage, but the magnificent creation of Irving, moving before me. And all this is done without the show of art. [144] Mr. Jefferson never talks above the ordinary conversational tone of voice, uses only a few gestures, and those of the simplest description, attempts no tricks of facial expression, and makes less fuss than the veriest supernumerary on the stage; and yet I question whether any

living artist has such an instantaneous command of the smiles and tears of an audience as he.

In fact, I confess I should be afraid of that man or woman who was not affected by this personation. It has been my good or bad luck, as the case may be, for many years past to have written on every actor and actress who have come to this city, and to have witnessed thousands of dramatic performances. Constant dropping of water wears away the rock, and I confess until I saw Mr. Jefferson, I have looked upon stage murders and all sorts of villainies with a large degree of composure; have even smiled at the lachrymose Mrs. Haller, beloved of young women, and have studied with all my might to discover the fun in the stage situation at which the audience was laughing; and instances are on record where I have slept the sleep of the just all through a five-act tragedy, overrunning with murders, suicides, rapes, burglaries, divorces and *crim. con.* enough to have started a second Boston in business. And when I first went to see Mr. Jefferson, I went all calloused with dramatic labor. But if that man didn't have me laughing and crying alternately the whole evening, then I'm a sinner.

The entire personation is so complete and individualized that it is very difficult to select any particular scene as better than others, for Mr. Jefferson is so thorough an artist that he neglects [145] not even the smallest detail. But there are two or three scenes which seem to me to stand out more prominently than the rest. One in particular is the episode where he is ordered to leave the house of his wife. Most actors would have torn a passion to tatters at this point, ranted and rushed round the stage, delivered mock heroics and dashed off in an ecstasy of blue fire with their arms flourished in the air, utterly forgetful of unities or proprieties. How different, Jefferson! He is sitting upon a chair, partially turned from the audience, in a maudlin state. His wife orders him to leave her house and never return. Perhaps she has ordered him that way before, for he pays little heed to it. She repeats the order in a louder tone of voice, but still he pays no heed to it. He has stretched out his arm and raised his head as if to speak, when she again issues her order in an unmistakable manner. It strikes him like a thunder-bolt. Without changing the position of a limb, he sits as if that instant petrified. He is dumb with amazement, as the terrible truth gradually becomes clear in his muddled brains. The silence, the motionlessness, the fixed look of the face, are literally terrible. And when he rises slowly, quietly tells the wife he shall never return—for he has been driven away—stoops and kisses the little one, and so easily passes from the doorstep to the outer darkness, that it might have been the flitting of a shadow, you inevitably draw a breath of relief that the scene is over, and indulge in a genuine feeling of the most hearty sympathy for this good-for-nothing, lazy, drunken, good-hearted vagabond.

[146] Equally, can there be anything more affecting than the scene when, after his sleep, he returns to his native village to find that no one remembers him? Or anything more sadly eloquent than the simple phrase, "Are we, then, so soon forgotten when we are gone?" pronounced so simply and quietly, and with such a gentle vein of sadness running through it? This appeal, which any other actor would have thrust into the face of his audience as the place for "a point," Mr. Jefferson delivers so simply that you hardly at first catch the full force of its meaning, or become aware how much of life is summed up in the few simple words. It is a page out of real life, only another proof of the folly of supposing that you or I are at all essential to the rest of the world.

Mr. Jefferson's make up is very remarkable. He must have studied the character with remarkable earnestness and closeness to draw it so perfectly. Before the sleep, his face is a thorough picture of the good-for-nothing vagabond who exists in every village and is remarkable for nothing but his big heart, which draws to him all the children and dogs of the neighborhood—a sure proof of the humanity of the dog. In general I think that big dogs and small children are the most perfect instances of thorough humanity in the world. A man who has a big heart will always be recognized by a dog quicker than by the two-legged humans. Equally, dogs and small children always recognize each other. After the sleep, the picture of the old man is just as perfect. In every detail of age—the pains in the joints, the shambling gait, the wrinkled face and the childish expression—he is the counterpart of old age. In neither phase of the character does he ever forget himself. He is always "Rip Van Winkle." His forgetfulness of the audience amounts almost [147] to impudence, and he is equally forgetful of the actors. Off the stage, Jefferson is the most genial of men; like Yorick, full of jest and humor. On the stage, he never forgets that he is playing a character. He is "Rip Van Winkle" in front of the audience, behind the scenes, in the dressing room, and in the *entr' actes* even. He never lets himself down for an instant from the necessities of the *role* until the curtain falls on the last act. He believes that an actor can never become too familiar with a part, never study it too much, and the result is that he plays just as conscientiously now, as he did when he commenced, and is constantly making the personation better.

Another singular feature of Mr. Jefferson's acting, is, that he not only makes "Rip Van Winkle" an actual living personage, but the dog "Snyder" also. Although "Snyder" never puts in an appearance upon the stage, he is as important a *dramatis persona* as any on the stage. I think I have a perfect conception of that dog "Snyder"—a long, lank, shaggy, ill favored, yellow cur, loving "Rip" with all his heart, hating "Mrs. Rip," a sworn friend of all the children in the village, one ear bitten off in an unpleasantness with "Nick Vedder's" mean bull dog, but with a big heart after all in his carcass, and a dog who would always take the part of a small dog in a quarrel with a bigger one. Jefferson succeeds in making "Snyder" an actual canine, although he is never visible to the eye; and when "Snyder" goes rattling down the hill, scared out of his senses by Hendrick Hudson's phantom crew, I acknowledge to a feeling of sadness for the poor beast who is "Rip's" only friend.

[148] Although Mr. Jefferson never makes a point of theatrical attitudes for mere effect, some of his

poses are remarkably beautiful and artistic, especially that one as he stands shading his eyes with his hands, looking with amazement at the village of Falling Waters, after waking up from his sleep; also the careless way in which he sits upon the table in the first act, and the peculiar attitude in the chair when he is ordered from the house, to which I have already alluded. They are just such attitudes as a painter would choose to paint, or a sculptor to chisel. They are thoroughly artistic, and much of this is undoubtedly due to the fact that Mr. Jefferson has very excellent talent in, and knowledge of, the sculptor's art. Had he followed it as a profession he would undoubtedly have achieved an eminence quite as elevated as that which he enjoys in the dramatic world.

If I have devoted considerable of this letter's space to Mr. Jefferson, it is because his "Rip Van Winkle" is a production of art worthy more than passing notice, in the presence of which, the gauze and tinsel of the spectacular drama seem very tawdry, and mock heroics of the sensational and romantic schools of action very false. He stands the only embodiment of the natural school of action—the only true school. Who will be the next to follow him, and assist to reform and restore the stage to its proper place as a great educator of the people and exponent of art?

September 5, 1868.

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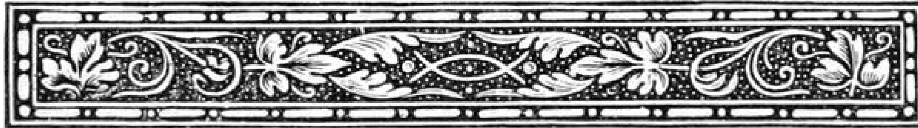
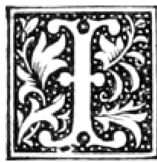
[149]



AN AUTUMN REVERIE.



T seems only a little handful of days ago that I was writing you of the note of the little blue trumpeter, announcing from the bare boughs the advent of Spring, and now the Autumn is here. And holding the days in our hands like grains of sand, there was now and then a golden one which you and I would have kept; but, alas! they, too, slipped through our powerless fingers, and the gold in the sand was but a dream within a dream.

I told Mignon the Fall was here, for our trees have commenced to lose their yellowing leaves, and show here and there in their boughs, hectic flushes, and harbingers of speedy dissolution.

But Mignon said that the flowers were still blossoming brightly in the garden, and that there was some happiness yet.

But I replied: "It is only for a few days my dear. The great trees are nearer the heart of nature and learn her secrets first. But the flowers will soon feel the dying breath of the year, and, smitten with the cruel arrows of the frost, will bow their heads in recognition of the great mystery, and the dahlias, and the asters, and the marigolds will strew the earth with the souvenirs of the summer sunshine. Some of the shrubs, to be sure, will decorate themselves with berries in a childish way, and the pines and ever-greens, clad in sombre green, will stand moodily [150] thinking of their gay friends who have left them—bearing the winter's white burden on their bent branches as the penalty of life in death, condemned to live forever, like Ahasuerus, with the recollection of numberless summers and companions—strong, firm and inflexible, to bear the storms of winter, but without a leaf which may stir next spring in glad recognition of the breezes and the birds coming back again.

"The birds, too, have learned the mystery, and have flown, all save the brown sparrow, and other sober, songless little fellows, who know that they have no business here when the flowers are in bloom, and little winged bunches of blue and crimson and gold, are filling all the air with their trills and roulades. You may listen very earnestly now, and you will only hear in the day a chirp from the cricket, that little black undertaker of the insects, who tries to be very cheerful, but only succeeds in being sad."

And I further said to Mignon: "These latter days of the year are akin to music, which is only music when there runs through it a vein of melancholy—a melancholy like Tennyson's 'tender grace of a day that's dead'—not sorrow nor grief, but that indefinable sadness which is to sorrow what the twilight is to the blackness of darkness. But we will make these days the happiest, for believe me, the chattering bobolink is not as happy as the sparrow, nor the shrill, noisy, cicada as happy as the chirping cricket; and the truest happiness will be found in those lives which are shadowed with regrets, or veined with melancholy memories to which hope's tendrils may cling."

September 19, 1868.

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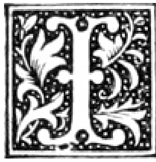
[151]

THE BEST WOMAN IN THE WORLD.


THINK old women—I don't quite like the word "lady," because it don't mean anything now-a-days—are the most beautiful and lovable things in the world. They are so near heaven that they catch the glow and the brightness which radiate from the pearly gates and illuminate their faces. When the hair begins to silver, and the embers in the fire grow gray and cold, and the sun has got so far around in life's horizon that the present makes no shadow, while the past stretches down the hillside to a little mound of earth, where we will rest for a season—a little mound not big enough to hold our corner lots, and marble fronts, and safes, which we shall have to leave on the other side of the hill, but big enough, I trust, to hold our memories, and fancies, our air castles and secrets; and when the journey is nearly done, and the night is setting in, and the darkness begins to gather around us without any stars, and the birds sing low in the trees, and the flowers wither and die, and the music we hear comes from afar, strangely sweet, like sounds coming over the water, and like little children we live in ourselves, and the world gradually recedes from us—then I should like to be an old woman, full of blessed memories and peaceful anticipations.

[152] I think I know the best woman in the world, and I think every other man knows her. I think the one I know has the kindest heart, and the dearest face, and the most caressing hand, and the most undying devotion among all women. Her eyes were once to me the boundaries of the world, and were the first things I ever looked into, and pray Heaven they may also be the last I shall look into. And I think the best woman every other man knows has all these qualities in the same degree. And I think there is not one of us who has strayed so far from that woman—the best of all women—not one of us so calloused with the strife and toil of life, not one of us in the midst of difficulty and danger, who does not feel the invisible arms around him to shield him, and who does not long to go back to the arms and the love of that woman, and to rest, as we rested before our feet got into the flinty roads, upon the breast of our MOTHER.

October 3, 1868.

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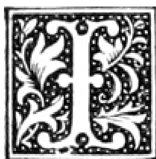
[153]

THE SCHOOL HOUSE.


N the round of my daily walks, it is my pleasure to pass a school-house, and I try to arrange my walks that I may happen to be there when school is opening and closing. The little men and women who compose the miniature world in the schoolyard, and make sunlight for me, undoubtedly have no idea of the great pleasure they afford me, or how rapidly my thoughts, under the magic influence of their bright eyes, lithe forms, and merry games, go back into the past, the morning-red of life, when the beautiful glamor of morning brightened every object it touched; when the flowers bloomed perennially; when the birds sang the sweetest of melodies; and when the brooks went laughing and dancing over the pebbles, full soon to broaden into sad, serene rivers, too soon to be hurled and beaten against the grey crags in eternal unrest; and forward, into the future, a hazy, twilight land, full of indefinable shapes and perplexing uncertainties. And yet, as our shadows lengthen in the journey towards it, there is always one certainty: that we shall find there, those who have gone before. Some who traveled the whole weary journey, and arrived footsore and travel-[154]stained, and some who never became old, and were spared the toilsome journey, because the angels loved them better than we and better than us.

And I think, as I watch those children at play, how many unseen agencies are at work around them—of avarice which will corrode and blacken this young life, and of charity which will make

that young life beautiful; of ambition, which some day with its trumpet blasts will wake this thoughtful one into action, and make the world wonder at him; of love, which will make this one's pathway smooth, thinking of what is; which will interlace cypress in the myrtle, thinking of what might have been; which will darken all God's Heaven for this one, thinking of what never should have been; of fame which will send the name of this one sounding round the world; of skill which will enable this one to see and know the very heart of nature; of misery which will follow this one like a Mephistophiles; and of despair, which never stops short of the grave.

And all this time, as I watch these children, chasing each other at play, as the yellow skeletons of the leaves chase each other in the wind in these memorial mornings, the fates sit spinning in the air above them, and weaving the tangled web of their destinies, some of them all white, some with here and there a black thread, while Atropos sits by with her fatal shears, which will sever this thread too soon and that too late.

It is only a few days, and this chase in the schoolyard will be transferred into life, where no walls will hem them in, and away they will go to the four winds of Heaven, and another set will take their places as they took ours. Ours! Do you remember anything about those days in the midst of [155] your invoices and bills of lading, your Berlin wools and Grecian Bends, and somebody coming home to tea and nothing in the house to eat? Do you remember the little red school-house on the hill, with poplar trees in front of it, that you used to think almost touched the sky? Do you remember the school mistress, with her pale face and sweet smile, and her little blue ribbon, now sleeping under the flowers, for school's out forever, and she has a long vacation? Do you remember the little girl in white apron and blue gown, with blue eyes and golden curls, whose satchel you carried up the hill, and whose name you cut into the bark of the apple-trees, vowing an eternal constancy—an eternity which lasted until the apple-trees lost the last of their pink-and-white blossoms? Do you remember the swallows which twittered round the eaves of the school house all the spring and summer, and suddenly one bright morning all left together, scared by a little brown bird, who came from the far north, and told them a story of something coming, which made them all shiver? And when that something came, do you remember the old box stove piled up with logs, and the snow-houses, and the nuts and cider, and the forfeits at the parties, especially that one where you carried the pillow to the girl with black hair, instead of little Gold Curls, not being on speaking terms with her, and the school mistress, with cheeks paler, and eyes brighter than ever, and flushes in the face which came and went like lightnings in the western sky in summer eves, for the little brown bird did not warn her that she ought to go with the swallows? You remember that when the swallows came back one sunny morning in the next May, [156] they did not find the school-mistress, for she went away with the brown bird.

If you don't remember any of these things, I pity you, for the friction of life must have worn you quite smooth, and the outlook must be very dreary.

October 11, 1868.

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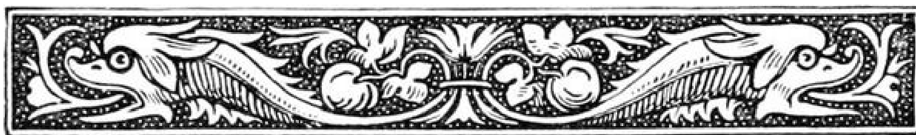
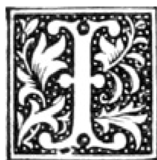
[157]



A NEW LIFE.



IN these latter days of the year, so full of melancholy, it occurs to me that we do not altogether die when we shuffle off this mortal coil. Is not physical death only a change to vegetable birth? We are born, we mature, flourish, and decay, and are laid away in the mould, only to reappear in the flower, the shrub, and the tree. That little child whom you buried when the leaves were falling, as you weep over its grave, in the bright springtime, when the leaves are repeating the miracle of the new creation, may look at you out of the golden petals of the dandelion and the butter-cup. There may be remembrance for you in the leaves of the shrub at the headstone, as they are ruffled by the breeze. There may be the *souvenir* of a familiar smile in the tremor of a daisy.

The generations of men come and go, but their life is not all gone. Life does not cease to exist. It is eternal in its revolutions, its changes, and its new forms. Down under the sod this active principle of life is still at work. Mysterious chemical processes are operating in that silent darkness. The old life shoots up in the grasses. All the lives, and loves, and passions of long ago blossom in the flowers. The life you once knew is giving strength to the sturdy trunks of trees. It [158] flows through the veins of the branches with the sap, and gives color to the leaves. In mythology, the Fauns and Dryads, Naiads and Hamadryads, typified this idea to a certain extent, and were

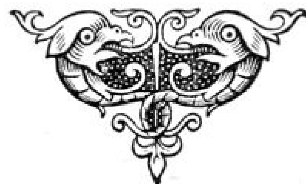
the most beautiful creatures of that beautiful mythology—so beautiful, indeed, that I am heretic enough to acknowledge I would like to have known all those dear divine creatures, so full of good, old-fashioned mortal failings; to have sipped nectar from Hebe's cup, and lunched on ambrosia with the Thunder Bearer himself; to have gone to the opera with Apollo, flirted with the naughty Venus, philosophized with Minerva, taken tea with Juno, and had one roaring old supper with Bacchus.

Thus there are whole races of men in the boundless forests, and friends of yours and mine in the flowers. It seems to me a very pleasant thought to believe that those whom we have loved, and whose lives were so beautiful and graceful, are still growing in the beauty of the flowers, and the grace of the vines; that those whose lives were bad and ungracious, yet exist in the nightshade and hemlock; that those whose lives never blossomed in the shadow of great misfortunes, still live for us in those flowerless plants whose leaves are full of perfume; that Nero is in the Upas, and Marat is in the dogwood.

It is a pleasant fancy to me to think that some friend whom I love will not altogether die, but will live in a rose; that I shall see the red of her cheeks in its petals, and that her grace will continue in its form; that the fragrance of her memory will come to me in the fragrance of its perfume, and that the tears which have stood in her eyes will be forever sacred in the dew drops on its leaves. [159]

There are strong, upright, and sturdy lives, which live again in the firs and pines, which are proof against all storms, and are green when all others are bare and sere; there are far-reaching, all-embracing lives, which live again in the umbrageous oaks; there are lives, which were warped in childhood, which live again in the crooked, gnarled trunks; there are lives full of the gall of bitterness, which never sweeten in the crab and wormwood; there are graceful lives, which curve and undulate in the vines; there are black lives which grow blacker in the poisonous plants, and the birds avoid the vegetable life as the children avoided the human, for birds and children are very much alike; and I think sometimes that the souls of the musicians are still sentient in the murmuring waves of the sea, and in the diapason of the wind-swept pines.

November 14, 1868.



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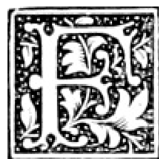
[160]

OLD BLOBBS—HIS SPEECH.



ITZ-HERBERT happened in this morning, and was lounging against the mantel, trying to look interesting. Old Blobbs was very much disgusted with the fellow, and begged to be allowed to have his say. So I yielded the floor to him.

And Old Blobbs' screed ran somewhat as follows: "I think it is every woman's duty to look as pretty as she can, and, so long as she doesn't carry fashion to an extreme and commit the mistake of making herself ridiculous, she is excusable. I don't see any particular necessity in a young man's looking pretty. In fact, it has been my experience that when a young man does try to look pretty, he generally succeeds in making an ass of himself. It should be the duty of every man to do something before he dies of which he may be proud, and which may be of some benefit to the world or to the individual, so that when he gets up to the gates, and St. Peter questions his right to come in, he may have something to show for himself. I think a young man who is merely a walking advertisement for his tailor and barber, and who has degenerated into a fashionable dawdler, is in a poor way to accomplish anything for *himself*, let alone the world. And I furthermore think that if I were St. Peter, and such a specimen came before me, I would lift my [161] blessed angelic foot and send him flying into Chaos, without asking to see his credentials at all. A small, black-backed beetle, pushing his lump of dirt before him, is praising God more with those busy legs of his, fulfilling the duty which God gave him to do, and conferring more benefit upon mankind in general, than an army of fashionable dawdling young men, the energy of whose enormous natures is mainly confined to murdering King's English, and endangering the integrity of looking-glasses. And when this fashionable young man lets his fashion run him into fashionable expenditure, there isn't a fashionable young woman in the city who can keep up with him. If he cannot have his Grecian Bend, he can have his benders, which, if not so Grecian, are vastly more expensive. Dress, dinners, fast horses, betting, gambling, and the elegant vices which follow in their train, are ten thousand fold worse than all the pleasant little sillinesses of which Araminta

may be guilty. The extremely fashionable young woman is pitiable, but she is only trying to make herself look handsome, and that is the object of her life; but the extremely fashionable young man is disgusting, because he has no right to look pretty, and is simply squandering away opportunities he has no right to waste."

Old Blobbs, as is his wont, grew excited as he talked, and, bringing his fist down upon the table with a vim which made the glasses fairly dance in their fright, and sent the condiments of the castor and the contents of the sugar bowl into promiscuous ruin, added: "Yes sir! a man with nothing to do but to entertain himself and exhibit himself to society, is the most contemptible object on God's footstool, and the sooner he gets off from it, and makes room for somebody else, the better." And here he grew slightly personal, and very red as to the face. "Yes sir! You, Mr. Fitz-Herbert, holding up the mantel-piece! You think you are of some importance in the world, and yet I will wager that your direst responsibility to-day will be the parting of your back hair. I will wager that you never had an opinion in your life of more consequence than the relative merits of Macassar and Ursine! I will wager that you are not capable of feeling any distress keener than the anxiety of a doubt relative to the exact condition of your neck-tie. I will wager that Timothy Maloney, scraping dirt on the avenue to-day, although he may get drunk to-night and beat his wife, like the brute that he is, is of more service to the world than you are. That is my opinion of you, Mr. Fitz-what's-your-name, and if an opinion on any conceivable subject can be of any service to you, you are heartily welcome to it, sir. I repeat it, welcome to it, sir." [162]

I think Fitz-Herbert got an idea through his head that Old Blobbs was talking about him, for he actually took his tooth-pick out of his mouth and himself out of the room.

December 5, 1868.

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[163]

DEATH OF THE MAIDEN AUNT.

A LITTLE black-bordered billet reached us yesterday, and a cloud has settled down upon all of us, for it brought the news of the death of the Maiden Aunt.

She died in the night, by the side of the sea, which she always loved, and the last sounds she heard were its waves moaning on the beach, as her own life ebbed away on the strand of death; and, after that, such music as Raphael's St. Cecilia would sing, or the angels who hover around his Madonnas.

She died by the side of the church-yard, in which for thirty years the daisies have bloomed over him, to whom she promised always to be loyal, and for whom she always wore the forget-me-not in the silken floss of her hair, in eternal remembrance. The forget-me-not is now quite withered, for memory has blossomed into realization, and hope is lost in possession, and the snow now covers them side by side here, and, for all that, they are side by side There.

Her life was so hidden from the world, that few knew her except the children and the house-dog, and some birds which were pets, and they mourn her loss. The children miss her, and it is something to be missed by the children, for it shows that however the body may have been tossed about and weather-beaten in the tempest of life, the soul has preserved itself in the repose of childhood. The dog misses her, and goes about the house moaning, and stirs uneasily in his sleep as if dreaming of her, just as Florence Dombey's dog did, in her and his first sorrow. And it is something to be missed by a dog, for it argues a great deal of humanity. The birds miss her, and have ceased their songs; and it is something to be missed by the birds, for no ungracious souls care for them or their songs. [164]

The heavens were mantled with grey, and the air was full of snow, and the black harbor waves moaned on the bar like a knell, when they buried her by the side of him who took away all her sunshine when he died, and left her life in the shadow. She sent some little remembrances to us—a curl of her hair to Aurelia; a bit of blue ribbon, full of memories, to Celeste; a turquoise ring, which he had worn, to Blanche; and the faded forget-me-not to Mignon. For the Maiden Aunt was rich only in memories.

She did not die like a saint, for she was not a saint; neither like a sinner, for she was not a sinner; but like a true woman, full of courage and dignity, contented to cross the River, because she knew she would find him waiting for her on the other side, and wherever he went she would go.

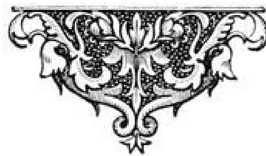
The Maiden Aunt always regarded human nature as something very sacred and sublime, and she regulated herself by that regard. I remember she used to tell me that she believed there was no nature so bad, but that it had a chord which would vibrate to goodness, provided the finger was skilled to find and touch that chord; and that there was no soul so barren, but that somewhere in it a flower was blooming. She did not believe that the divine spark which God implanted in each nature could ever be utterly quenched, however its light might be concealed in life's confusion and chaos. She had faith in His omnipotence. [165]

She had her faults and her frailties, which proved her humanity. She was intensely human. The dead were to her as the living, and he who had gone before her, I think was always with her. He was only absent on a journey, and would send for her when the time came, and she waited in patience. Her knowledge, like the knowledge of the most of us, was bounded by this life; and she used to say that, when her thoughts reached that boundary where knowledge ceased, her thoughts ceased also. Consequently, she gave her work to this life, and her love to him, whom she kept in this life, although absent; and, notwithstanding all her faults and her frailties, I think, in the presence of the great sorrow which had eclipsed her inward being, the angels at the Celestial Gate did not question her—for the faults and the frailties were of the body, and under the snow with his, and never soiled the spirit, which had been sanctified and purified by the grief which she had carried as a burden at her heart. I think the angels recognized her at once, as they recognized the Beatrices who died—the one in glory, the other in agony—or that Irmgard, who found repose on the Heights.

Our lives are twofold. There is the active, every-day life in ourselves, and the life which we live in sleep, and is made up of the tangled web of dreams. One of her lives was in herself, hidden to the outward gaze, and yet manifesting its presence in a thousand graceful ways. The other, which no one ever saw or knew but herself, went even beyond the realm of dreams, and in the place left vacant in her heart, by the absence of that life, there was eternal snow. [166]

What was beautiful a thousand years ago, is beautiful now, and if there were saints a thousand years ago, there must be saints now, although their record may be unchronicled, save in some human heart. I think the Maiden Aunt was as worthy of canonization as Ursula or Agatha, and that in this common, homely human life, there are many worthy of it, whose saintliness will not be known until that day when we are all brought upon a common level. The homeliest humanity is full of contests as fierce as those Tamerlane waged; full of deeds as glorious as those achieved by the gods and demigods we set up for worship. They are never known to the world, for they have no historians or singers to chronicle them, but when they come to be known as they will be one day, we shall be surprised to find that they were the real victors.

December 12, 1868.



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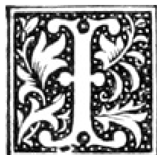
[167]

THE NEW YEAR.



I SUPPOSE this old world will revolve about its axis in 1869, just as it did in 1868, and that we shall revolve with it just the same. I suppose we shall go on loving, hating, praying, cursing, marrying, dying, and doing foolish things in the new, as we did in the old; that Old Midas and Gunnybags will chase the Almighty Dollar just as hard, and swindle just as much; that Mrs. Blobbs will continue to lecture Old Blobbs on the proprieties, and that Old Blobbs will continue to grow worse and worse; that Aurelia will have another baby in the new year just as she did in the old, and will think there never was such a baby born before; that Celeste will continue to do foolish things, and be the most delightfully wicked little creature in the world, for she is just wicked enough to be completely good; that Fitz-Herbert will make an ass of himself next year as he did this; that Mignon will be just as sweet and lovely, and keep all the rest of us in sunshine, and that Blanche will still search for the lost melody in her life.

In general, I suppose, men and women will do in the new year just as they did in the last, and will continue to air their vices in the courts as if they were of any interest to other people who have vices of their own, which are a great deal more interesting, and boasting their virtues, when everybody knows that under the cuticle they are just as shabby as the rest of the world. This is the one grand mistake which people make, viz: To suppose their virtues or their vices are of any [168]

earthly interest to other people.

As a general rule, you are only essential to yourself, and the man who takes off your boots, and puts on your coat, or the young woman who does up your coiffure, and looks after your toilet, and knows you best, will tell you this. Some people succeed in making heroes of themselves, and are worshipped by some other people, but they are never heroes to those who know them best. Strip your hero of his decorations, bid him come down from his pedestal, undress him, and stand him up by the side of Terence Maloney, and you can't tell one from the other.

You see the whole thing is conventional.

So I suppose the sun will rise and set, and the world go on just the same, until suddenly it stops going, for you and for me, and we shall go out of it like gentlemen, I trust.

We shall make the usual number of resolutions, I suppose, on New Year's Day, and break them before the next with our usual success. We shall firmly persuade ourselves next Friday morning that we are hereafter to be models of goodness, and pinks of propriety. We shall appropriate to ourselves the most of virtue and decency in the world, and set examples for the rest of mankind. We shall all be shining instances of temperance and godliness. We shall confine ourselves to a proper use of King's English. We shall attend upon Parson Primrose's ministrations twice each Sunday. We shall no longer ruin the characters of others with our idle, foolish gossip. We shall take off our masks and wear our souls upon our sleeves. And before the year is over, there isn't one of us who will do anything of the kind. Our cemeteries, next New Year's Day, will be just as full of head-stones set up to mark where our broken resolutions *lie*, as they have ever been. [169]

And a hundred years hence, it is extremely doubtful whether any one will care for our resolutions, whether they were kept or broken, or for us, whether we have lived or died. But I suppose, for all that, it will be necessary for us, during the coming year, to conceive that we are of some importance, and that the curious looker-on in Jupiter, and the Man in the Moon, will wonder what we are all doing on our ant-hills, and why we are making such a fuss.

And I suppose when you and I retire from the stage, and the curtain comes down on the little farce we have been playing, that the great audience will not go home, nor the manager close up the theatre, but that other actors will step into our buskins, and thus the play will be kept up, and men will laugh, and women will weep, and others will love and hate, and do brave deeds and naughty deeds, although the call-boy may never summon us again behind the lights.

Now, I might go on from this point and preach you a sermon, as my brethren in the pulpit will do, upon the brevity of time and the stern realities of life, but I am not going to do anything of the kind. Life is not measured by years, nor by flight of time. He lives most who loves most, and lives longest who appreciates what is best. Some men live longer in a year than others in a lifetime. [170]

December 26, 1868.

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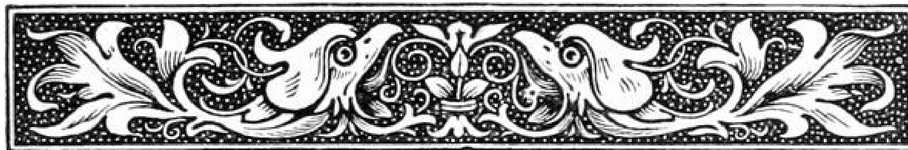
[171]



PUBLIC PARTIES.

AT breakfast, this morning, our first topic of conversation was on the matter of parties. It has been, as you know, a great party week, and Old Blobbs, in a casual kind of way, desired to know my opinion of them. Celeste looked a little uneasy at this request, for there is nothing that so delights that Dear Child as a party crush, and nothing is sweeter to her than the fine disorder of her green silk, after young Gauche has emptied his sherry over it, or old Mrs. Dalrymple, who is *chaperoning* her two nieces to the marital market, has spilled a plate of escalloped oysters upon it, and that overgrown boy of the Midases, who is out for the first time, has trodden them in and disturbed the integrity of the *panier* besides. She regards all these things as the veteran does his scars, and loves to talk of them in her "confidences" to her two-and-forty dear young friends, who have just bobbed in after dinner to say "How do you do?" and inquire if it was really true, that bit of scandal about Matilda So-and-So and young Codliver. The company immediately pushed their chairs back. Mignon called the Canary from his cage for its morning meal, and as it flew to its customary place upon her shoulder, and watched with its sharp little black eyes the bread which was being crumbled for it, I thought I would rather talk about those two birds than parties. [172]

Blanche sat with her fine eyes half closed, as dear old Rossini used to sit at his table, and listened in a dreamy sort of way. Aurelia had all she could do to keep the baby still by threatening it with her shapely fore-finger, while Old Blobbs took his fifth baked potato, a feat in gormandizing which incurred a glance from Mrs. Blobbs that would have withered any other person and caused a rustle of her black silk (for Mrs. B. *will* wear her black silk to breakfast), eloquent with promises of something between the curtains which would not be as soothing as a lullaby nor as delicious as a love-song.

And I spoke somewhat after the following manner: Some time ago I did myself the pleasure to give you my opinion of fashionable public weddings. Upon that occasion, you will remember that my principal objection to those weddings, was the fact that people mistake vulgarity for elegance. The same fatal mistake applies to public parties, as they are usually given; where genuine elegance becomes impossible, and there are no opportunities offered for the display of taste.

You all well know that party giving, at present, is a mere competition. Mrs. So-and-So issues her cards for two hundred. Mrs. This-and-That immediately sends out three hundred, and Mrs. Whether-or-No, at her party, increases her list to five hundred, and so on. Now, I have no hesitation in pronouncing this simple vulgarity. You cannot make miscellaneous herding elegant. In the first place the social element is killed. To claim that you have five hundred friends is simply stupid. To claim that you have fifty is susceptible of doubt. If you have five, you are much better off. Your five hundred people are, then, merely acquaintances. In the race to get ahead of some one else, you have invited scores of people you don't care a straw for, scores of others who don't care a straw for you, scores of boobies and simpletons, and when you have herded and packed them together, in a house not capable of holding one-fourth that number comfortably, you have simply made a vulgar crush, where no one knows his neighbor, and where mutual acquaintance is impossible, because, however peripatetic you may be in principle, you are stationary in fact. To make such an affair elegant, is in the nature of things impossible. Mere show, noise, glitter, gilt, gingerbread, and gew-gaw, are not elegance. Taste cannot be exercised among, nor appreciated by a genteel mob. In forms of art, in matters of taste and true elegance, there must be the element of repose. It is indispensable to perfection. A gathering of people without any conditions of age, character, or quality, literally packed into a space so small, that locomotion becomes impossible; a table which your restaurateur can't make a success, owing to this fact; an intellectual atmosphere, surcharged only with the small gossip and twaddle of the hour; an utter absence of culture, which alone could impart the repose of true elegance; a meretricious display of glitter, and no true gold; a feasting which is only gormandizing—for in such a miscellaneous gathering you cannot keep out the gluttons; an absence of all true courtesy, because it is impossible to exercise it in the crush; an occasion which does not offer a single inducement for attendance, in the way of art, music, literature, or the best forms of social intercourse—is all that you have accomplished. [173]

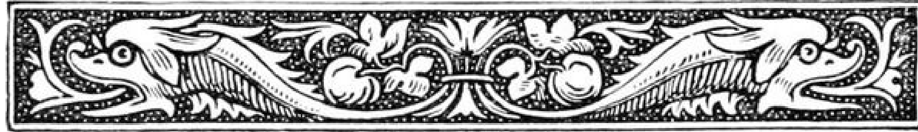
Was it worth accomplishing? You know it was not, my dear madame, as well as I. You know that when you wake up the next morning, you are utterly disgusted with the whole affair, and that there is not a single element of gratification in remembering it, except the empty honor of beating Mrs. So-and-So. You know that nine-tenths of those who were present did not enjoy a single minute of comfort, and look back upon your party as a bore, while the happy ones are those whose regrets lie upon your table. [174]

And all this, simply because it was vulgar—not vulgar as meaning immoral or low, but as meaning silly and common. You have made your house too common. No party can be a success, in the best sense of the word, in which there is not some discrimination used in inviting your guests. You should always arrange, if possible, to bring people together of similar tastes, and then have some central point to hold them together. If you *must* invite five hundred people, you had better make five parties of one hundred each, carefully discriminating, so that your guests may enjoy themselves, than to herd the whole five hundred into one, and thus make a mere rush, scramble, crush and guzzle of it, and transform your house into a menagerie. I am glad to know that this view is not confined to myself, but that in good society, (not the "best" society, for that is almost always the worst), the home parties are included in small soirees of a distinctive character, in which there is ample room for the display of cultivated and artistic elegance, admission to which is deemed an honor.

But do not forget above all, that when a thing becomes miscellaneous, it becomes vulgar, and that judicious exclusiveness and cultured repose are absolutely essential to true elegance. The most delicate rose in the garden planted among hollyhocks, and sunflowers, and weeds, loses all its beauty and fragrance. [175]

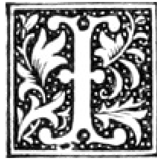
Old Blobbs had finished his potato, and was far advanced upon his sixth, when I concluded. He heartily agreed with me, although Celeste was pouting her pretty lips, and said that he desired to make a few remarks also, whereupon Mignon commenced teasing the Canary with a geranium leaf from our breakfast bouquet, and Mrs. Blobbs suddenly excused herself, which did not, however, deter Blobbs from saying his say.

January 10, 1869.



[176]

AURELIA'S BABY.



IT is necessary I should say something about Aurelia's Baby, for it is the only baby in the whole world. At least Aurelia thinks so—just as any other mother thinks.

I suppose there never was a baby born into this vale of tears, that its mother did not suppose to be the only baby in the world. I suppose those poor women who were the mothers of Nero, Richard, Elizabeth, Robespierre, Marat, and the latest murderer who has expiated his villainies on the gallows-tree, thought the same thing, equally with the mothers of all good and blessed people. I see no good reason why they should not, for the birth of the first baby revolutionizes the world. The mother passes into a new sphere of being, illumined by other suns and stars, in which other flowers blossom and other birds sing, and the only inhabitants of which are she and the baby. All her great love centres in the baby, and where all her love centres, of course, there is her world. The whole world of the baby is limited by the boundaries of its mother's eyes. You may have noticed a baby lying in its nurse's arms, looking up into the sky with wide-staring, vacant eyes and blank face. It has no more intelligence in its face than a small kitten or any other sucking possibility. In the arms of a nurse, all babies are alike—merely breathing bits of blank vacancy—apple-dumplings, with plums for eyes, and stuffed with [177] colic. But, change the scene, and place the baby in the arms of its mother, and, somehow, by some strange necromancy that passes between the two, some subtle link of affinity, that baby's face lights up with intelligence and its little white soul looks out of the eyes as it recognizes its world in the calm, holy eyes of the mother; for I think every mother's eyes, from Aurelia's to some wild Indian mother's, crooning strange weird lullabies under tropic palms, to her first born, are saintly when they gaze into the sweet face of the first baby. And I believe that the angels do not know such a love as exists between those two mortals.

Which reminds me to say that I think Eve's baby, which she named Cain, had the advantage of Aurelia's baby in some respects. The chronicles of that day do not show that the baby Cain was obliged to take soothing syrup, squills, or paregoric. There is no proof that the angels smiled at him or talked to him in his sleep, as they do to modern babies through the medium of colic. Cain could wander about at his own sweet will, without any danger of catching the whooping cough, measles, chicken-pox or any other of the contagious infantile necessities which have been imposed upon all coming babies by his mother's exploits in stealing and eating apples. Adam did not have to walk the floor o' nights, have his whiskers pulled out by the roots, or buy rattles and india-rubber rings. There isn't a line on record to show that the infantile Cain suffered from pins sticking into his blessed little legs and arms. I do not suppose that the old ladies of the neighborhood came in every day or so, and scared Eve's life out of her, by conjuring up all sorts [178] of diseases, with all sorts of remedies and cheerful predictions that Cain would die young, although I think it would have been better for Cain if he had. Holy Writ does not show, again, that Cain was entrusted in his marsupial days, to the care of that curious compound of a gin bottle and a baby-tender, who has a profound contempt for the mother, knows more than all the rest of the world combined, and looks upon a physician as a foe to the human race. I do not suppose Cain was kissed within an inch of his life by prospective young mothers and youthful females, who have graduated from the doll stage of their existence, nor that he was rigged up in bib, pinafore, and ribbon, until he was purple in the face, with the point of one very sharp pin inserted into the end of his back, and placed on exhibition in a state of squalls and general disgust consequent upon the aforesaid point, which he could feel, if he couldn't see. The youthful Cain was not made the victim of the maternal meetings, and crammed with Watts' hymns, and chapters of the Bible before he was into his fig-leaf breeches—and right here, I suppose somebody will say he would have turned out better if he had been brought up in this manner, to which I might retort with the fact that Abel was not subjected to the cramming process either. Cain never bumped his precious little head by falling out of his crib. He could not fall out of the cradle of the beautiful white arms of the first mother, which encircled him with their zone of love, and which, I warrant you, yearned for him even when he wandered through the earth, with the brand upon his brow, and the stain upon his heart, and our common mother mourned in the [179] depths of a triple agony. And it is to be recorded as one of the incidents of his early days, that Eve was a healthy woman, and he was not brought up on chalk and water, and did not ruin his small stomach with candy and sweetmeats, presented by injudicious, but kindly disposed people, whose generosity was only equalled by their stupidity.

I am getting away from Aurelia's baby somewhat, but there are still some analogies between Aurelia and Eve untouched upon, and, as I am writing this screed I will be obliged to you if you do not interrupt me again, but leave me to say my say in my own manner. I candidly confess to you that I don't know where this baby business will take me, or when I shall get through talking about it, but just at present I prefer to let the subject take me along at will. I had rather trust myself to babies, than some grown people who insist upon interruption.

After this necessary parenthetical defence of my rights, I may say that although the youthful Cain turned out very badly, I do not suppose that Eve—as she sat under the pleasant trees of Eden, and watched the little Cain playing in the flowers, while all the birds, as yet unharmed by man, came and sang to her—ever thought her first-born would be a murderer, or ever saw anything in his face, as he lay upon her bosom, but love and joy. For the good God never made anything ugly or bad. All that comes from his hand is perfect and beautiful. No human being, do I sincerely believe, is born absolutely ugly. The ugly man has made himself ugly. The ugly woman is at fault herself.

[180] And as Aurelia sits looking into the eyes of her baby, I do not think she ever dreams of what may be in store for it in the coming days. Her whole world is in the present. But as I watch them, smoking my cigar, I cannot help seeing visions in the smoke, and I sometimes shudder as I think that the sweet blue eyes may lose all their light of beauty, and purity, and innocence, and burn with the fierce flame of passion, or be dimmed with the mists of misery, or darkened with the night of anguish through which she may have to pass; that the little soft pink-and-white feet may have to travel and bleed on the flinty roads to which they are all unused, and that, weary and travel-worn, soiled and dusty, they may find no resting place this side of Heaven, save in the long rest under the flowers; that the tiny hands which now grasp at the world, as if they would clutch it all in the little fists, may full soon fold themselves, tired with the conflict, may grasp another only to be deceived, only to wither and waste away, only to be crossed above a cold, silent heart, with a flower in their marble fingers, may know cruel grasps of parting, and heart-ache, may do the deed which shall dishonor the sweet mother-hand which must too soon cease to guide, and must let go the hold which it would fain keep forever.

And in all the great joy in her eyes, I see no traces of a shadow which may come into the house; no fear that some day the sun will not shine for her, and the stars be darkened in the cruel heavens; that the baby which but yesterday filled all the home with the light of her eyes and the silvery music of her voice, will be lying cold and still in the chamber overhead; that the little waxen face moulded into a moment's unearthly beauty, by that cunning sculptor, Death, will [181] cease to respond to her; that the white and green of the cross and the crown, and the half opened rose-bud, no whiter than the fingers holding it, will be the only souvenirs of her whom the jealous angels carried away in the night watches, because she was fairer than they. I think sometimes of these things as I sit watching them, but I know that she does not, and I pray Heaven to avert the cruel blow, and that the mother may be waiting for the child at the Gate Beautiful, and not the child waiting for the mother; and that all the good angels may watch over them, and shield them both, however deep the waters through which they may pass.

I think that Aurelia's face has suffered "a sea-change" since the little one was born; that it has been transfigured into something more beautiful—a serenity, and holy calm, which is not altogether beauty, but a rapt and saintly expression, such as you may see in the Madonna della Sedia of Raphael. I think you will often see it in young mothers at certain times. All that was there before imprinted by the wear and friction of life, with its petty annoyances, vexations and passions, all the weariness and *ennui*, all the storms and conflicts, seem to have passed away, and in their stead has settled down a placid, gentle, saintly expression, just as after the noise and bustle, the smoke and dust, the jangle and jar of the day, come the brooding wings of the twilight, the holy hush of evening, and the silence of the stars.

January 17, 1869.

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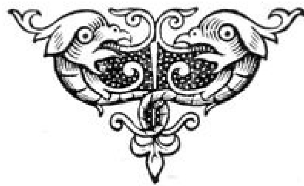
[182]

THE QUARREL.

OLD Blobbs, who always takes a fiendish delight in chaffing Fitz-Herbert, immediately proceeded to enlighten him, by declaring it was nothing of the sort. "I suppose, my young friend, that Lambele had the same right to get married as Mrs. Blobbs had, and would give the same reason. I suppose, if you live long enough, sir, you will find some foolish young woman who will want to marry *you*, although I think you will be quite old by that time. Mrs. Blobbs and I have lived together a great many years. With all due deference to Mrs. Blobbs, we have had a good many clouds in our sky, and some storms. It is not for me to say who has caused these storms, nor to insinuate that it is not

altogether necessary for us to have had clouds in our sky. Perhaps, if the sun shone all the time, we should not appreciate each other as we do. At the same time, Mrs. B. will join me in saying that it is a blessed thing to be married. Why, sir, look at J. Grau, who has been sitting under the willows of Babylon, playing the harp all his life, in single blessedness, and is going to marry a young New York lady, of charming beauty and great expectations. Now, you may ask why J. Grau, who has always been wedded to art (when it paid), wants to marry? It will make a man of J. Grau, sir—make a man of him. It makes a man of any one. A man without a wife is a boat without oars. It will drift without purpose, and finally go to pieces. He is a jug without a handle—a bow without an arrow. It would make a man of *you*, sir, although it might take more than one woman to do it. Your prospects for an early attainment of that desideratum would be better under the wings of Brigham Young, albeit the 'heft' of the labor would come upon your marital female fractional parts. Any further information you desire, you can obtain from Mrs. Blobbs, if you apply between the hours of two and three, when she is invariably at peace with me and all the rest of the world." Whereupon Fitz-Herbert smoothed his back hair and looked at himself in the mirror opposite, and Mrs. Blobbs' black silk began to rustle, when Mignon prevented an outbreak between Jupiter and Juno by declaring it was a shame to have the pleasure of the breakfast-table marred with any differences. The Canary stopped singing when Mignon spoke, ashamed of his music, and as the Dear Creature arose and kissed the frown out of Mrs. B.'s face, and smoothed down Old Blobbs' iron-gray locks, she said: "We must have no naughty words, my dear Blobbs, in this golden sunlight and under these blue heavens. Let us thank the good God who sent us gifts of days like these in the new year, and who tempers the winter winds in blessings to the firesides of the poor, and not mar their perfect beauty with our little differences." And she took Blobbs' hard, horny hand, and Mrs. B.'s thin and withered hand in her own little white hands, and, placing them together, said: "We will have no more quarrels, my dears, and, under clear and cloudy skies—in bright or stormy weather—when roses are blooming and roses are dying—when the birds build among the leaves, and when no birds fly under the gray heavens—we will go hand in hand and heart to heart, for life is too short for us to quarrel in. The sun is low down in the west, and our shadows grow longer. We have but a little way to go down the hill, and one of us must leave the other before we get to the foot of it. We will, therefore, forget all about the rough journeys up the hill, and make the rest of our way lighter and brighter, in remembrance of that day, so long ago, when we placed our hands together thus, and promised so to do." And there were tears in Mrs. Blobbs' face, and Old Blobbs' face lighted up with an expression none of us had ever seen it wear before. As the old couple sat for some time, hand in hand, and neither of them spoke, we knew that the trumpets were singing truce, and that the battle was over.

January 23, 1869.



A WOMAN NOT OF THE PERIOD.

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UT thus formally embracing the Woman of the Period, I cannot altogether suppress memories, and among them will come memories not of the period; a woman who believes that God Almighty did not intend to unsex her; a woman who believes that as soon as her dependence upon man ceases, she loses all her loveliness; a woman whose home is a perennial spring, from which flow the purest of pleasures; a woman who sends out her boys and girls into the world, clothed with her own graces of humility, and beauty, and goodliness, whereby they may crown her old age with blessing; a woman who is queen at her own fireside, and rules her own household with the sceptre of love; a woman who governs because she serves; a woman whose influence radiates far and wide from the home circle, as light and heat radiate from the sun; a woman upon whose breast you first opened your eyes to the light of day, and a woman upon whose breast you would fain lie when you close your eyes forever to the light, and prepare to go through the darkness alone; a woman to whom invisible forces are ever drawing you, under all suns, in all times, and in all wanderings, be they never so far; a woman, the perfume of whose prayers always follows you, in good or evil report; a woman who always clings to you, even to the depths of degradation; a woman whose great love is superior to all the accidents of time; a woman whose still, small voice,

warning finger, and pleading eyes, are ever present with you when overwhelmed with sore temptations; a woman whose price is above rubies, who worketh willingly with her hands, who giveth meat to her household, who stretcheth her hands to the poor, whose husband is known in the gates, when *he*, (not she), sitteth among the elders of the land; who openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in whose tongue is the law of kindness; who looketh well to the ways of her household, and whose children and her husband also arise up and call her blessed; a woman to whom you look up, and whom you worship, though no halo, except that of love, sheds its light upon her sweet face; a woman whose life is too holy to be debased with politics, too industrious to be wasted on empty babble, too lofty and too noble to be dragged down to the level of man; a woman, best of all women—your mother and my mother.

February 13, 1869.

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[187]

A TRIP TO HEAVEN.

IT was in a dream, and, I think, the *Andante* of the fifth symphony had something to do with it. In any event I left this Earth very suddenly on a trip among the stars. After I had risen a short distance, I looked down upon the Earth, and was astonished to find what a small and insignificant place it was, after all. Quite a number of people whom I might mention, who make a great parade and show, and who strut up and down the green footstool, like Sir Oracles, actually looked to me like ants, running about on an ant hill, and they didn't appear at my height to any better advantage than those who were more humble and retired. Several loud, blatant fellows, and several women gifted with Gab, strange to say, I couldn't hear at all. In fact, I couldn't discover that there was anything at all of much consequence in this world, to a man half a mile up in the air. When I arrived at the Moon, I stopped to rest, and had a talk with the Man in it, who laid down his bundle of sticks and was very affable. Much to my surprise, when I looked after the Earth I couldn't find it, and inquiry of the Man did not help me any, as he had never known such a place, except from hearsay. He pointed out several millions of stars in an obscure and remote part of [188] the heavens, which were dimly visible, and intimated that the Earth might be among them, but, as it was of so little consequence he never troubled himself about it. When I told him, however, how the lovers of Earth worshipped his planet, he seemed pleased, and expressed his gratification that there was so much moonshine in love. I gave him the latest intelligence of the doings of the Sorosis, in which he manifested considerable interest, there being, as he told me, no women in the Moon. I noticed that the place was exceedingly quiet.

After guiding me upon my way to Heaven, he picked up his bundle of sticks and resumed his journey, and I set off on another flight. I passed Jupiter, who was still up to his scandalous tricks, which, of old, brought Antiope, Leda, Europa, and others, into the divorce courts; passed Mars, who was just putting on his helmet and preparing to thresh a small planet in a distant galaxy; passed Venus, to whom I touched my hat and hurried on, as she was just then engaged in a *tete-a-tete* with Adonis; passed the Pleiades, all of whom still wear mourning for their lost sister, who, they informed me, ran away several thousand years ago, with a pretty little comet with a tail like a peacock's; passed Ursa Major, who growled somewhat, but finally gave me a drink from his Dipper; passed the North Star, the only steady and well-behaved star in the heavens. After leaving the Cynosure, my course led me into the Milky Way, a wretched place, which, to my astonishment, I found full of milkmen, who, on earth, have been accustomed to sell chalk and water. One of these unfortunate shades, who used to have an Elgin dairy on the Archer road, [189] informed me, with tears in his ghostly eyes, that the Milky Way was reserved for the milkmen of Earth, who have proclivities for pumps, and that they are doomed to be chased through all eternity by stump-tailed cows. He begged me, when I returned to earth, to warn his relatives and all others in the business. I promised to do so, and, when I left the Milky Way, he was making the grand round, with a whole herd of stump-tails, who used to live on the North Branch, after him.

After leaving the Milky Way, I reached the boundary of our system of planets, and dodging innumerable meteors and comets which were flying about in the most eccentric manner, and narrowly escaping destruction by the explosion of a planet, many times larger than the Earth, which burst into millions of atoms with a roar which seemed to shake the whole empyrean, and went floating off into space like a piece of burned tinder, passed into another system of stars and planets, all revolving round their central sun. The earthly system was soon lost to view. I passed

from planet to planet, from galaxy to galaxy, floated in azure fields full of gorgeous nebulæ, or rode on undulating billows of air, between comets of lustrous sheen, and moons and suns, whose orbits interlaced, in sheens of glowing, rosy light. Out of this system into still another, and the last faded from sight again, and so on till I reached a great calm sea of golden light in which there were no suns nor no moons. I had passed the confines of all worlds, and they had all disappeared. Above, below, and all around was only this serene, golden atmosphere, unflecked by a single spot, undotted by a single island. It was the vast, open sea of Immortality, which never began, and shall never end. In that sea there was no limit to vision. In that sea all things became [190] clear. Time dwindled to a speck, and Death was only an incident. Life was incomprehensible in this sea, but it seemed to me with my new vision that I had lived many lives before this one, and that I saw the shadows and indistinct forms of others yet to be lived. As I floated on, I suddenly rose out of the gold into a crystal atmosphere, which was no longer the solitude of the sea, but was peopled with beautiful forms which flew slowly past me with wondering eyes, and one or two there were, who gazed at me with an old familiar look I somehow seemed to remember in that Earth, millions of miles below me, but no sound came from their lips, and thus I questioned them in vain. As I rose higher, this crystal atmosphere was crowded with lustrous forms, and suddenly, in a blaze of almost blinding brightness, I found myself at the great gate of pearl, with St. Peter keeping watch and ward, the keys in his hands, as the old masters loved to paint him. He very courteously denied me admission, as I was only in a dream, and had not yet passed to that sleep which knows no dreams; but he allowed me to stand at the gate.

And as I stood there, several disembodied individuals who had formerly lived on Earth, applied for admission. Upon each application, St. Peter inquired in a loud voice within, if there was any objection. The first who came was a cartman. The usual inquiry was made, and as the cartman was about to enter, his horse, whom he had beaten and killed with cruelty, and whose sufferings had reached the throne of the infinite God, confronted him, and gazed at him with those eyes [191] which had appealed to him for mercy in life, until he fled in dismay into the outer abyss. Another came, and a little bird, whom he had wantonly shot on Earth, to whom God had given life not without purpose, flew from a lotus plant to the gate, and confronted him. He, too, asked no questions and turned away. Another came, and, as he was about to enter, a pallid form with a gory wound on his forehead, suddenly appeared before him, and the now revealed murderer fled, shrieking, away from the gate. The next who came was a purse-proud individual, who had on Earth ground down his female employees, and paid them only the scantiest pittance, and as he was about to enter, a woman in rags, with pinched, wan features, who had died of neglect and starvation, met him and prevented his entrance. I could not begin to enumerate all who came to that gate and went away. One man's entrance was prevented by a butterfly, whom he, cruelly and in wanton sport, had torn to pieces to gratify his malicious idleness. Each one that had perpetrated a needless wrong, met that wrong at the gate, and it stood in his way. And I inquired of St. Peter if that was the universal law in Heaven, and he said to me: "The law of Heaven is love. The law of kindness is the law of love, and he loves the great God best who loves everything He has made—the beast of the field, the bird of the air, and the fish of the sea; and Heaven loves him best who loves all His works on the Earth, from the tiniest insect to his brother Man."

St. Peter ceased, for just then Beethoven and Mozart and Mendelssohn and Bach commenced to play a new quartette, which they had just composed together, and so sweet was that music that [192] all the angels came flocking to hear it. Dante stood by listening, with Beatrice, for he no longer looked up to her in the shining heights, but beheld his "most gentle lady" face to face. Irma, who found repose on the Heights, and the other Beatrice, now kindred spirits, were there. Petrarch and Laura, and Abelard and Heloise, freed from all earthly taints, reclined upon a flowery bank and listened, and many others, whom I have not time to enumerate, who did great deeds upon Earth, and suffered great sorrows, and yet were nameless heroes there, found their great reward in these delights. As the music ceased and I was about to turn away, there was a little form which flew towards me and looked at me with unutterable love in her eyes, and stretched out her little white hands to me, and I recognized the eyes as those I had seen on Earth and the hands as those which I had seen crossed over a rose-bud no whiter than they, and the form as one we had laid away, when all the birds were singing and all the flowers were in bloom, in the populous Acre of God. And I would fain have gone to her, but as I sprang forward, she vanished slowly into the distance, still looking at me with the loving eyes, still stretching out the white hands, and, like a strain of beautiful music wafted over water in the night-watches, came the words to me, "Not yet." And the heavens vanished and I awoke upon the dim spot which men call Earth.

February 20, 1869.

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[193]

DAY DREAMS.

UR talk at the breakfast table yesterday morning, was discursive to a degree which would have distracted Anna Dickinson. We had no hobbies to ride, and we rattled on about this, that, and the other, Mignon's Canary singing at the top of his little lungs, and Aurelia's baby adding to the general confusion by the most desperate protests, in an unknown tongue, against a pin, which was sticking into his blessed little back. We were all very happy, and not even Mrs. Blobbs complained of any invasion of her rights. Old Blobbs, his face beaming with delight, was undressing his third baked potato, and asked, in a careless, and slightly sarcastic way, "Well, what have you been day-dreaming about lately?"

And I replied: "You should not speak so lightly of day dreams, for *you* are a day-dreamer."

Blobbs looked up in surprise, and Mrs. Blobbs stopped stirring her coffee to gravely shake her head. "Yes, my dear Blobbs," said I, "you are a dreamer. We are all dreamers. Life is all a dream, and we shall not cease dreaming until we fall into the dreamless sleep, when all that is now dark will become bright, and the Sphynx will no longer torment us with the enigma of its stony lips [194] and staring eyes. It is useless for you to deny that you have any sentiment in your nature. You may try to cover it up with discounts, invoices, bills of lading and mortgages. You may mingle with men upon 'Change, and wear a hard, practical face. You may talk in the conventional *patois* of life, and try to convince those around you that you are a mill-stone, busily engaged in crushing sentiment, but you cannot cheat yourself. You are a living lie. You are too proud to acknowledge there is any poetry in your heart. But it is there, nevertheless, and when you least expect it, some strain of music, some song of a bird, some perfume of a flower, some thought in a book will bring it out. Deep down in the heart of man it rests. It may be a thought, it may be a principle, it may be only a remembrance, but it is there in some shape. You may conceal it from your fellows, but when you are with yourself, you dare not deny it. You may forget it in the rush and din of trade, and the wheels of Mammon may drown its still, small voice, but there must be times when you retire within yourself and forget the practical; and, in those moments, when there is no one near you, those moments which make a man of you, you think of what has been, and what might have been. Dare you deny that you have a little memento laid away—some long faded flower, some bit of ribbon, some little trinket—which is full of precious remembrances? Dare you deny that I found you the other day with a tear in your eye, as you stood looking at a wreath of faded white and green, which once rested upon the breast of a little sleeper, who came among us, and stayed but for a day, because they had need of her in Heaven? It was not your child. What was that dead [195] wreath to you? The angels did not rob you. It was simply, my dear Blobbs, a link between the seen and the unseen. It tied Heaven and earth together. It suggested to you what might have been. It made you think of little eyes, you long had waited for, which never looked into yours; of little feet, you long had waited for, which never made music in your house. It rekindled the ashes of a dead longing, and you dare not deny that you thought with unutterable pain, it were better to have possessed and lost, than never to have possessed at all. It was your better nature, which you strive so hard to suppress, coming to the surface."

And Mignon said: "All of us have this sentiment in our composition, although the most of us are too proud to acknowledge it. I have been in the woods in March, when the ground was covered with snow. I have carefully pulled up the matted layers of dead leaves, and underneath all this debris was the arbutus, with its glossy, green leaves, and its pink and white petals, as full of beauty and delicious fragrance as if it had never been buried under the corruption of a dead year—as if it had never been hidden from the air and the sun. So in every heart, down under the snows of life, down under the dead, matted leaves of care, passion, sin, and shame, are growing flowers of sentiment. You will do well to uncover them now and then, for they will give beauty and perfume to your whole nature, and make you a better man or woman. And God grant, that when you clear away the debris, you do not find a grave of dead hopes."

March 14, 1869.

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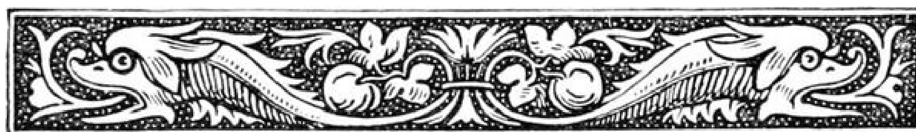
[196]



LENT AND CHILDREN.

HEW!

Which is meant to express a sigh of relief that Lent is over.

Isn't it nice?

This saving one's soul on fish when fish commands a premium, is expensive and monotonous.

Welcome the hens. Exit white-fish, enter eggs.

Whew!

Would that we lived in the grand old days when the sun danced in the sky on Easter morning; when the children played the pretty games with colored eggs; when the Aldermen went out on Easter morn for a little municipal game of ball; when it would have been my privilege to parade the streets and claim the privilege of lifting every woman three times from the ground, receiving as payment a kiss or a silver shilling, the women having the same privilege on the next day, in order to make things even.

Wouldn't it be nice? That is, if one didn't meet Parepa and undertake that little job.

When the men and women threw apples into the churchyard, and those who had been married during the year threw three times as many as the rest. It strikes me, however, that if this rule had been reversed, and those who had been divorced during the year were obliged to throw three times as many apples as the rest, the Chicago church-wardens would fare better. [197]

And then to go to the minister's and feast on bread, cheese and ale, on bacon and tansy pudding.

As it is, the only relief one has now is the blessed feeling that he can go to sinning again. It is too much for any constitution to be strictly pious for six weeks, and live on beans and fish. Neither the moral nor the physical diet agrees with me. A little sin now will be an excellent tonic.

And it will agree with you, Celeste, also. You didn't look well sitting in black, picking fish bones. I knew all the time you were thinking of the flesh pots. It is useless for you to try to convince me that you have been an angel for the past six weeks. It won't do. There is not the slightest sign of a pin feather, even, on your pretty white shoulders. You are essentially human. I know that, eating your lentils, you sighed for the salads, and filets, and Burgundy. I know that, in your suit of serge, your eyes were prospectively fixed upon the new spring hat and all the pretty petals which would unfold about you on Easter, and turn you into a lily, to blossom to-morrow, in accordance with the provisions of the Council of Nice.

Isn't it nice?

When you kept saying to yourself, all through Lent, that you were a poor, weak, miserable creature, and that there was nothing but vanity in the world, I know you excepted that delightful fellow in black hair, with a divine moustache and taper fingers, who looked unutterably pretty things at you over the top of his prayer-book, divided his responses between you and Parson Primrose, and wore a diamond ring on his third finger, which he managed, somehow, to keep directly in the light which streamed through St. John on the stained window. [198]

You are now absolved, my dear Celeste. Go in and sin just a little, and prove your humanity. You are not made to be an angel, but "a little lower than the angels," you know. Undrape your pretty rounded shoulders. Pile up your chignon. Put on those darling white slippers, which leave footsteps almost as small as those of the robins in the early spring. No more cypress and rue on your corsage, but the wicked camelia, and the flaunting azalia. Set your slow monastic march to a quicker *tempo* and, *voila*, the German. Sound fiddles and blow trombones, for Capuchin is now Columbine, and the gilded doors of Fashion swing quickly open for the maskers to enter. It is a merry procession. Sly glances flash through the masks, and there are rounded outlines in the dominoes. Bells tinkle on the gay robes. Who is who? What matters it, so you keep the masks on? Of course, the black mask, now and then, will enter and beckon to one or the other of us to come out with him to the anteroom and take off our masks, preparatory to a long journey with him.

Heigh ho! We shall never come back to the gay scene; but the revel will go on just the same as if you and I had never been in the set. The fiddles will only play a little more *forte*, just loud enough to drown the dirge outside, and we shall go into the dreamless sleep, and grope our way through the shadowy land to the light beyond. Pray God, we all lay ourselves down like true ladies and gentlemen, and that the bugles sing peace over us with all the world. [199]

Which reminds me to say, that in looking over the advertising columns, a few mornings since, I observed a card published by some party who desired boarders—"a gentleman and lady without encumbrances."

Of course the "encumbrances" are children. I protest against the application of the term. If there be anything in the world which can make stale bread and hash palatable, it is a child. If there be anything which can bring a ray of sunshine into the dreary, gloomy desert of a boarding house, it is a child.

I am bound to protest against this opposition to children, which is growing fiercer every day. Occasionally you will find a family with soul enough in its collective breast to admit a party with one child, with a mental reservation that they are entitled to a crown of glory for so doing. But what are those fond parents, whose nest is full of these lively and demonstrative pledges of

conjugal affection, to do? A house which has not a little blue and gold edition of humanity, fluttering through its rooms, dancing, singing, and crowing, as full of love as an egg is of meat, whose sky is all sunshine, or at most overcast by the thinnest of April clouds, sounding a jubilant peal of ecstasy in the morning, and making the coming night doubly holy and beautiful with its little prayer at evening, must be a very lonely house. A house which has not a little crib in the nursery; a mutilated battalion of dolls, minus legs, arms, and heads, looking for all the world as though they had just come from some Lilliputian battle; marvelous books, reciting the exploits of the matronly Goose, the good fortune of Cinderella, and the bad fortune of Polly Flinders, [200] scattered about in every room, *sans* covers, and tattered and torn; little blue and red shoes and striped stockings in the drawers; little fingerprints about the door-knobs and marks of juvenile industry everywhere, such as combs in the coal scuttle, carving knives in the molasses jug, tea spoons in the stoves, a family bible illustrated with pencil marks, intended by the youthful Raphael to be letters to some distant aunt, or *chefs d'œuvres* in natural history, sugar deftly mixed with the salt, Eau de Cologne in the slop jar, and your favorite arm chair harnessed with strings, and mustered into service as a horse-car—such a home must be as cheerful as the cell of a recluse.

The house which has not seen the day change into night, and all the blessed sun-light extinguished; which has not heard the music of childhood suddenly cease; which listens in vain for the little footfalls pattering from room to room; out from the doors of which a little coffin went one day, leaving a great blank, carrying with the little sleeper almost all our love, and hope, and faith; the house which is not connected more closely with Heaven by that little billow of turf which will soon be starred all over with daisies—such a house must be very dreary. Children, encumbrances! Bah! The man or woman who wrote that card—it could not have been a woman—will never be troubled with heart disease.

In the name, and for the sake of the children, I protest against this outrage upon these little people, whose mission it is to elevate, refine, and humanize us; into whose pure, innocent faces one can look with so much relief, after a day of intercourse with the rough, hard faces of the [201] world; who are the only reminders that there ever was an Eden, and who make Heaven possible on earth.

I wouldn't trust a man with a torn five cent shin-plaster who didn't love a child. It is impossible for a woman not to love a child. There never was a woman so depraved, or so unwomanly, but that a little child could find a good spot in her heart.

And I not only protest against this term of "encumbrance," but I protest against the manner in which children are treated. The other day, I observed an elegantly dressed little child paddling along on the wet, muddy sidewalk, with the thinnest of blue paper shoes. Every step the little one took, must, inevitably, have dampened her feet. A foolish woman was walking by her side quite comfortably shod.

I don't know that that foolish woman knew what she was doing, but I will tell her. In allowing your child to go out with those shoes, you were sowing the seeds of disease, which will either kill her before she leaves childhood, or send her into womanhood wrecked for life, and finally to die of consumption. If your child dies before leaving childhood, you will undoubtedly mourn as sincerely as did Rachel, and your good minister will come to comfort you. He will assure you that "the Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away." He will tell you that whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth. He will also caution you against repining at an affliction wisely ordered by Divine Providence.

[202] All this may do as a salve for your sorrow; but it isn't true. The Lord didn't take away your child. You yourself sent her away. This affliction was not ordered by Divine Providence. It was an affliction solely of your own preparation and consummation. No one else in the wide world is responsible for your child's death, and, but for you, she might have been living now. It may be very pleasant for you to cast the responsibility upon Divine Providence, but it isn't fair.

We are all of us too apt to shirk the responsibility, and, with a sort of meek, resigned, gracious wave of the hand, transfer the responsibility to Divine Providence. But it won't do. You can't deceive Heaven in that way.

You yourself hold that child's life in your hand. You can save her, or you can kill her by the mere matter of thickness of leather. If you don't take off those blue shoes, woman, your child will die. Divine Providence won't take off the shoes for you. The requisites for the life of your child are common sense and a shoemaker. It is criminally thoughtless for you to expose your child. It is cowardly for you, when your child dies, to try to shift the responsibility upon Heaven, which had nothing to do with it. If the epitaph was written properly or truthfully upon her little gravestone, hereafter, it would read somewhat after the following fashion:

Here Lies the Body of

* * * *

WHO DIED OF THIN SHOES AND MATERNAL FOLLY.

Her Mother Did It.

If what I have said shall get a pair of thick shoes for even one child, my purpose will be answered.

March 27, 1869.

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[203]

BELLS.

T the dinner table, the other day, we were discussing the subject of bells, and we unanimously regretted the fact that so many beautiful churches have been erected in this city without bells. A church without a bell is like a bush without roses, or a harp without strings.

I believe it to be a Christian duty to hang a bell in every church-tower or steeple; a bell dedicated to solemn and eternal things, dwelling in a realm of music, and swinging in the mid-heavens, to teach us of the mutability of earth; a voice above us—above the din and roar of the city—above the strife of mammon and the jargon of trade—to warn, and to console, and to bring repose to us. And upon every bell, I would, if I had my way, cause to be engraved that solemn legend upon the bell in the minster of Schaffhausen: "Vivos voco; mortuos plango; fulguros frango," ("I call the living; I mourn the dead; I break the lightnings.")

We need more bells. Bells, whose evening chimes mourn the death of the day, and, like the song of the swan, are the sweetest when the day is done; which, like the Ranz des Vaches of Switzerland, call man from his toil and hurry, to the night of repose, and into the weird world of [204] dreams; evening bells, like those which used to be rung to direct the wanderer through the forests to his nightly home, and which, as Jean Paul says, with his rare eloquence, have their parallel in the voices within us and about us, which call us in our straying, and make us calmer, and teach us to moderate our own joys and conceive those of others; vesper bells, veiling all the landscape with a holy hush, and calling man to prayer; bells wafting the sweetest music over the water to the homeward-bound sailor, and coming to him like voices from home, softened by the twilight; bells to welcome him who has wandered the world over, with pilgrim's staff and scallop-shell, seeking for rest—who, tired with life's tumultuous pleasures, surfeited with its vain shows, and filled with nameless, unutterable longings, turns his face homeward again, and finds his heart leaping with joy at the familiar sound of the bells in the distant city—peal upon peal vibrating in sweet music, and telling him of home, and rest, and peace; bells to break the peaceful silence of the Sabbath morning with the lingering cadences of their sweet concord—to summon to worship, to rouse the ear, and to kindle the heart with praise; bells to ring glad, jubilant peals of triumph—to proclaim peace—to wail with sorrow in their voices—to shriek, with warning alarum, the danger in the night.

And if I had my way again, there should be a bell in every steeple to proclaim the birth, the wedding, and the death of man. When the child enters upon the rosy morning of life, the bells should be the first tones to strike upon his ear. Their music should greet him as his little feet take hold upon the rough highway of life, from which they must sometimes stray into forbidden fields, [205] on which they must become so begrimed, so weary and so tottering, and at the end of which they will find rest after the long wandering, sooner or later. When the child, grown into youth, enters upon marriage, the bells should ring their harmonious concord, and their glad tones should mingle with the orange flowers, and the mutual gifts and good wishes. The same bells which welcomed him as he started alone upon the journey, should welcome him now, as the way is made lighter by a companion, and roses grow in the paths where before there were only sharp pebbles and flint. And when the end of the road is reached, and the eye dims, and the flowers fade, and the blue sky is all clouded over, and the two companions must part, the same bells tolling sadly and heavily from the steeples, should guide the weary traveller to his last home with their dirge-like tones.

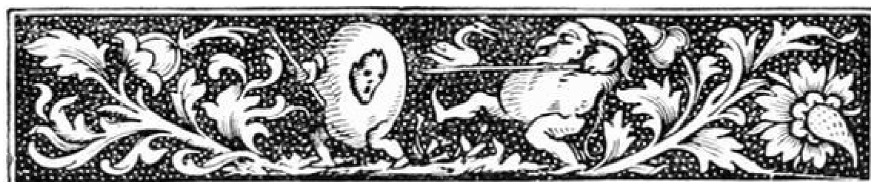
There are sorrow, music, joy and blessing in bells. The church tower may point to Heaven with Gothic solemnity, but, if no bell is there, no voice calls. Bells are sacred with associations. Year after year they have marked the flight of the hours in their perch in mid air, with no companions but the birds. They have looked down, year after year, upon grandfather, father, and son, grandmother, mother, and daughter, and followed them to their graves in the adjacent acre of God with solemn toll. They have rung glad peals of ecstasy to those who came before us, and have now gone, and they will ring the same glad peals to those yet to come. They are ringing for you and for me now, and they will ring on just the same when you and I are gone. It is now Te [206] Deum, and now Requiem; marriage bells of gladness, and funeral bells of woe. But I would that she, who will come after me, should hear the same bells that I hear, and that they should tell her the same melodic tidings they tell to me, and teach her the same lessons.

Don't build any more churches without bells. Place a bell in every steeple. Consecrate it with joyful service. Bid it to ring for the living, and toll for the dying. Raise it to its belfry with glad

acclamation, and then solemnly leave it there in the mid-heavens, above the jargon of earth, companion of the birds and the lightnings, to bring comfort, consolation, and repose forever to the weary—to warn, to inspire, and to gladden.

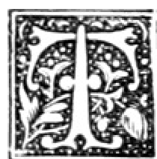
At present the bells are confined to the pews in the church, and their tongues are not always musical.

April 4, 1869.



[207]

TENORS AND BASSOS.



HE tenor, I take to be the happiest man in the world, or, at least, he ought to be. He is the individual whom all the operatic Elviras love. He loves them, also. He has all the serenades to sing. He alone can indulge in the *ut de poitrine*. Almost invariably, he is allowed to die for the heroine, when he isn't permitted to marry her, and always has a *fortissimo* death-song given to him, which, like the swan's is the sweetest. What little stage business there is, in the way of kneeling at the feet of the *inamoratas*, kissing of hands, and embracing of languishing Leonoras, belongs exclusively to him. He also can be the melancholy man, and drown susceptible damsels with tears, over his chalky grief and cork-lined wrinkles of woe. The women dote upon the tenor, send him little billets, look at him through the lorgnettes, and adore him in secret, as Heine's pine adored the palm. He finds bouquets upon his mantel, and little perfumed notes upon his dressing-table. If he be a *tenor di grazia*, lovely woman will sigh for him; if a *tenor robusto*, lovely woman will die for him, or wish that Heaven had made her such a man. The amateur tenor enjoys the same advantages as the operatic tenor, on a small scale. He is privileged to sing all the pretty things, and he may sing them as badly as may be, if he is only interesting. He is the idol before which female bread-and- [208] butterhood bends, both Grecian and otherwise. He is usually fragile, *spirituel* and delicate. He sleeps on the underside of a rose-leaf, drinks Angelica, eats caramels, and catches butterflies. He carries his voice in a lace pocket-handkerchief, when in the open air, and does it up in amber when he retires to sleep upon the rose-leaves. He alone is permitted to wear white kids and vest, and otherwise array himself after the manner of the festive hotel waiter. He knows the secret of immortal youth, and never grows old. All tuneful lays set to the tinkling of flutes, guitars and harps, belong to him. He alone can sing to the moon and address the stars. In his *repertoire* are all the interesting brigands, the high-born cavaliers, the romantic lovers, and the melancholy artists.

And he has nice legs, or, if he hasn't, he had better degenerate into a baritone, and have done with it.

A tenor without nice legs is worse off than a soprano who can't sing "With Verdure Clad," if there be such a *rara avis*, or an alto who has to do *Siebel* and *Maffeo Orsini* with elephantine ankles, and there never was an alto in the world with whom I wouldn't measure feet, and give them the odds of one or two numbers.

The tenor lives in clover, chin deep, and never gets stung by the bees. Sometimes he forgets to wrap up his voice in the handkerchief when he goes out, or he sleeps in the direct line of a current of air, which comes in under the door, and the result is an indisposition. When he has an indisposition, he goes off hunting ducks at Calumet, instead of dears in the audience, and the manager forgives him and the audience pity him. He doesn't die like other singers, but gradually [209] fades away like the rose, and disappears in a little cloud of perfume.

The basso, on the other hand, is the personification of vocal misery, and he knows it. He feels that he is not interesting at all. He knows the women don't adore him, and he takes a fiendish delight in bellowing at them. He never has an opportunity to languish on the stage, or to go round kneeling and sighing and kissing of hands. He is never a lover. If a brigand, he is a dirty cut-throat. If a cavalier, he is some dilapidated old duke, with a young and pretty wife, just packing up preparatory to elopement with the tenor, and requesting him not to interfere with her little arrangements. If a sailor, he is a swaggering pirate. If an uncle, he is a miser. If a mayor, he is a simpleton. If a father, he is a fool. The composers never give him but one aria in an opera, and that is always written an octave higher than he can sing, or an octave lower than his boot

heel. He is always in trouble with the orchestra. He knows he can squelch the first fiddles and reeds, and come out even with the bassoons and double basses, but the man with the trombone is his mortal enemy, and the man with the kettle-drums his skeleton. He feels in his heart of hearts that the one can blow him into ribbons, and the other pound him to a jelly, and what is more, he knows they are never happy, except when they are engaged in that pulverizing process. What little singing he has to do is devoted to panegyrics upon beer, dissertations upon cookery, and lugubrious screeds upon the infidelity of woman and his own ponderous wretchedness. When he is not confined to this, he is set up for a laughing stock in *buffo* work. He has no runs and trills [210] and sky-rockets with which to dazzle people. He knows that one of his long arias is like a long sermon. He usually has so much voice in his copper-lined and brass-riveted throat, that it invariably gets the better of him, either running like molasses in cold weather, or coming out by fits and starts, and leaking all round the edges. He must inevitably sing false, and it makes him unhappy. He is not at all delicate, being usually doubly blessed in chest and stomach, and the result is, he can't get sick if he tries. The blessed indisposition which so often gets into the velvet throat of the tenor, rarely gets into his, consequently his opportunities for duck-hunting at the Calumet are very limited. All of these afflictions make him misanthropical, and he goes through the world with his little *repertoire* of "The Calf of Gold," "Infelice," "O mio Palermo," "The Last Man," and the "Wanderer," a very Ishmael of wretchedness, and a howling Dervish of despair. He drinks beer, and all sorts of fiery damnations, eats sausage and kraut with impunity, and smokes villainous tobacco in short clay pipes. He despises the razor and eschews the little weaknesses of kids and patent leathers. The tenor is the nightingale; he is the crow. The tenor is the beloved of women, but for him no serenade, no face in the lattice shaming the moon with its brightness and beauty. I pray, therefore, all gentlefolk to deal kindly with the basso, and make his rough road as smooth as possible, for it is as inevitable as fate that he will live to an hundred years of age, and sing every blessed day of the century, and will finally be gathered to his fathers, singing as he goes.

[211] And, as he goes singing to his fathers, I have another topic of which he reminds me. As I sit here writing, some poor fellow, who has got through with the troubles of the world, is going home to sleep under the turf, which is now so restless with all the quick impulses of spring-life, and which will soon weave a green and flower-embroidered counterpane above him. A band is playing a dirge, the wail and melancholy rhythm of which fall unheeded upon his ears, forever closed to the sweet sounds of the earth. To me, there is something ineffably sad in the playing of a dirge in the open air. The funereal solemnity of the music contrasts so strangely with the beauty of the clear heavens and the joyous life of nature, and interweaves an *Andante* so unexpectedly in the *Scherzo* of the din and jargon of the busy street life, that I cannot keep the tears out of my eyes, and I cannot but pause for a minute, on my journey, to think. And I think of the day when I shall drop out of the comedy of life and some one else will take up my part and go on with it, as if I had never been in the play at all. I think that, some bright morning, A will meet B on the street and say: "Did you know that —— died yesterday?" "No! Is that so? What was the matter with him?" And then the two will talk of grain and corner lots, for it was only a bubble that disappeared on the great tide of humanity, ever flowing from one eternity to another. I wonder if anyone will remember me from one spring-birth of flowers to another. And I think of those standing about me, with their hearts beating to the time of the dirges, and with each pulsation approaching a step nearer to the long sleep. And, somehow, although the dirge saddens me, by sending a [212] shadow across the brightness of the sunny day, I think I feel the better for having heard it.

But this will not be the last I shall see or hear of this procession. I know that, an hour later, the mourners will have dried their tears, and that they who went to the grave, marching slowly and with sober countenances, to the movement of the Dead March, will return to the quick tempo of "Champagne Charlie," or some other musical abomination. Have we no respect for the dead! Is it creditable to common humanity to go through the streets uttering a funereal lie—to shovel a man into his grave, and, while the grave-maker is patting the turf with his shovel, to come trotting home to the music of a ribald Casino song? Is human life of no more account than this? Is the life of our friend of so little consequence, when compared with the nonsense and delusions of this world, that we leave him and all recollections of him with the grave-maker? Is there no sober, serious thought for us in the new-made grave? If there is not—if, when a man dies, he dies like a horse, only to be shoved out of sight, the quicker the better, that we may not be delayed any longer than possible from the exactions of business and distractions of pleasure—I pray that those who have these public funerals in charge, may at least consult the feelings of some, to whom such inconsiderate and irreverent unconcern for the dead is a fearful shock.

April 17, 1869.

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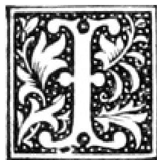
[213]

A CHILD'S STORY—THE THREE ROSES.



I WRITE to you to-day with a certain sort of sadness, and yet not mourning as one without hope.

I think one can become strongly attached to inanimate things, and, after associating with them for years, come to invest them with certain human attributes, and even to love them. They grow to be part of one's self, and reflect, in some degree, the individuality of the possessor. I have now sat for nearly three years at the old desk before me, in the same old corner, with the same blank prospect of brick walls and the little patch of blue sky no bigger than the lace handkerchief which swings from your finger, my dear Madame, and discoursed each week upon all sorts of pleasant topics in my careless way, always satisfied if here and there you might find a little flower worth laying away in your memory as a souvenir. Many of you who started on our journey through the World of Amusement are with me still, but some have left and gone up higher to the Beautiful Country; and one cruel summer which killed so many birds and blighted so many flowers, we all travelled with heavier hearts, thinking of the little ones whom the jealous angels enticed away, and some of us could hardly see the way for a [214] time for the black shadow of the valley and the mists which were in our eyes.

I shall write to you no more from the old desk in the old corner, for, when next Saturday comes, I shall be at the new desk, in a new corner of the new building, and yet I cannot part from it without regret, for I have learned to love it, ink-begrimed, scratched and cut as it is. There are pleasant memories indelibly connected with it, and the next owner who possesses it will be richer than he knows, for he will buy some priceless associations. I frankly confess that I look forward to the new desk with some suspicions. It will be a better desk, a handsomer desk. The old, tried friend, whom you have grappled to yourself, as with hooks of steel, through storms and shine, it is hard to give up for the new comer, whom you have to learn before you can love, and who may deceive you, when it is all too late. And yet it is cheerful to know that when I say good-bye to the old desk next week, you will accompany me to the new desk, and that I shall continue to talk to you so long as it shall please you to listen. Aurelia, and the baby and husband, Celeste, Fitz-Herbert, Mignon and Blanche, and Old Blobbs and Mrs. Blobbs, will all go with me, and Old Blobbs has promised me that he will have something to say next Sunday from the new desk.

In this, my last letter from the old desk, I frankly state that I am going to say something to the children. You know that I thoroughly believe in children. I think they represent nearly all the love, and innocence, and purity there is in the world, and I want to tell them a story which may lead them to preserve that love, and innocence, and purity, until the end. I therefore warn all the [215] grown up children, that this story is for the little ones, so that those desiring to leave, can go now, without disturbing us after we have commenced. Should any desire to remain, I hope they will keep as still as possible. Perhaps they will hear something which will benefit them. We will therefore wait a few minutes, after which the doors will be closed.

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The story is a simple one, but it has its lesson for you. Some of those older ones, who have just gone out, if they were here, would tell you, even with tears in their eyes, that it is true. It is the story of the Three Roses. One of them was a

WHITE ROSE.

This white rose grew in a large garden, where there were many other flowers: great, coarse, vulgar dahlias, always dressing in gaudy colors, without any regard to taste; delicate little anemones, who would drop their petals off in fright, if even a bee went buzzing by them; tulips, in whose breast the butterflies used to sleep; blue-bells, who rang the matins for the other flowers to wake, and the vespers for them to drop their little heads and fold up their petals in sleep; azaleas, who were very jealous of the fuschias, because the latter had a graceful way of hanging from their stalks, which the former could not get, although they tried until they were pink in the face; heliotropes, and their little cousins, the mignonettes, whom all the flowers loved for their sweetness, and never could see that it was because they were so humble that their lives were so full of perfume; passion-flowers, whose lives were full of pain; and those sensitive little flowers [216] who were so nervous, that if you even pointed your finger at them, they would shiver all over, and draw themselves up in a heap. The White Rose was a very proud flower. She always dressed in pure white, with a beautiful gold ornament on her breast, and devoted most of her time to lazily swinging in the wind, admiring her beautiful garments. She never recognized other flowers in the garden. She never even condescended to notice the butterflies and the bees, who were great friends with the rest of the flowers. She would now and then nod to the green-and-gold humming-birds, who took good care, however, to keep out of her way, because they were afraid of her thorns. She had set her cap very high, and would marry nothing short of a prince, and thus she slighted some of her friends, and wounded others with her cruel thorns.

One day the prince came by that way, and his name was Zephyr. He was a gay, careless young fellow, without any heart in him. He came from a far country, and in his travels had flirted with every one. He had ruined many flowers in other gardens. He had even dallied with the tender leaves in the tree tops, of an evening, until the stern old trees angrily kept him away. Troops of the ghosts of the dandelions and pink thistles and young gossamers, whom he had deceived, followed in his train, and even the blue-birds, and robins, and orioles, were enamored of him, and kept the air full of melody, singing to him. Prince Zephyr came gaily dancing over the garden, and all the little flowers nodded their heads to him. The White Rose looked her prettiest, and at [217] once beckoned him to come to her, and hid all her thorns. The two were long together, even until the sun went down, and the blue-bell had rung her vespers. It would have been well for the White Rose to have gone to sleep too; but Prince Zephyr dallied with her, and whispered all sorts of pretty nothings to her, and the foolish flower listened to him, and believed all he said. He promised to be true to her, and to return in the morning; and when they kissed good night, he stole away her perfume, which was her life. When the morning came, however, Prince Zephyr did not return. Many mornings came, but Prince Zephyr was far away, whispering that same sweet story to other roses, in other gardens. And the White Rose waited in vain, and withered and died, and was buried by the larch-tree in the corner of the garden, the cypress, and rue, and rosemary being the mourners at the funeral, the birds singing the hymns, and the little many-legged bugs in the grass, making the orchestra, with the bee at the baton.

And the name of the White Rose was Pride, which must always have a fall, my dear children.

But there was another rose. It was the

RED ROSE.

The Red Rose grew by the side of a tiny little brook, which had nothing to do the livelong day but to dance over its pebbles, and sing pretty songs, and laugh in the sunshine. The Red Rose was very discontented with her lot, for there was no one around with whom she could associate, but white and red clovers, dandelions and butter-cups. The Brook, who was a garrulous little fellow, [218] made her still more discontented, by telling her what fine things there were out in the world, and how she would enjoy them if she would go with him and see them. One day, tired of looking into the Brook and seeing only herself, she dropped into his arms, and he tenderly carried her along. She floated very lazily and pleasantly along for a time, for the heavens were all blue, and the sunshine was bright, and the Brook was smooth, and so they rode along merrily together. The wild laurels, and red Betties, and Jack-in-the-pulpit, and starry asters, crowded together on the marges of the Brook to see her pass, and nodded to her. The white lilies who grew in the Brook rippled the water with their mocking laughter, for they knew her fate. The sober ferns warned her, but she paid no heed to the warning, and sailed down the meadow as proudly as Cleopatra under her silken sails on the turbid Nile. By and bye she got out of the meadow and it was not so pleasant. The flowers disappeared, and she had hard work to avoid the flags and rushes, and old gnarled stumps, and the sun was hidden by the interlaced tree-tops, and there were all sorts of water-spiders and little glossy black bugs which she disliked. After a time, the frogs and the water-snakes terrified her, and one day she found herself in a little whirlpool which made her dizzy. When she recovered, she was in the foam of a water-fall, and the foam-bells dazzled her so with their sheen that she plunged about among the rocks very wildly and before she emerged from them, some of her petals were badly damaged. It was now too late to return. She had made the first fall and she must go on. She no longer recognized the little Brook in the brawling, [219] muddy waters which carried her through the rank swamps, where she met all kinds of noxious, ill-favored flowers, the hemlock, and nightshade, and belladonna, and poisonous ivies, which mocked her. The Brook was now a river, and too wide for her to escape. On she must go, ever on, bruised and weary as she was, and presently the river swept her through a great city, rank with corruption and filth; swept her past the vessels at the wharves, loading and unloading, and noisy with the curses and cries of the sailors; under the wheels of steamboats; now sunk into the corrupt depths, and now rising to the surface again, but so changed that none of the flowers in the country, who nodded to her that bright morning, would ever have known her; under the arches of the bridges and close by slimy mouldering piers; and one evening, so close to the dead body of a woman, who had hurled herself out of the world and out of misery, that she almost got tangled in the streaming black hair which rose and fell in the turbid current; and so on, until one morning she found herself out of the river and into the mighty surges of the ocean, when it was all too late.

And the name of the Brook was Pleasure and the name of the Red Rose, Folly.

I have now to tell you of the third rose, the

WILD ROSE.

The Wild Rose grew in a forest, and was a simple modest flower, who was sheltered in the winter from the cruel winds by the mighty pines. In the spring and summer she was even more beautiful than the White Rose or the Red Rose, although she had a tiny little petal of white just suffused [220] with a blush. Her leaves were very small but they were very fragrant. There were no other flowers in the forest for her to love, and so she loved a Star which she used to see every night through the branches of the trees. Sometimes when the dew fell in the night, the Star would come to her in the drops, and she could see and feel his radiance on her petals, although she could never go to the Star. And there was a little Child who, sometimes, used to roam through this forest, who loved the Rose, and used to stop and talk to it in her childish way, and the Star, which the Rose loved, was the Child's Star. For, even for each little child, shines a star which is

its own—a star which always rains down blessed influences upon it—a star which will always guide the child if it will but follow. One day the Child did not come to the forest, for an Angel had come down out of the blue heavens—the Angel of Death—and forever closed the eyes of the little one and sealed its ears to the sweet sounds of earth, and hushed its merry prattle forever, and strangers went to the forest and plucked the Rose which the little Child had loved, and they placed it in the cold marble hands, and the Angel of Light, the sister of the Angel of Death, came and took the Child and the Rose and carried them to the Star, and the three were re-united and were happy.

And the name of the Wild Rose was Wisdom.

These are the stories of the Three Roses, which I tell to you, my children, upon the old desk, before I leave it forever, and I pray Heaven for you all, blue eyes and black eyes, brown hair and gold hair, whether you live in hovel or in hall, whatever ways your little feet may wander, that [221] they go not in the way of the White Rose which is that of disappointment leading to death; neither in the way of the Red Rose which is that of folly leading to ruin; but in the way of the Wild Rose, which is that of contentment and wisdom.

April 24, 1869.

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[222]

THE OLD.

ON this May-Day, when Nature is putting on her new spring suit of green, and decking herself with new buds and flowers; when every blade of grass shooting up through the brown sod, and every quaint little package of leaf unrolling itself on the bough are new; when restless men and women, carting their Lares and Penates through the streets, are seeking new homes; when new breezes from the North come shiveringly down upon us, telling new stories they learned of the icebergs on their way; and when new asparagus and onions are coming into the market; on this new day, I am free to confess I like the old.

I like old books. I think there is more virtue, and wit, and sense, and solid stuff in the old tomes—brass-clasped and vellum-paged mayhap, made to last forever by the old worthies, over whose heads hundreds of springs have come and gone, and generations of birds have sung, and they none the wiser, for they left their souls in the tomes—than in the reams of gaudy modern trash, born in all sorts of ways, in all sorts of places, and of all sorts of parents, with lives as permanent as a tadpole's, and, like many a human being, carrying all the usefulness and beauty they possess in their covers. Gilt goes a great way with a book, as it does with a man. There are a great many [223] gilded men and women it won't do to touch or examine too closely. The moment you handle them, the gilt rubs off and shows the pewter underneath. There are a great many books of the same description.

I like old wine. There is virtue in the mildewed, cobwebbed bottle, which one of your family, whose portrait hangs in the hall because he is a little old fashioned for the drawing room, placed in the cellar years ago. Break the neck of the bottle, and see how the imprisoned genii of the wine leap sparkling into the sunshine, clad in gold, and fragrant as a rose you stumble upon in the woods. No aquafortis, logwood, or burnt shavings here. This is the nectar which refreshed the giants of old time, which Horace sang, and Anacreon drank, with which Dante pledged Beatrice, and which runs through Beethoven's *Scherzos*, and inspired the Brindisis of the masters.

I like old songs into which the writers have poured their souls; songs as full of passion and pain as the West sometimes is full of thunder clouds; songs full of sadness which is not the boisterous wo of the hired mute, but as unobtrusive and gentle as the summer rain; songs full of the quaintness, and delicacy, and beauty which time has only mellowed, and which come down to us hallowed with associations which cluster around them like vines. Now and then you get a song which touches the heart at once, but a song, like a friend, must have been tested by experience before you can fully receive it. Who would not take Mendelssohn's "First Violet," and gladly give up all the flower-songs of to-day? Has the religion of to-day anything more delicately beautiful [224] and graceful than Herrick, anything more massive and majestic than the "Ein Feste Berg"? Do

our modern lovers sing such dainty serenades as Spenser and Sidney sang to their Phyllises?

I like old friends. A man can't afford to have too many friends. It is too expensive in the social economy, not in the matter of dollars and cents, but in the personal wear and tear they occasion one. A man with a thousand friends is worse off than the Wandering Jew. A man with five hundred friends is to be pitied. A man with a hundred friends is a victim. A man with fifty friends is happy in a quiet way. A man with twenty-five friends can find time to be a philosopher. A man with ten friends, one for each finger, each one of whom will stick to him like his fingers, is justified in crying "Eureka" over the discovery of perfect happiness. The result of my observations in a feminine direction, is, that women are so made that they will be inconsolable without a thousand dear friends, to whom they are bound by the tenderest ties until death, and ten thousand other friends entitled to the confidences which distract the female breast, without which relief, the female breast would be simply a pent up Vesuvius. If, therefore, you have ten friends, and they are old friends who have travelled all along the journey with you, through storm and through sunshine, with any one of whom you would exchange your personal identity, I congratulate you.

It is because I like old things that I paid a visit to the old Tribune Buildings. I have a passion for old buildings. The smell of antiquity about them is as refreshing in the modern combination of [225] smells as the bouquet of good wine in a villainous beer cellar. I like to trace all the habits and peculiarities of the dead and gone men and women, which, in the process of time, have been ingrained into the building, and become part and parcel of it. I have no objection to a ghost or two—none of your mice in the wainscotting, or swaying beams in the attic, but the good old-fashioned ghost of some poor soul, with streaming black hair and pale face, who concealed her malady and carried her secret with her under the turf, and, discontented in Heaven, *must* come back to the old place where *he* used to be, and walk under the trees where they used to walk—the trees which know the secret as well as she, for they heard it; or the ghost of the boy who ran away and went to sea and never came home again, whose sad story most any wave crawling up the sand will tell you, if you will listen aright; or the ghost of that wrinkled old flint who hid his ingots under the tiles of the hearth, and comes back now and then to see if they are safe.

I did not see any spirits in the old building; quite the contrary. There was a great deal of life there. It was night when I went there, but by the moonlight I saw some strange sights. Our late co-tenants, the rats, mice, cockroaches and spiders, were holding a general mass-meeting in the various rooms, discussing the changed aspect of affairs. An antique rat, of venerable appearance and gray whiskers, covered with the scars of many a hard-fought fight, and with a tail sadly mutilated by the numerous inkstands and paper-weights which had followed him into his hole many a time and oft, occupied the Managing Editor's old desk, the empty pigeon-holes of which [226] brought him into admirable perspective. He acted as Chairman of the meeting, and presided with dignity, holding a dusty document in his hand for a gavel, which had been laid away fifteen years ago as of immense value, and never thought of since—just as you and I, you know, who think we are of so much value, will be laid away shortly in a pigeon-hole, and never thought of again. Several rows of rats, who had come down from a former generation, occupied an old table, sitting erect, and manifesting a proper appreciation of the spirit of the meeting. The younger rats were compelled to shift for themselves, and were sprinkled about the floor. The gas pipe running up the wall was festooned with mice who looked down upon the assembly with interested countenances, while the three blind mice of song notoriety could be distinguished by their tails, that is, as much of their tails as escaped the carving knife, which protruded from a hole in the wall. Being bereft of the blessing of sight, it was but natural that they should make the mistake of turning their backs upon the Chairman, but they could hear all that was said. The rat who lived in a well, and who, when he died, went to a warmer climate, you may not be aware returned from that place some time since. He was present as an invited guest from the Museum. The cockroaches looked out of the cracks in every direction, and balanced themselves dexterously on shreds of wall paper. The spiders occupied the centres of their webs, apparently asleep, but in reality wide awake, as one unfortunate blue-bottle fly found, who got caught, and was immediately served up and sent to the spiders of the Local-Room as a present. Besides these, [227] there were a few score of old fogy mosquitoes, left over from last year, and a handsome representation of those quiet little brown bugs addicted to bedsteads, and pronounced odor, whom I do not like to mention by name. The Chairman was listening to the complaints of the multitude, for famine was staring them in the face, and some means must be adopted for self-preservation. A motion to serve out an injunction on the Tribune Company, and compel them to replace the goods they had carried away, was canvassed, but failed of rat-ification. One large, portly rat, with a very benevolent face, and getting gray, whom I at once recognized as an old friend I had seen on my old desk many a time, banqueting on paste, was complaining particularly of me. He characterized such conduct as despicable in the highest degree. It was a betrayal of friendship, a breach of confidence, and he would never again repose trust in a biped. All that he had found in my desk, during a visit that evening, was a dried up bouquet or two, rusty pens, one scissor blade, a photograph of a superannuated prima donna, a paper of pins, and a huge package of tickets to amateur concerts. There was a time when he was young and strong. In those days he could gnaw a file, and derive considerable culinary consolation from a paper-weight, but now he was obliged to conform his diet to a weakened digestion and disordered liver. He spoke more in sorrow than in anger, and regretted that Pickle should be fickle.

At this point, a young mouse, perched upon the top of the gas pipe, in a piping voice complained that he had just commenced going through Abbott's History of the War. It was slow work, but he had got through the covers, and part way through the introduction, and he didn't like to be [228]

interrupted in this manner. It was true he hadn't derived much sustenance from the thing, but it was a matter of principle when he commenced a piece of work, to keep at it if it killed him. Some fifteen or twenty old fossilized rats, with their wrinkled faces, scanty hairs and shrunk shanks, made the same complaint with reference to the Patent Office Reports and commercial statistics. To be sure they had not thriven well. One of them had devoured half the Georgian Bay Canal; another had swallowed two Board of Trade Reports, and had got as far as lard in the third, to which he was looking forward with great expectations, being then unprofitably engaged upon lumber; a third had almost exhausted himself with devouring a census table, and was just in sight of some quotations of cheese; a fourth had swallowed the Smithsonian Institution, and put the Covode Investigation on the top of it, and was just ready to attack the American Cyclopedia, in which he was sure to find something to agree with him and repay him for the time he had wasted. A sentimental little mouse complained that she had just got into Mrs. E. D. E. N. Alphabet Southworth's "How He Won Her," and was interrupted, at a critical moment, when "he" and "her" were about to say something nice. She was dying to know "how he won her," and she might go down to a premature grave without the knowledge of that interesting secret. A grave looking rat, with a streak of white fur around his neck, and troubled with a slight cough arising from an affection of the throat, announced that he had devoted several nights of hard labor, in getting [229] through the back of a Biblical Cyclopedia, and had just reached the title page. All the world was before him. Vistas of Hebraic and other sorts of lore, opened before his longing eyes. He was about to enter, when the prize was snatched away. He consoled himself with the reflection that all earthly matters are illusions, but he could not help thinking now and then how pleasant that Cyclopedia would have been. There was one wretched old rat who had eaten up a volume of Swinburne, two duplicates of Walt Whitman, and was feasting upon a gorgeous picture of the spectacle of Undine. He had eaten up four blonde wigs, sixteen legs of ballet girls, and left eight coryphees with a leg apiece. He was very indignant over his disappointment, and even swore about it, for which he was called to account by the grave-looking rat with a slight cough. The wicked rodent growled out something in broken Rattish, and retired to his hole, out of which he shook his tail in defiance. Presently four or five good little mice, whom I had not observed before, with their faces very clean, and their fur smoothed down very sleekly, made their complaint in a weak kind of utterance. It was to the effect that they had discovered a little stock of Sunday School books in a paper box, which were very affecting, and narrated how "Little Freddie" and "Good Teddie" and others, committed forty feet of texts in one day, which disagreed with them so that they died very early, not being good enough for this world. They had just succeeded in getting into the box, and now the books were gone.

In this manner, complaint after complaint was made, and the meeting adjourned to another evening without taking action. You should have seen the assembly after adjournment. The whole [230] mass of rats and mice rushed pell-mell through the dusty heaps of papers on the floor. One set danced a polka on fragments of editorials touching the finances and internal revenue, taxation and other topics. In the local room a rather spare rat, with long reddish hair, mounted the City Editor's desk, and read off, to the edification of the crowd, several mutilated fragments of a "Horrible Murder," "Atrocious Villainy in Bridgeport," "Destructive Fire in Holstein," "Scandal Case on Michigan Avenue," "Religious Announcements," etc. In the Commercial Room several casualties occurred. One unfortunate mouse was nearly choked to death with a column of figures which he found on the floor, and attempted to swallow. Another, of a sentimental turn of mind, went insane trying to understand some commercial quotations he found in an antique looking scrap-book, and three incautious little mice, venturing too hastily into Colbert's Astronomy, fell into the Dipper and couldn't get out, until an old rat helped them with the North Pole and a line dropped from the plane of the ecliptic, through the parallax of the sun, whatever that is. In another room, the cockroaches had a carnival in the Night Editor's coffee-pot. It was one of the most touching sights in the world to see them enter in festive procession at the top and come out through the nose. On my own old desk, twenty-three assorted cockroaches, of a beautiful bronze color, each one of whom I have killed twenty-three times in twenty-three various ways, were dancing a can-can. A few of the odoriferous, small brown bugs stood round in various attitudes, [231] like supernumeraries, while an old rat, against whom I once swore eternal war, as Hannibal swore against the Romans, beat time with his stump of a tail. I forgave the rat, but I shall never forget the scene. I shall miss those cockroaches in the coming days, surrounded by the inanimate splendors of the new desk, upon which I write you to-day, looking no more upon the brick walls, but sitting in a flood of roseate light, which pours through the new window from the dying day. I could not bear to interfere with the sports of those poor creatures, and I left them there in the moonlight, engaged in their wild revels. I cannot say with any degree of veracity that I loved them while living with them, but still I know that I shall miss them, and their innocent little ways.

To rat, and mouse, and cockroach, and odoriferous bug, and spider; to the old desk, and the withered bouquets; to the old rooms, which have seen so many come and go, and one of tempered judgment, and calm speech, of dignified presence and upright life, a fast friend and sure adviser, who left us one morning to rejoin her who had gone to Heaven a little while before him; to many pleasant associations and happy scenes; to the familiar stairs worn deeply with the yearly tread of feet as the water weareth away the rock; to all but memory, hail and farewell! And welcome the new!

May 1, 1869.

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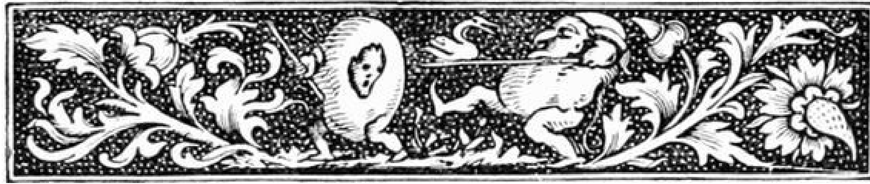
[232]



OLD BLOBBS' OPINIONS.

LD Blobbs came up to see me the other day. He breathed very hard when he came into the room, was very red in the face, and wiped his forehead vigorously with his yellow bandanna, for the stairs troubled him somewhat. Blobbs is not what he was forty years ago—a broad-breasted, strong-legged, deep-lunged young fellow. The bucket creaks now in the well, and the grasshopper begins to be a burden. We all hope the pitcher may not be broken for a long time to come, but we see many signs that he is on the sun-down side of the hill, and in his melancholy moods he talks about the shadows down in the valley whither he is going. I think, however, that he will never cease his hatred of shams; that he will always delight to strip off all the fine clothes from human pretence; that he will never admit that respectability is whatever keeps a gig, and that, under all the rubbish of the world, he will contend there is something real, and that it is his duty to find it out. He believes, as I do, that this great world is a type of the Godlike; that the history of man from the days when Adam dwelt in Eden, down to this blessed May morning, so full of spring's odorous promise, is a gospel in itself; that the morning stars sing together now as of old; and that our [233] souls are kept in subservience to our bodies, running of errands for them, or concealed beneath aprons doing the work of the waiter, these starry strangers who should only be allowed to fulfil their own missions.

When Blobbs had recovered his breath, he signified his desire to say a few words from the new desk, and I left him in possession. When I returned, I found the following, written in a large, bold hand, and underscored to give emphasis, I suppose. I give you the document just as he wrote it, underscorings and all:

"The *Sin* of the American nation, sir, is a holiday. The unpardonable folly is a LAUGH. Sport is unworthy a man born on American soil. Recreation is an exploded idea, sir, which has come down to us from a former generation, and if there is anything which an American looks upon with utter contempt, it is a former generation. There is no retrospect or prospect between the Atlantic and the Pacific. It is now and always a simple *spect*. Every man has a likeness of Mammon set up on his mantel, and to spare one day from the worship of that small god, is to expose himself to the danger of not being an old man at thirty, and comfortably into his grave before fifty. Some unfortunate individuals manage to get beyond fifty, but they are like old parchments, faded, yellow, and wrinkled, with all the characters upon them effaced. American babies are begotten of *fret on one side, and hurry on the other*, and these two forces are forever propelling them toward a six-by-two patch of ground with a stone at each end, one of which is Ananias and the other Sapphira. American babies are *never children*, sir. They make one step from bibs to breeches, [234] and from pinafores to *paniers*. An American man of fourteen has squeezed the orange of life dry, and an American woman of twelve is ready to receive proposals of marriage, and sink her identity in kettles and pans. There is no law against it, sir. Nature has kindly preordained that there shall be no bar in the intimate relations of humanity and asininity. If a man wants to go through life like a locomotive, I suppose there is nothing to prevent it, but I don't want him to ask me to ride on his train. I know the rails are laid on every kindly feeling and elegant grace, and that the smallest flower can't grow between them. I know that there are all sorts of obstructions on the track, bankruptcies, suicides, diseases, etc., which will prevent him from getting into the three score and ten station which God Almighty intended for him. People come into the world in a great hurry, and immediately commence their preparations to get out of it. They pile up a heap of treasures, and by the time they get it piled up, under the sod they go, where there is not room for a five cent shin-plaster.

"What made me think of all these things, sir, was the official announcement of the city authorities that when the grandest achievement of this or any other age is celebrated next week, business will be suspended *for one hour*![2] Actually for one hour, sir. SIXTY MINUTES, SIR!! And the wretched man who doesn't recommence his work and put on steam exactly when the hand reaches the *sixty-first minute*, is unworthy the inestimable privileges of an American citizen, sir. If I had been [235] the Common Council of the city of Chicago, I would have passed a law that the merchant who did not hang out the banners on the outer wall from sunrise to sunset, who did not double the wages of his clerks for that day, and order them to celebrate, who did not eat double his usual amount, who did not execute a *can-can* on the top of a flour barrel, who did not make Mrs. Merchant eternally his joyful debtor, by the item of a new hat, and allow the little Merchants to ruin at least

one suit of clothes in a mud pie bakery, and who did not retire to bed at night feeling that he was all right at heart, however he might be in his head, should be liable to fine and imprisonment. *Business will be suspended for one hour!* Bah!

"I tell you, sir, when Gabriel blows his horn, and summons us to square up our accounts, it will be extremely doubtful whether Chicago will suspend business more than one hour to accommodate him; and, as I am positive that it will take over an hour to settle up the accounts *of this city*, it seems to me there is going to be some confusion. It may be possible that Chicago will not be recognized at all on that occasion. If she is, I hope some arrangements may be made by which she can spare a day or two for Gabriel's business.

"I tell you, sir, we travel too fast. We don't take enough time for recreation. If we would only halt occasionally in this everlasting chase after the Almighty Dollar, there would be less occasion for hospitals, insane asylums, and penitentiaries. There would be fewer suicides, and general smash-ups and break-downs. There is no good reason why a man shouldn't be just as fresh at forty as at twenty, but, as we go now, there isn't one man in a thousand who is fit for anything but a calculating machine at forty. Physically, he isn't worth a pinch of snuff. Mentally and morally, he is dried up; and the women, sir, are just as bad as the men. It pains me, sir, to see our women fade so quickly. This fast pace is killing to them. Brought up in hothouses, and forced beyond nature in their growth, they mature when they should be in bud, and wither when they should be in maturity, and are not of much further use, except for running sewing-circles, and drinking weak tea. It pains me, sir, to see the young girls on our streets, with that callous sort of countenance, and knowing expression, which show that they have got out of illusion into reality, and to see so many pale, careworn, bent and faded women, out of whom all buoyant life has departed long since, and who can no more keep time than a watch with a broken spring. [236]

"In the mean time, *business will be suspended for one hour*. Bah! Boy's play sir; all boy's play!!

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"These are my opinions, sir, and it is quite immaterial to me who knows them. And, sir, if your new desk will give them any extra weight, I shall be glad of it. I do not know that Mrs. Blobbs will agree with all that I have written to you, but that also is quite immaterial. She is a remarkable woman sir, and *principally remarkable for not thinking as I do*.

"Allow me to subscribe myself, sir.

"Your very obedient servant,

"JOHN BLOBBS."

May 8, 1869.

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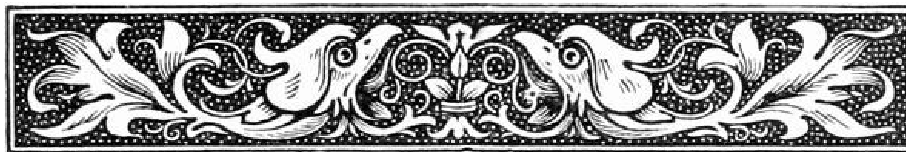


TYPES.

AT the breakfast table this morning, time hung rather heavily on our hands, for the breakfast was not altogether a success. Old Blobbs was a little sulky, as Mrs. Blobbs had not rested well during the night. When Mrs. Blobbs does not rest well, she either gets up and wanders about the house, in an aimless sort of way, or else she talks to Old Blobbs, which is just the last thing in the world Old Blobbs wants her to do, when he is trying to sleep. Aurelia's baby was troublesome also, and was at last sent away in disgrace, when it had emptied a brimming cup of milk into Mrs. Blobbs' lap, and down the folds of the black silk. Mignon was in a pet about something or other, and was moodily tearing a geranium leaf to pieces, which she had pulled out of the breakfast bouquet. Celeste was in a towering rage with Fitz-Herbert, and shot lightnings out of her pretty eyes at him, because he had spoken slightingly of her coiffure. F. H., however, was as impervious to lightning as a glass non-conductor, and in a chaotic sort of way caressed the promise of a side whisker just beginning to dawn on his cheek.

I was, as usual, serene and philosophical; and to dispel these little spring clouds which every moment threatened to rain torrents upon the breakfast table, told them I had something to say. [238]

The announcement was magical, and had the same effect upon the company, that oil has when poured upon the troubled waters, or the show window of a millinery store on opening day upon the ruffled breast of lovely woman.

And what I said was this:

I think there is a direct line of ascent from the atom, the grain of sand upon the sea shore, for instance, up to God, and that the great principle of life, which emanates from God, finds its way

down to the atom, although we cannot perceive it with our finite sight.

Let us commence, if you please, with the dust, which is not to be despised, my dears, because you are made out of it, the sand, the drops of water, or any other of the very lowest forms of creation. We pass up from these elements, and find them crystalized into minerals, and wrought into flowers, and obtain our first ideas of beauty. Looking up through the grades of flowers, we happen upon the sensitive plants, which shrink from you, and shiver when you point your finger at them like guilty souls, and the winged orchids, which you must touch to convince yourself they are not butterflies; and in these you begin to get foreshadowings of life. From this point you find organisms which may be vegetable, or may be animal. Our skill is insufficient to decide which they are. Presently you reach the sponges and the corals, in which animal life is very apparent; and if you will do yourself the pleasure to look into that glass of water with a microscope, my dear Celeste, you will be thoroughly convinced of life, and also that you are daily drinking [239] millions of very unpleasant looking animals. A step higher up, you reach the insects and the ephemera, who live their little day of breezy life in the sunshine, and in their buzzing you find music commences. All these little fellows, with wings and feelers, play very pretty tunes, if your ear is only good enough to catch them, when they praise God by beating their gauzy wings together. As you pass from the insects to the birds, life is more pronounced, and the music of which I have spoken develops in construction and increases in beauty. Now, we are reaching the grade of animals, where intelligence commences; and as we come up to the dog, ox, horse or elephant, affection is added to intelligence. The animals begin to assume the qualities of man, and before we are aware of it, some of the animals are walking on two legs instead of four, and assuming the form and features of men, as, for instance, the monkeys, the apes, and the orang-utans. You pass from the monkey to the Digger Indian or Hottentot, and with the single unimportant exception of length of tail, it is well nigh impossible to tell them apart. Man is a short-tailed monkey, or, *vice versa*, monkey is a long-tailed man. Even in the highest order of man, it is sometimes difficult to tell a man from a monkey. Turn a child out into the woods, and let it grow up for thirty or forty years, subsisting upon roots, herbs and nuts, like an animal, and what does it become at last but a hairy, chattering ape, climbing trees, burrowing in the ground, and living like an animal? Thus we rise through various grades of men, each new type more perfect than the other, but still possessing some characteristic of the animal, until we reach [240] woman, who is a step higher; then up through the various types of women, until we reach the angels; through the various types of angels until we reach the archangels, and then through the shining hierarchy of Heaven, until we stop at God, the centre of all life and the sun of all perfection, beyond Whom is nullity.

Thus do I believe that man is linked with all animal and vegetable forms below him, and that in each change the higher type takes something from the lower and preserves some characteristics of it, and that man loves God best when he loves all the types below him—the beast, the bird, the insect, the flower, and even the atom. The line from God to the atom, and from the atom to God, seems to me clear and uninterrupted; and thus the whole of this great universe is bound together by clear, though sometimes unseen relations, and radiates from God, its centre. And who knows but that in other planets there are intelligences superior to us, forming more links in this grand chain? When man dies, he goes back to the dust whence he sprang. He mingles with the brook; he blossoms in the flowers of the field; he is crystalized into the mineral; and thus part after part is absorbed, until only the original atom is left, which is the foundation upon which God has built up all this marvelous superstructure. Purified of all the bad qualities of animal and vegetable, and other material organisms, the soul, or what the philosophers call the Ego, only is left, and is only fitted to be in the presence of the Originator of this complex mechanism.

Exactly where the soul comes in, in tracing the changes from type to type, I confess, is a difficult matter to solve. The physical peculiarities are easily defined, but the spiritual developments are [241] very subtle. I am free to confess to you that I don't believe man has a monopoly of all the soul there is in the world. I am prepared to admit that some men don't have souls at all, but only instincts. The common saying, "This man hasn't the soul of a louse," I think may be literally true. Some animals, I solemnly believe, have larger, better and truer souls than some men. All the learned arguments in the world would never convince me that the faithful horse, who is diligent in business, who understands what is said to him, and who stands there weeping big tears out of his eyes, and uttering a mournful cry under the lash of the brute who is driving him, has not a soul, and more than that, a better and bigger soul than his driver. The mental acumen of all the schools would never convince me that the faithful dog who loses his master, searches for him day and night, only to find his grave, and, lying upon that grave, refuses food and drink, and, moaning piteously, dies upon his master's sleeping place, has not a soul. Did you ever look directly into the eyes of the ox, and not see the soul of the animal looking out at you in those soft and expressive orbs? To my mind, blind old Homer never said a finer thing than when he called the mother of the gods, "Ox-eyed Juno," although I think it was an injustice to the animal, because Juno was a scallawag, and deserved just such an old rake of a husband as the Cloud-Bearer.

In these various types we do not always find perfection. There are breaks in the ascent. I will illustrate this to you. Among the insects, there are fleas, mosquitos, cockroaches, and other [242] species, which have not advanced a particle in decency or intelligence above the hideous horned animalisms in the drop of water. Among the birds, there are some types of no more consequence than the insects. In the higher grades of the animals, there are the same unfortunate breaks. In the dog family, for instance, the yellow dog is really far below the plane on which he stands. He belongs to the same category as the skunk. He is of no earthly use to the types above or below him. The only thing he can do is to bark; and as he barks at everything, from the moon to a mud-

puddle, even his barking has no significance. When you get up to men, there is no exception to the rule. Some men have not fully changed from one type to another, but have the characteristics of the lower type in a crude form, like pollywogs and water-newts.

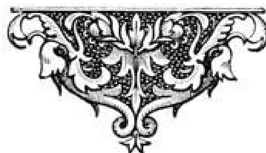
Now, you see, assuming my doctrine to be correct, you can explain a great many peculiarities of men, and the animal characteristics they carry about with them. It explains why some men look like animals; why some men act like a dog; why some are slow as a snail; why some are secretive as a clam; why some absorb all you have got, like a sponge; why some are as dirty as a hog; why some are as sly as a fox; why some are as scaly as a fish; and so on *ad infinitum*. You can find the features of almost every animal in the human face—the ass and the monkey being specially prominent. The number of men, who, in the change of types, have preserved the family semblance to these animals is somewhat remarkable. In fact, the ass was a very hard animal to get by in the ascent. Almost every man now and then makes an ass of himself, and returns to the lower type—the only shade of difference being in the length of the ear. Were it not that a superior power continually holds him in check, man would gravitate downward, as his whole tendency is to retrograde to these lower types. Some men, who are not obstructed by this superior power, manage to get back to the brute and stay there. He must have certain conventional surroundings, also, in addition to this superior power, which is that of education, to keep his elevated position. [243]

I think that the women mainly come from the flowers and the birds. You will find the analogies of nearly all women in the vegetable kingdom. Some women, tender, delicate, fragile, and spiritual, have all the attributes of the violet, and though they may blossom in some out of the way corner, they make everything around them joyous with their beauty and fragrance. Then there are others who flaunt their heads with a pretty disdain, and dazzle you with the beauty of their faces, but the moment you touch them, they fall to pieces like the seeds of the dandelion. They won't bear handling. Then there are women with strong natures, whose bodies are in harness, and souls in curb, who resemble the tough azalea, with a stalk like iron, and flowers we never care to gather, owing to their glutinous consistency. There are other women whom you can't take hold of at all. They repel you from every side like a porcupine. They resemble the fruit of the Durion tree, which is excellent eating provided you have courage enough to get through its hard spikes.

I was reading the other day that the birds of Paradise, when they are in their most gorgeous plumage, select some tree, or other eligible spot, go through with a regular dance for the edification of the other birds, and, during the dance, display their lustrous feathers by spreading them out as much as possible, and chatter together, in an insanely garrulous manner. [244]

I was about to make an application of this custom to women, when I caught the eye of Mrs. Blobbs looking at me in a significant manner. I confess to you I am a little afraid of that majestic woman when she puts on her war-paint, and I immediately refrained, and we arose from the table.

May 15, 1869.



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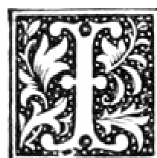
WOMAN IN CHURCH.



IN refusing to admit the women into the Young Men's Christian Association, Brother Moody has thrown aside the strongest element in religious matters which he could have used. Women are peculiarly receptive. Their nature is intensely emotional. They see instinctively where the man has to grope and reason his way up. A thousand sympathetic tendrils stretch out from their hearts, like the arms of the cuttle fish, which seize upon, wind around and draw to the centre, in strong affinity, if not assimilation, every object to which they are attracted. If it be good, it transforms them to angels; if evil, to fiends. No man can be such a saint as a woman; no man such a sinner. It is this intense emotion and natural instinct which admirably qualify them for religious purposes. And it proves, moreover, why, without them, there isn't a church in this city that could live six months. The church membership as every one knows is largely feminine. The influence which the Church exerts is feminine. The sympathy which the minister gets is feminine. His smoking-cap, dressing-robe, slippers, book-marks, donation-parties and other pleasant perquisites are feminine. And all the grumbling, fault-finding, hard work and hard knocks which the minister has to encounter, are [246]

purely masculine. The man, naturally lacking in reverence as well as religion, is inclined to regard the minister from a commercial point of view, and to treat him as an equal, while the woman looks up with admiring reverence.

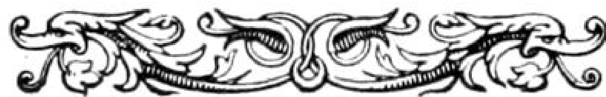
Any woman who has been to church, unless her nearest neighbor has just come out in a new hat, can tell you what text the minister preached from, and give you a syllabus of his discourse. There isn't one man in ten who can do that. The man carries his business into church with him. The woman, unless there is an harassing doubt concerning the integrity of the beans, which might have been placed in the oven a little too soon, leaves her business at home. She can shed her cares as an umbrella sheds rain. The man, be he a dentist, allows dental reflections to insinuate themselves among the threads of the discourse, and wonders how he can get sister this or that into his chair of torture, and mentally determines to try it on at the next sewing-circle. The doctor is rather quietly rejoiced to see a large number of sisters absent, because this argues sickness. Women don't stay away from church unless they are sick, or some one is coming to dinner. The lawyer wonders if a certain statement the minister has made, has any legal bearing, and this leads him to think of the case of Boggs *vs.* Noggs, which is pending in the courts. The merchant who has just seen two of his clerks driving down the avenue at a very rapid rate, with cigars in their mouths, and in a style which seems to indicate they are not going to a Sunday School, wonders where they *are* going, where they got their money to go with, and what they are going [247] to do when they get there. And so on with each class. It is all very well to talk of the quiet of the Sabbath, and the propriety of forgetting the things of this world. It is a pretty theory, but men don't observe it. A man, in course of time, gets his nature so soaked and saturated with the cares, foibles, and follies of this world, that the moment it is squeezed in the slightest degree, some of these things will ooze out. So he thinks of the things of this world, and the words of the minister hum through his thoughts as the buzz of the bees comes to your ears in a hot summer day, when you are lying in the shade of the trees; and, as the architect was in league with the devil when he built the church, the ventilation is slightly bad. All these things militate against watchfulness, and the man, having confidence that the minister is on the right doctrinal track, quietly goes to sleep, and makes no sign thereafter, except to brush a fly from his nose, or nod vigorous assents to the parson's heads with his own.

I have noticed that women do not sleep in church. When Mrs. Blobbs accompanies old Blobbs to church, that good woman's attention is sadly distracted from the sermon, by the constant necessity of punching Old Blobbs in the ribs to keep him from snoring, whereat Old Blobbs opens both eyes wide open, fixes them upon the minister, as if he had never slept a wink in his life, gives his individual and serious attention to the sermon for the space of one minute, gradually closes one eye, as if winking at somebody, then quietly shuts the other, as if he did not want to disturb any one, and in another moment his nose sounds the whistle that he has arrived at the [248] station of Morpheus, which necessitates another punch from Mrs. Blobbs. Thus Old Blobbs is kept between a snore and a swear the whole blessed morning, and goes home to his dinner without a single coherent idea about the sermon, while Mrs. Blobbs can go from firstly to tenthly, and throw in significant remarks about the young fellow who was fool enough to go to sleep on a window sill, while Paul was preaching, resulting in a broken neck, or something of that sort, you know.

Woman gives herself up without a question or a doubt to the inspiration of the hour, with the whole intensity of her emotional nature, very much as I think I should give myself up to the beats and pulsations of the organ-heart of some old cathedral, while the "dim, religious light" streamed in through the stained windows, and saints and martyrs looked down upon me from their niches.

And then a man in a sewing circle, or church sociable, or maternal meeting, or aid society meeting, or anything else of that harmless sort, is as much out of place, and as essentially useless as a coal-heaver would be at a classical concert. And yet these are great aids. They must be in the hands of the women. The major part of the machinery of the church must be engineered by the women. For all these reasons do I think that Brother Moody was unwise to refuse admission to the women.

May 22, 1869.



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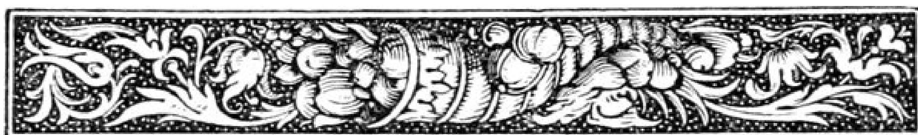

THE MOUNTAINS.

DID you ever go East over the Pennsylvania Central Railroad? If not, do it at your first opportunity, and get a glimpse at the mountain scenery. It will reconcile you to life. The memory of those

grand, imposing forms, towering into the heavens, clothed with their mighty greenery, girdled with the mists and crowned with the eternal sunshine, will stand you in good stead when life presses with its cares and anxieties, and the daily routine frets and worries, and friendship grows forgetful, and the grasshopper begins to be a burden.

I remember that the first thought which flashed upon me, as I stood upon the rear of the train, crawling up the hills in sinuous track, like some great serpent, was not so much the physical aspects as the perfect repose which seemed to brood among them. There was no life apparent—no motion visible. There was a river, which now and then glistened in the sunlight, but it was far down in the valleys, and it seemed from our height only a silver thread, tying the mountains together in a great emerald cluster. You saw the tops of the trees overlaying each other, and covering the mountains like the scales of a fish. But there was no motion in them. They were [250] solid, massive and gigantic as petrified Titans. I do not believe the birds sing on those mountain sides; I do not believe the fairies gambol there in the moonlight, nor even that the insects play their part in the breezy morning symphonies under those still trees. It seems to me that none but a Deity should come down to those mountain tops, and thrice happy the man who can commune with him in that solitude. It seems to me that there would be no need of the written word there. The genius of solitude broods there—on the jutting peaks, in the great trees, in the solemn shadows, in the dark, silent pools and tarns, in the dank, trailing robes of the mist, and in the ineffable golden glory of the sunshine. I can now see how Irma found repose on "the Heights;" how she could reach from the Alpine summits up toward Heaven, and feel the hand of the Great Father reaching down to her; how, among the toils, and the sorrows, and the sins of the little world down in the valleys, the sweet repose of the mountains purified her; and how she struggled out of vice into virtue, out of impurity into perfect purity. I can see how all great souls, tormented with the follies and littleness of the world, with the ungratefulness and faithlessness of those they have trusted, bound down under the weight of their earthly burdens, their wings clipped, and their hands fettered, have longed for the mountain tops, where they might forever forget the world, and be alone with nature and the Deity. I can see how God came down to Moses on the mountain; how the marvelous transfiguration shone from the mountain; how Goethe sang,

"On every height there lies repose."

Another thought struck me, and that was the magnificent littleness of humanity, when it is [251] brought into the presence of these mighty manifestations of Nature. What a poor little speck you are upon the great canvas! How small you look with your aches and pains, your fusses and foibles, your fashions and furbelows, your vanities and ambitions, in this eternal presence! How evanescent is fame; how transient is wealth; how feeble is love; how fickle is friendship; how small is this hand-breadth of life; how utterly insignificant all accomplishment of human industry; how utterly pinchbeck all displays of human grandeur, compared with this awful majesty of Nature! How few men have caught the mountain spirit and left it in their works! Blot out Shakspeare and Milton and Dante, Moses and Paul and Martin Luther, Raphael and Michael Angelo, Rembrandt, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Bach, and who is left to correspond with the height and depth, the majesty and solitude of the mountains? Not that genius was confined to them, but the other great names have been celebrated in the valleys, by the brooks, and among the flowers. They made the earth lovelier and brighter for their presence, but they did not reach the heights of human nature, where dwells everlasting repose. They saw the star-shadows on the water, but these others soared to them in the heavens. They sowed the world with richest flowers of thought. To these others, it was given to pluck the asphodels and amaranths growing by eternal waters. They budded in the trees of the valleys, and their songs were sweet. These others sought the regions above the storms with their eagle-flights, and when their voices come to us [252] from their calm heights, they are laden with an awful majesty and beauty, as the west is now laden with the thunder-clouds, and pregnant with sweeping power, as those clouds are now pregnant with the lightnings.

The physical aspects of these mountains are marvelously beautiful. What a compact wall the tree-tops make! They seem impervious even to the sharpest lightning. Their forms give you every diversity of surface. Their outlines are never harsh or rugged, but always undulating and graceful. As the train sweeps along, now you get only the bold, precipitous wall of one mountain side. In a minute you get a view of another face. Now a chain of mountains group themselves together in a superb tableau. Now they form the gigantic setting of a peaceful green valley with a river laughing in its face, with here and there the dot of a house, and the column of thin, blue smoke no bigger than that which curls up from your cigar. The next instant the pretty vision is swept out of sight. You are thundering along on the edge of a curve right in the clutches of these Titans. The motion of the train impresses you with the idea that they are moving down upon it with resistless might, and that they will crush it like an egg-shell. You are surrounded with dense shadows. The mountains are bowing down their shaggy heads. You almost feel their weight pressing down upon you, and their breath, full of the bracing essence of life, in your face. It seems almost profanation to speak with such a presence near you, and you can only think thoughts too deep for the fashion of words. But anon, the train speeds through the sulphurous blackness of a tunnel, and you emerge into the sunlight, rolling in great waves of gold up the [253] mountain sides, and giving you weird effects of light and shade, and constantly changing emerald tints that would mock the finest frenzy of the artist. I believe the clouds love to deck the mountains, as the sea loves to deck the shore with shells and sea-flowers. A sunrise or sunset in those mountains when the heavens are full of clouds, shows what dyes nature can use, and what forms she can mould, as you will see them nowhere else.

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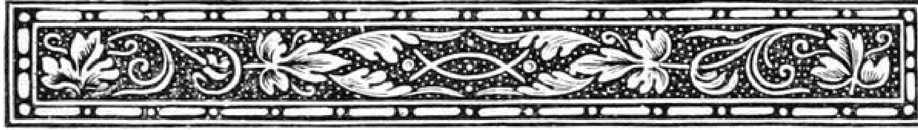
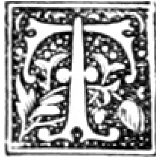


THE JUBILEE.

Boston, June 15, 1869.

HE day of Jubilee has come.

Boston has been in a flutter of agitation and excitement to-day; for, truth to say, Boston herself has not been over sanguine as to the success of the Jubilee. It is probable that not a person in the city has regarded the experiment in the light of an unquestioned success, except Mr. Gilmore, in whose fertile brain the Jubilee was conceived, and by whom it has been pushed forward, in the face of obstacles, to a successful birth. When Mr. Gilmore offered the Jubilee to New York, the Manhattanites laughed at him, and gently insinuated that he had gone clean daft, whereupon Mr. Gilmore took his embryonic Jubilee to Boston, and, undaunted by obstacles, and unannoyed by the gibes and jeers of the faithless, he worked in season and out of season, put this wheel and that wheel together, got this man and that man interested in it, melted even the adamantine hearts of the musicians themselves, and at last got his project so far advanced that it became a matter of city pride to put the municipal shoulder to the wheel and help Gilmore out with his mammoth undertaking. And Boston did help him right royally. Once provided with the ducats and with the collaterals, which guaranteed him financial safety, the foundations of the enterprise were laid, and the superstructure grew rapidly. [255] Singers and instruments, big singers and little singers, big fiddles and little fiddles, poured in as fast and as thick as the dogs and cats in Beard's picture. I myself saw, riding on a boat of Commodore Fisk's, from New York to Fall River, *en route* to the Jubilee, sixty double basses ranged along on the deck, like coffins swathed in green bags, and to-day I saw them again manipulated in the vast orchestra, to show that I do not lie.

The material was, at last, all in his hands, and the material was composed of one thousand instruments—a big organ, ten thousand singers, a Coliseum, and sundry properties by way of appendices, such as a battery of artillery, church bells, and anvils. And the question immediately arose:

What will he do with them?

This is the question which has agitated Boston to-day, from the harbor to the Back Bay, and from Bunker Hill to Jamaica Plain. When Boston woke up this morning, notwithstanding her doubts, she dressed herself in festal garments of streamers, flags and bunting, to do honor to the occasion, and to properly impress the strangers within her borders with the fact that she was out for a holiday, and was bound to enjoy herself. And there were strangers enough within her borders. Every other man you met upon the narrow sidewalks was a carpet-bagger, and every other woman had a roll of music in her hands. Band musicians in all sorts of uniforms, carrying all sorts of odd-looking boxes, met you and jostled you at every turn, for it is impossible for two people to pass each other upon a Boston sidewalk, especially if one has a box or a carpet-bag in [256] his hands. Every train and every boat which has arrived to-day was loaded down with musical freight, and all the morning they filed down Boylston street to the Coliseum, in water-proof cloaks with their rolls of music. The hotels are filled with them. The boarding houses are full, both in the city and in the suburbs, and even some of the public halls have been provided with cots, to accommodate the melodious strangers, who have come here to lift up their voices in the grand chorus.

And it is a grand chorus. In 1836, Mendelssohn, the great master, led 536 performers, and ten years later led his own "Elijah," with a chorus of 700 before him. In 1862 a chorus of 4,000 voices sang together at the Crystal Palace in London; and last year Costa led 4,500 in the same building. It was considered a great event—an episode in the history of music. Julien, that eccentric little conductor, conceived the idea of increasing upon this number, but the very magnitude of his operations turned his brain, and he died in a mad-house—his disordered mind, even in his dying moments, being occupied with an imaginary orchestra. It has been left for Mr. Gilmore to eclipse them all. What was some time a problem is now a fixed fact; and the annals of music can show no grander triumph than that which this daring, hard working man has achieved this day. When Mr. Gilmore's baton closed the final chord of the massive Martin Luther choral, he had done something which was worth living for. He had a right to be proud of his work.

The Coliseum in which the Jubilee is given, is upon the made lands of the Back Bay. Upon its site young Boston has fished in the summer, and skated in the winter. When Boston had filled out to [257] the water's edge, it did what Canute could not do. It commenced to drive back the sea, and each step that the sea receded was filled up and built upon. Aristocracy turned its eyes thitherward, and went there to build its free-stone fronts, and made it the handsomest part of the city. The Coliseum is on the newest of this land, where it has not yet been divided off into lots. Its immediate surroundings, therefore, are not very attractive. The exterior of the building is not remarkably beautiful, and the fine Natural History rooms, and other elegant buildings near by, provoke architectural comparisons not particularly favorable to it. It has a cheerful, pleasant appearance, however, and derives a certain sort of brilliancy from the little flags of divers colors which flutter in the breeze from every salient point. The hucksters and venders of notions, who have improved the occasion to turn an honest or dishonest penny, as the case may be, have not improved the *ensemble* with their scores of board shanties and canvas tents, which have been dumped down upon the crude ground in every direction. Their name is almost literally legion. There are venders of ice creams, which are mushy and sloppy; of soda water with gaudily colored syrups; of innocent vegetable beer, for the hard hand of the law forbids the sale of anything stronger; of domestic cigars compounded of innocuous herbs; of oranges, and pop corn, and bananas, and photographs, and fans. At this shanty you may get revolving heels placed upon your boots, and at that one you can get key tags stamped. [258] Here the wild men of Borneo are delighting a crowd, and there you may see a two-headed monkey cheap. Blind men are selling ballads. Small girls are vending hot roasted peanuts. Here is a shooting gallery, and there a fandango. The old buxom Irish women of the common, who have been accustomed to drowse away their days under the elms, have suddenly become imbued with the enterprise of the hour, and are driving sharp bargains on the Back Bay in oranges and candy, and puff away at their dhudeens with an air of self congratulation.

Notwithstanding these drawbacks, however, the Coliseum admirably answers the purposes for which it was built. It is large enough to accommodate all who will go. Its ventilation is excellent; its acoustic properties good, and its conveniences perfect as they can be. The interior is beautifully decorated with bunting, streamers, flags, and various paintings and devices. The sub-rooms, especially the reception room, are exquisitely adapted to the purposes for which they were designed. The latter room, this morning, presented a perfect wilderness of flowers, and its walls were hung with elegant paintings. Its seating capacity is, I should judge, between thirty and forty thousand, exclusive of the chorus and orchestra. The roughness and blank appearance of unfinished wood-work, has been concealed by drapery and bunting very gracefully arranged, and from one end of the Coliseum to the other, the eye is attracted by the brightest of colors.

It is now my task to describe to you the opening concert, and I freely confess my inability to do so. As I write you, the deep diapason of that mighty organ, the surging waves of harmony from the largest orchestra and the marvelous sublimity of the largest chorus the world has ever [259] known, are still in my ears, and it seems to me that I can find no words to describe it. I can feel it, but I cannot make you feel it with poor words. It almost seems a profanation to attempt it. To see that multitude alone is electrifying. It makes your blood stir within you, to look upon that great sea of faces stretching off into the distance, and to know that one man holds them in his hand, and with his little baton guides and sways them at his will. One man in that vast throng is only as one drop in the sea—one grain of sand upon the shore. His voice is indistinguishable, but the aggregate, you feel within you, will be as the on-coming of the mighty storm.

Picture to yourself the scene. Immediately before you is the orchestra, one thousand strong, occupying the level platform. The brasses are at the rear, as you may easily perceive, by a strip as of gold, which runs through the sombre black, and right between them is a huge bass drum, looming up like the wheel of a steamboat. From this level platform, on three sides, rises an amphitheatre, which holds the great chorus, ten thousand strong. The sopranos are on the left, the altos on the right, and the tenors and bassos in the centre, and up from their midst rise the open pipes of the great organ, the player of which sits facing the conductor, at some distance from the organ, communicating with him by means of speaking tubes. Sub-conductors are also located near each of the choral parts, who convey the instructions of the main conductors. Just at the right of the conductor there is an electrical battery which communicates with a section of artillery at a distance. [260] The instrumental performers are arranged in the orchestra. The first, the chorus orchestra, is made up as follows:

Stringed.		*Wind.*	
First Violins	115	Flutes	8
Second Violins	100	Clarionets	8
Violoncellos	65	Oboes	8
Violas	65	Bassoons	8
Double Basses	85	Horns	12
	——	Trumpets	8
	430	Trombones	9
	74	Tubas	3
	——	Drums	10
Total,	504		——
			74

The grand orchestra is composed of the following instruments, in addition to those specified

above:

Piccolos and Flutes	25
E♭ Clarionets	20
B♭ Clarionets	50
E♭ Cornets	50
B♭ Cornets	75
E♭ Alto Horns	75
B♭ Tenor Horns	25
Tenor Trombones	50
Bass Trombones	25
B♭ Baritones	25
E♭ Basso Tubas	75
Small Drums	50
Bass Drums	25
Cymbals	10
Triangles	10
	——
	590
Chorus Orchestra	504
	——
Total	1094

The players and singers are all in their places. The organ sounds a few chords, and the players tune their instruments therefrom. Ole Bull comes in and takes his seat at the head of the first violinists, amid applause from all parts of the house, and the veteran Norwegian cavalier sits there, with his bow upon his violin, as straight and as lordly as one of his own pines, watching the conductor with flashing eyes. It is Mr. Gilmore who has just followed him, and as he takes the stand, enthusiasm breaks out in every part of the vast building, and the applause is loud and long. When it has subsided, he raises his baton. The chorus rises, and there is something stirring even in the rising of such a vast throng. The audience is hushed, and, for an instant, there is perfect stillness. The baton descends, and chorus, orchestra and organ sound in a mighty chord of harmony the opening note of Martin Luther's grand old choral. As they sweep along through its slow and solemn movement as regularly as the swing of a pendulum, the organ's mighty diapason upholding the whole and keeping them together, it is like the voice of many waters. It is not a chaos of noise, as I had dreamed it would be; not a mere volume of sound without music. The voices come to you blended together as the sounds of nature—the songs of the birds, the blasts of the winds and the rushings of the torrents—blend. The instruments are powerful, but smooth. In that vast array you lose the scrape of the strings and the blare of the brasses. They are toned down into pure harmony, and through all, in all, and about all, come the mighty voices of the organ as the thunders come in the storm. The tears are in your eyes before you know it. The audience before you disappears. You are lifted, as it were, upon the great waves of music into the very presence of the infinite, and the outside world, with all its petty cares and troubles, is forgotten. On the repeat, the choral is commenced *pianissimo*, and the music comes to you as if from afar over the water. Gradually it approaches you, and, with a superb *crescendo*, in which the organ carries everything along with it, the cadenza is reached in a burst of harmony you have never heard before. You may never hear it again. The conductor steps down from his stand amid thunders of applause. It is at last proven that the Jubilee will be a musical success. [261] [262]

Such singing and such playing I have never heard before. I do not believe anything like it has ever been heard in the world. At first, it seems to you that the choruses are not in time, for, from first to last, they have not been with the conductor's beat, to one sitting at some distance. Of course, you see the beat before you hear the sound, as you see the wood-chopper's axe descend upon the distant hillside before you hear the blow, and thus the chorus seems to be behind, when, in reality, it is with the conductor.

Julius Eichberg, who wrote the pretty little "Doctor of Alcantara," next takes the baton, and the grand orchestra addresses itself to the unraveling of Wagner's Tannhauser overture. The massing of instruments in the opening of the overture is superb, and the main theme is delivered with remarkable beauty. Soon they are lost in the intricate modulations and chaotic discords of this musician of the future; but when they begin to emerge into the chromatic violin runs, and return once more to something which has a resemblance to melody and a meaning in it, it is with a splendid burst of power; and one is almost compelled to acknowledge that there is method in this Bavarian madman, after all. [263]

Once more, the chorus rises, and Carl Zerrahn takes the baton—the flute-player of the old Germania orchestra, and one of the most accomplished musicians living. He is a great favorite, both for his musical and his gentlemanly qualities, and he is greeted with a very storm of applause. The "Gloria" from Mozart's "Twelfth Mass" is next on the programme. He is a very easy and graceful, and yet forcible leader, and, notwithstanding the intricacy of the accompaniment and the difficulty of the vocal score, under the magical influence of his baton, the sublimity of the "Gloria" finds a graphic illustration.

Gounod's "Ave Maria," so full of suggestions of "Faust," is the next number, and Parepa comes forward to sing it, dressed in pure white. She receives a perfect ovation. In the morning, at

rehearsal, she had been very nervous. The vast orchestra and chorus before her almost terrified her, and she was confident she could but make her voice heard for a short distance. The "Ave Maria" is not a fair test of the capabilities of her voice, however, as she has only an accompaniment of *two hundred violins* to do the *obligato*. She bows to the audience, and, turning, acknowledges the hearty welcome which the chorus has given her. Every tone of her voice is audible, even in the most distant parts of the hall. Its absolute purity, and the entire absence of woodiness in it, make it heard, and give you confidence that you will also hear it in the [264] "Inflammatus," where she will have a severe test.

The "Star-Spangled Banner" is the next feature. It has been arranged differently for this occasion, which may account for a slight *faux pas* which happened. The tenors and bassos take the first verse, and the sopranos and altos the second verse in unison, which gives you an excellent opportunity of hearing the various parts of the great chorus by themselves. It would be difficult to say which was the best, although I am inclined to give the palm to the tenors, and yet I think no one who heard them can ever forget the other parts. A serious mistake occurred in the accompaniment. The trumpets are badly out. Some of the other brasses follow, and draw off some of the violins. The chorus begins to waver. There is danger of a disastrous breakdown. Gilmore, who is at the baton, is growing nervous; he fairly jumps up and down in his anxiety. And still it is running away, when suddenly Wilcox opens all the great organ, and with a crash of sound and an obstinately right *tempo*, brings all the discordant elements together again. The artillery peals in with its thunder in perfect time, and as the last measure closes, the whole audience rise unanimously to their feet at once, and the most intense excitement prevails. Thousands of handkerchiefs are waved by the ladies and flutter in the air like white doves. Men wave their hats and clap their hands, and the air is filled with bravos and cheers, which are kept up until the *encore* is given.

Parepa has the next number, and it is her favorite number—the "Inflammatus" from the Stabat Mater. Her voice has now a test such as it has never had before; for in the last few measures she [265] has to sing against the full choral accompaniment of ten thousand voices, the thousand instruments, and the organ. She passes through the ordeal bravely. In the most distant part of the house you can hear her voice. The sustaining of the upper C and the trills were superbly done; and as she closed, her sustained high tones were as pure and as beautiful as those of a bird singing in the distance. It was a grand triumph for her, and the audience evidently regarded it in the same manner, for they gave her a very hearty and unmistakable *encore*, to which she replied with a repetition of the same. The absolute purity of her voice was never better tested than upon this occasion.

Verdi should have been present to have heard his Anvil Chorus performed. He is pre-eminently the great apostle of noise, and ten thousand voices, one thousand instruments, one hundred anvils—pounded by two hundred stalwart firemen in perfect time—and a battery of artillery, adding to the din and marking the time without a break, could not but have delighted him. The effect was simply indescribable. The aggregate of sound was gigantic. The firemen had been well trained, without the orchestra, by Mr. Gilmore himself, and, although the whole affair was more or less sensational and noisy, the effect was very stirring, and the audience insisted upon an *encore*. Oliver Wendell Holmes' Hymn, set to the music of Keller's "American Hymn;" the overture to "William Tell," which was deliciously given; the Coronation March from the "Prophet," and the national air, "America," completed this remarkable performance.

[266] There were probably few among unprejudiced persons who did not anticipate a musical failure upon this occasion. Many considered it a piece of Boston braggadocio, and others a musical experiment, in which all the chances were unfavorable. The result, however, has proved just the reverse. With the exception, here and there, of slight mistakes, in which some instruments got out of time and occasioned variations which were so trifling that they did not interfere with the effect, the whole affair was a musical success.

June 16, 1869.

The weather yesterday was purely Bostonian: wind from the southeast, drizzling rains, dull, leaden clouds hurrying up from the salt water, a sultry, humid atmosphere, and muddiest of all muddy flag-stones. It was an inauspicious atmospherical commencement for the Jubilee, but to-day the motto of the festival is granted, and we have peace. The skies are bright, the air cool and bracing, and those little green oases in the brick and stone desert, the Common and Public Gardens, are as pleasant to the eye and as grateful to the senses as the gardens of Paradise. The trees are alive with birds, the fountains are glistening in the sunshine, and the cool walks are crowded with pleasure-seekers and curiosity-hunters.

It is a gala day in Boston; for, in view of the arrival of the President, the City Fathers have proclaimed a holiday, and all Boston and the rest of the universe which revolves around it, including Saugus Centre and Newton Four Corners, have turned out to see General Grant and [267] each other, eat popcorn and bananas, hear the great chorus, and get all bedraggled and tired out by sunset. The city is dressed out gaily in the red, white and blue, and, true to the American characteristics, as much business as possible is combined with it in the way of advertising. The American Eagle is made to carry a fearful commercial weight upon his generous back in Boston to-day, from the squat female Hibernian dealer in fly-specked candies, even, to sundry granite-fronted, wholesale, solid men who live in the omnipresent free-stone houses on the Back Bay. The

streets are literally crammed with people. Locomotion is a tedious affair upon these ribbons of sidewalks, and the surging crowd sometimes carries you, whether you will or no, into all sorts of alleys and by-ways and serpentine streets, which are sure to land you at somebody's front door. Fourth of July, the Saints' Day of Boston, is in danger of its multitudinous laurels, for it has never witnessed greater crowds than the magic baton of Gilmore has brought here.

Before I tell you of this second day of the Jubilee, I have a few incidents of interest wherewith to prelude it. And first, the organ itself is a noteworthy feature here, for it is the back-bone of the music, which holds the ribs and small bones of the Jubilee, keeps them in place, and prevents fracture. The organ was manufactured by the Messrs. Hook, expressly for the occasion, in the short space of four weeks, and was built with the design in view of combining strength and volume of tone with the least possible space in occupancy. The instrument has a very novel appearance, for the reason that it stands without a case. Above a very slight casing of chestnut and walnut, all the pipes of the "flute a Pavilion" are displayed—a stop which answers to the "Open Diapason." Behind these and others are the pipes of the "Bombarde," a sixteen-feet reed stop, and, still behind these, the vast wooden pipes of the "Grand Sub Bass," which form a double wall across the rear of the organ. On each side are the pipes of the "Pedale Posanne." The grouping of the pipes is very symmetrical, and presents quite as imposing, if not so beautiful an appearance as an elaborate case. The width of the organ across the front is twenty-two feet, and the height thirty feet. The wind-pressure used is at least four times that of ordinary organs, requiring four thousand pounds weight upon the bellows. Notwithstanding its great power, the tone is by no means harsh, but very agreeably rich and pleasant, and combines great intensity and solidity with the most brilliant seriousness conceivable. Its marvelous power and volume were specially manifested yesterday, when the orchestra began to break in the "Star-Spangled Banner." Mr. Wilcox, for a moment, seemed to be gathering up the resources of the organ in his hands, and then let it out in a manner which resembled the rushing of a storm more than anything else; but it had the effect to bring order out of chaos, and when once more he gathered back and restrained its powers, the instruments were playing like a charm. [268]

Individuals count but little in this vast assemblage of singers and players, and yet there are notable people there whose superb solo singing and playing have been familiar to the public in concert rooms and opera for years. Look among the first violinists and you will see Ole Bull, prince of them all, fired with the spirit of the occasion. In the aggregate of sound you cannot hear a tone from his violin, and yet you know from his manner that the old Scandinavian is playing as he never played before. There is Carl Rosa, the *petite* Hamburger, a boy among them in appearance, wielding his bow with the general enthusiasm of the occasion. There is Schultze, who, years ago—how many leaves have fallen since then—stood at the head of the first violinists in the old Germania Orchestra, and distracted the ladies with the fine tinge of his cheeks and his "Sounds from Home;" and Zerrahn, who stood opposite him in that same organization, playing the flute, is now wielding the baton for his old compatriot. There is Julius Eichberg, who wrote the charming "Doctor of Alcantara" and the "Two Cadis," a most accomplished musician; and there are Grill and Mollenhauer, Besig and Moll, of New York. In the second violins you will find Carl Meisel, of the Mendelssohn Quintette; Eichler, of Boston; Reichardt, Ritter, Conrad and others, of New York. Thomas Ryan has dropped his clarionet and Heindl has dropped his flute, and both have taken violas in the grand orchestra. Wulf Fries and Suck and Henry Mollenhauer have their violoncellos before them, and Muller and Stein their double basses. Koppitz, Zohler and Carlo are blowing their flutes. Among the oboes you will find De Ribas, Mente and Taulwasser. And glorious Arbuckle sends the clarion blasts of his cornet shivering through the music as a flash of lightning cuts through a cloud. [269]

Among the singers also, you will find notable names. Among the sopranos are the matchless Parepa, Mrs. H. M. Smith, Mrs. Sophia Mozart, Miss Gates, Miss Annie Granger, Miss Graziella Ridgway, Mrs. D. C. Hall, Miss S. W. Barton and Mrs. J. W. Weston. Among the altos are Adelaide Phillipps, Mrs. Drake, Miss Addie S. Ryan, Mrs. C. A. Barry, and Mrs. Guilmette. Among the tenors are the two Whitneys, L. W. Wheeler and James P. Draper. There are prominent singers also among the bassos, such names as Rudolphsen, Powers, McLellan, Ardavani, Perkins, Kimball, M. W. Whitney and Dr. Guilmette. [270]

The telegraph will have anticipated me concerning the movements of General Grant. His arrival, and the fact that he would be present at the Coliseum, swelled the crowd about that building and in the vicinity to enormous proportions. The streets were one swaying, surging mass of humanity. Vehicles were jammed together in inextricable confusion. The horse-cars found it impossible to proceed, and, being piled together in long lines, sometimes a mile in length, added to the general distraction. The Hub was in a hubbub. I made the journey from the Coliseum to the State House, ordinarily a five minutes' walk, in exactly one hour by the Park Street Church clock, which never lies. As the time approached for the opening of the concert, the rush was fearful. At every one of the twelve entrances to the Coliseum, thousands of people were jammed together, pushing and fairly trampling upon one another. The efforts of the police, efficient as they have been, were of no avail. Hundreds and hundreds of people who had tickets turned and went away, rather than face that crowd. Women became timid and shrank from it. There were some, however, who resolutely went in, and some of them came out squeezed. Some fainted and were, with difficulty, extricated. Not one of them but had rumpled feathers, smashed *paniers*, dishevelled hair and flushed, perspiring faces, when they had fairly effected an entrance. For an hour at least this terrible crush continued. It was such a crowd as Boston has never seen before. It is doubtful whether any city has ever witnessed the like. And all this while all the streets, even the spacious Common, were densely packed, so that walking was impossible. The trees bore human fruit in [271]

black clusters. The fences were selvedged with humanity. All the doorsteps of the palatial stone fronts stood disgusted with the loads of country cousins they were compelled to bear.

The audience inside the Coliseum was a scene for a lifetime. It gave you an idea of the sublimity of humanity such as is rarely afforded. There must have been, including the performers, 50,000 people inside that building. Far as you could see, and you can see a great way in that building, was one vast sea of human faces. It was a sublime sight, and it was a beautiful sight as well, for the blues and purples of the ladies' apparel catching the sunlight which streamed in through the windows, made it seem like a garden of gorgeous flowers, and shine in splendid contrast with the reds and yellows of the flags and streamers, and when, in a moment of sudden applause, the waving of handkerchiefs fluttered over this vast crowd, it was hard to convince yourself that they were not white-winged birds, flying over the throng. For a time, the rush inside the Coliseum was almost as terrific as that outside.

Some delay was experienced in waiting for the President and his staff, and when they did enter, [272] the whole audience had become seated. Their appearance was the signal for a general uprising. The great organ pealed out above the multitudinous din, "See the Conquering Hero Comes." He advanced to his seat, in the centre of the house, amid a perfect storm of applause, waving of handkerchiefs, bravos and cheers, and standing upon his sofa acknowledged them.

When the President had taken his seat and order was restored, Carl Zerrahn took the conductor's stand to lead the festival overture, based upon the Luther Choral, *Ein Feste Berg ist unser Gott*, the simple theme of which had been sung the day before. The arrangement is by Nicolai, and is in fugue treatment, opening with the theme for all parts. The fugue is then taken by the orchestra and superbly worked up. The chorus anon takes the same fugue, and closes by returning to the original theme, which was given with immense power and effect. The programme was mainly of an oratorio character, and this school of music probably never before had such a magnificent illustration. The dignity, grandeur and sublimity, and the solemn power of the great oratorio master-pieces could never before have been fully felt. The first selections were the "Glory to God in the Highest," and the chorus, "And the Glory of the Lord shall be Revealed," from the "Messiah," which were given with admirable effect and with better singing than characterized the first day's concert.

The next number on the programme was the recitative and aria, "*Non piu di fiori*," from Mozart's "La Clemenza di Tito," for Miss Adelaide Phillipps, and as that lady came forward she was [273] received with very hearty applause, but not with that cordiality of greeting I had expected to witness from a Boston audience to a Boston singer. Her selection was a most unfortunate one. It was too florid in character and marred the unity of the oratorio nature of the performance. It would have been in much better taste also to have selected something in English than in Italian. It is but simple truth also to say that her singing was no better than her taste in selection. She was not able to cope with the obstacles of the house and the audience. But one tone of her voice was thoroughly distinct at the rear of the hall. Her singing, at a distance, was so very expressionless that it fell utterly cold and flat, and people talked and turned uneasily in their seats. And perhaps it was worse than all else that she did not sing true, and at one time was almost hopelessly floating along upon a discord. Every advantage was afforded her, for only a handful of instruments accompanied her, and these were toned down to *pianissimo*. Her fine chest voice, which is so effective on the operatic stage, was almost inaudible beyond the centre of the hall. A flutter of applause ran over the audience when she had finished, and then came Mendelssohn's magnificent chorus from "Elijah"—"He watching over Israel." Zerrahn leaves the orchestra in the hand of another conductor, and takes his place in the centre of the vast chorus with baton in hand. There must be no mistake made in Felix Mendelssohn's music. Its ineffable beauty must not be marred by a single spot or flaw. And it was not. The two conductors' batons moved as if they were in the hands of one, and, from first to last, the chorus and orchestra were [274] together in perfect time and with the most tender regard for light and shade. I could not help wishing that Felix Mendelssohn himself could have been there. How small and feeble would the 500 Birmingham performers have seemed to him in the presence of this vast multitude! How his great heart would have rejoiced within him to have heard this chorus, so full of dignity, and piety, and beauty, sung by such a massing of voices and instruments! What letters he would have written to his sister! To have heard that performance was the event of a lifetime, for it may never be done again. Had I been Carl Zerrahn, it seems to me, I should have been the happiest man in the world. If spirits are allowed to visit this lower world, then certainly the spirit of Mendelssohn must have been in that hall, and must have guided and inspired that baton, for it held the singers, organ and instruments together like magic, and when it had made its last beat, the audience broke out into loud and long continued applause.

Parepa came upon the platform for the next number, "Let the Bright Seraphim," from Handel, and received an ovation which even eclipsed that given to the President. Arbuckle took his place beside her, to play the trumpet *obligato*, using the cornet as players invariably do. The instrument and voice were twins in time and tone, and the responses of the singer to the trumpet came every time, as truthful as an echo. I have never heard a more marvelously beautiful piece of singing with an instrument, and, when it was finished, the applause was almost deafening in every part of the vast building, the chorus joining in with the audience. The cheers and bravos, [275] which compelled an *encore*, fairly shook the building.

In the interim, between the two parts, the Star-Spangled Banner and the Anvil Chorus were repeated, for the gratification of the President. In the second part, the C major symphony of Schubert was given. The hour was growing late, and only the Andante and Finale were played.

"The Heavens are Telling," sung with immense effect, closed the concert.

June 17, 1869.

The sudden death of Mrs. George L. Dunlap, of Chicago, during the concert yesterday, has caused a widespread feeling of sadness here, even among those who were not acquainted with her; while those who did know her, and were familiar with her many lovely traits of character, deeply feel this sudden bereavement. She passed away in the twinkling of an eye, literally without warning, and expired in the arms of one of her dearest friends, Mrs. Ellis, of Chicago. It was a startling fact in the midst of so much life! Fifty thousand hearts pulsating to the sublime music from the great chorus, and one is suddenly stilled forever! No one among the many thousands who were present yesterday entered with lighter heart, more buoyant spirits, or apparently better health; and if you had been asked to select the one in that great throng whom Death would strike first, she would have been the last you would have selected. I saw her on Tuesday as she sat in her place, her face beaming with delight as she listened to the music, and I saw her again on yesterday, as she suddenly fell into the arms of her brother like a rose snapped [276] from its stem; and I can scarcely yet comprehend that she is dead. She breathed her last breath as Parepa was singing the angelic song, "Let the Bright Seraphim," and she passed from among us and joined those seraphim and continued the song. And it seems to me, if I had been permitted to look into that far country, that I should have seen her sitting by the side of the angelic old master, Handel, telling him of the celestial song which so suddenly died upon her ears in the presence of the vast multitude, whose song was as the voice of many waters, and that I should have seen him bending forward, with a thoughtful look, and listening to her as she told him of the "Messiah," which she had heard on the day before she died. I know that she and the master will be friends through all eternity, and thus the majesty of genius and the beauty of loveliness will be joined together forever.

And to him who sits in bereavement to-day, may there come consolation and the gift of the tender pity of the Great Father, and may the darkened homes in Boston and Chicago be made holy for all his and their coming days, with the recollections of her loveliness and true womanly character.

It is a clear, cloudless day, and had that man Gilmore, with the steam engine inside of him, made special arrangements with the weather-clerk, he could not have secured a more auspicious day. The crowd yesterday was great, but the crowd to-day is greater.

The programme to-day is purely a popular one. There are the overture to Fra Diavolo, a Peace March composed for the occasion by Janotta, whoever he is, which is not original and very [277] tiresome; the inevitable Anvil Chorus, with the artillery and bells; a sensational and rather commonplace overture, built up by C. C. Converse, on "Hail Columbia;" and national airs, which the orchestra flounder through rather than play. Indeed, if you watch Wulf Fries, Rosa, Schultze, or any of the leading players, you see their faces all scowled up as they wade through so much musical swash, so unworthy of the great orchestra. In fact, there is no atmosphere of art here to-day. The only feature of interest in the Fra Diavolo overture is the trumpet solo, which is taken by fifty instruments instead of one, and gives out a clarion blast which might wake the dead. The rest of the overture, however does not go well. The second violins are shocking. Gilmore has not got them well in hand. In the Grand March, done by Janotta for the occasion, there are reminiscences all the way through, of Tannhauser, the Coronation and the Wedding March, and the connecting links are very weak, sometimes almost stupid. The man who writes marches for such an orchestra should be inspired. He should feel the electricity of the great audience tingling through his veins. Heavens! If only Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Handel, Haydn, Meyerbeer, Rossini, anybody, were living to write for this organ and orchestra. We want columbiads and have got pop-guns—a mountain thunder-storm, and we have a silly April rain—a Jeremiah, and we have nothing better than Daniel Pratt. Converse's trivial arrangement of "Hail Columbia" is no better, perhaps not so good. It is profanation to devote a thousand instruments and an organ four times the power of that in the Music Hall to such commonplaces. The old masters would have died [278] contented once to have got the *baton* in their hands with such a massing of instruments and voices for the production of their works. Then, again, we are treated to Bilse's "*Marche Militaire*," to the "Star Spangled Banner," the "Harp that Once thro' Tara's Halls," and the overture to "Stradella," all good enough in their way and in their place. But how feeble, how purposeless, how silly they all are in this place! What does Hercules want of a wax doll? Or Samson of a child's grasp to carry off the gates of Gaza?

We have again the "Anvil Chorus." To be sure, it goes well. The artillery is fired with strict precision, because it can't be fired any other way. It emphasizes the initial notes of the bars very grandly and very effectively, but then what is the use of emphasizing such stuff at all? The firemen pound their anvils very precisely, and on the very second of time, and make a very hearty cling-clang; but it would be to more purpose were a hundred horses waiting to be shod. There is no music in all this. It is noisy; it is sensational; it is humbug; it is anything you please—but music. And yet the audience is hugely delighted and they demand the *bis* each day; and this, too, in Boston, where the purists live—where art is supposed to have its home and flourish like the green bay tree. Tell it not in Gath that a Boston audience has *encored* Verdi's Anvil Chorus, performed by red-shirted firemen, batteries of artillery, etc., and allowed the grand chorals of Luther and "He Watching Over Israel," which were done as they have never been done before—which were so full of sublimity and majesty and dignity, and so musically excellent in their [279]

treatment that it made one's heart fairly stop beating—to go by almost without recognition. It seemed to me that all possibilities of life and all conditions of the hereafter were bound up in that performance of Mendelssohn's chorus. Zerrahn himself approached it with fear and trembling. The organ was silenced. The instruments were toned down. He would not even trust himself upon the conductor's stand, but took his place right in the heart of the vast chorus. How sweetly the sopranos take the opening of the theme, and then come the tenors alone—"Shouldst thou walking in grief." How sublimely that prayer is delivered? Then how part after part rises in splendid climax and finally dies away in a soft *piano*, with just the faintest ripple of sounding, like the plashing of waves on a beach, stealing across the orchestra! There is a slapping of hands among the audience as if the music had been tolerated, but they will go crazy when the Anvil Chorus comes.

To-day, I have sat within three rows of the conductor's stand. The effect is very grand, but it is more noise than music, and you can put nothing together. If you go to the rear of the hall, you get a better harmonic blending and less noise. Indeed, a thousand performers in Farwell Hall would make just as much noise as the ten thousand performers do in the Coliseum, or, rather, the effect would strike you with equal power. It is probable that no amount of technical skill upon the part of the conductor, or of force and fidelity upon the part of the singers, could change this. It is impossible for such a great body of sound, occupying such a vast space, to reach a single ear with anything like its full force, or even with any degree of regularity; and if you watch the conductor, [280] you will be still more confused, for, apparently, he is beating ahead of time—such is the discrepancy of time between the blow of the baton and the speed with which time travels. The chorus may, and with trivial exceptions does, follow the beat of the conductor with great precision, but the confusion is always noticeable. Again, the distance from those in the rear of the chorus to the front ranks is very large, and, although all may start upon the beat, by the time the sounds reach you, there is a difference, very slight, it is true, but nevertheless perceptible, especially in words ending with "s," "t," or any harsh letter. In the long notes of the chorals which are decidedly *the* features of the concert, you do not notice it so much, but, in many of the quick choruses, sometimes everything seems at sea to you, when, in reality, it is going very smoothly. With so vast a chorus, also, it is very difficult to preserve the delicate transitions. You can get a *fortissimo* or a *pianissimo*, but it is extremely difficult to get the *forte* and *piano*. The tendency of this multitude is either to sing too loud or too soft, and there is the same fact noticeable upon the part of the orchestra. With the organ it is different. Mr. Wilcox, at any moment he pleases, has the power in his hands to drown chorus and orchestra both, with its thunder. Its tones fairly pierce through and through the aggregate of sound at times with almost startling effect, and, wherever there is a weak spot, it can be covered up without difficulty. In the chorals, the power is specially manifested. In the hands of a skillful person, one beat of a baton would be all that was necessary to keep the chorus to its work. It could not get away from that organ if it tried—the [281] pedal bass is so immense, so uplifting and so sustaining.

I think there is a universal disappointment in regard to the volume of sound to be produced by this chorus. People have imagined that the sound of ten thousand voices in the Coliseum, for instance, would be ten times as loud as one thousand voices in the Music Hall; but in reality it is no louder. They did not make calculations for the increased size of the building and the obstacles placed in the way of the traveling of sound and grasping it with the ear. My own disappointment has been a happy one. I had thought the noise would be simply noise, but the noise has been music. It has now been thoroughly proved that a chorus and orchestra of this size can be manipulated and not only be made to sing and play together, but to sing and play with expression and even approximate to a certain degree of light and shade. But yet, apart from the magnetism, there is in such a vast human presence, I do not see that the increase in numbers is really an advantage in making effects. It was a splendid experiment to try, however, and it speaks volumes for the skill of Mr. Gilmore, who conceived and organized it, and for Mr. Zerrahn, who has conducted the oratorio and classical parts of the programme.

June 18, 1869.

The crowd is not quite so large as that of yesterday, and yet the building is well filled. The programme was almost exclusively classical, and was opened with Weber's brilliant "Jubilee [282] Overture," with the baton in Eichberg's hands. It was not given very effectively until the national theme in the *finale* was reached. This was played superbly by the brasses. The Fifth Symphony of Beethoven was only given in part, the *Andante* and last half of the *Finale* being played. It was something to be grateful for, to get even a fraction of the symphony, but it seemed almost cruel to cut the work or mar its unity in the least. It is the first time I have seen the orchestra really get down to its work as if they loved it. There was no talking among them, no listlessness. Every man sat in his place as eager for the start as a hound to slip from his leash, one eye upon Zerrahn, and the other upon his score. Two policemen standing in the aisle near the first violinists are talking together, and Carl Rosa and a half dozen others snap at them to stop their gossip. *Apropos* of Carl Rosa, he has proved himself an artist through this jubilee. He has been in his place every day promptly at the hour, and has played through every note of every programme. I regret that Ole Bull, who has been in the city during the whole week, only appeared on the opening day. It will be a matter of surprise to his admirers that he should so far have lacked enthusiasm as to absent himself upon such an occasion. The two movements of the symphony were played conscientiously and *con amore*, and there was little to ask for which was not given in its

production.

Zerrahn seems to have a partiality for Mendelssohn, for when he came to the "Elijah" chorus, "Thanks be to God, He laveth the thirsty land," his instructions were more than usually explicit. The chorus, however, did not get the beat, and for a moment there was danger of a catastrophe. [283] Zerrahn left his stand as quick as a rocket, and, waving his baton, went down into the chorus. The electricity of his manner fused the discordant elements, and with "The waters gather they rush along," all were together. Zerrahn remained at his post, and Schultze took the orchestra in hand, with his bow for baton, and the two batons moved like magic, and chorus and orchestra played like magic to the end, sweeping through the jubilant number like the march of a storm. If the chorus had never sung any thing else this would have paid for the difficulties of organization and been a rich remuneration for all the labors.

Miss Phillipps made her second appearance of the season, and was cordially greeted. She sang the familiar "Lascia Pianga" of Handel's, which is one of her concert favorites. She appeared to much better advantage than on Tuesday, mainly because the selection was in better taste; but, sitting even as near as I did, her voice seemed hard and cold and she was evidently singing with great effort. At the close, the enthusiasm of the chorus, joined with that of the audience, secured her an *encore*, which she acknowledged by repeating the air, and singing part of it to the chorus.

The programme was closed with the Hallelujah Chorus from the Messiah, the whole chorus, orchestra and audience rising to their feet while it was performed. In spite of its inherent difficulties and broken time, it was carried through superbly, and as the final "Amen" pealed out with majestic power, the Jubilee was at an end, so far as the great chorus was concerned.

[284]

June 19, 1869.

The day of Jubilee has gone. The great Peace Festival has passed into the annals of musical history. The outside halo of peace which encircled it shone so dimly that I do not conceive any national significance attaches to it. It is to be judged purely as a musical event, and it will take its place in musical annals as an ambitious and bold experiment, and, in large degree, as a grand success. There were points open to honest criticism, and some of these points I have indicated in these letters; but many of these defects were beyond the remedy either of conductor or chorus. It was a musical success, because it has shown that ten thousand people can sing together and one thousand instruments play together, not only both in time and tune, but also with sufficient expression to make effects. It is not to be denied that some very paltry music has been played—in fact, the whole programme of Thursday was devoted just to this class of music—and that many of the numbers in each day were purely meretricious and sensational. But the bare fact of the organization and manipulation of such a vast chorus and orchestra stands now, and will always stand, as a monument of which the projector and his assistants have a right to be proud.

The great chorus dispersed last evening, having accomplished its arduous work. Exhausted as they must have been with the four days' task, I doubt whether any one of the ten thousand singers closed his or her book without regret. It was something to be proud of to have sung and played at this Jubilee. I can appreciate the feelings of a prominent Chicago bass singer, who had [285] been only a listener during a portion of the programme on Friday. The next number was the grand chorus, "Thanks be to God," from "Elijah." He hurried over to me, and, seizing me by the collar, said: "Tell me how I can get into that chorus. I cannot stand this any longer. I *must* sing the Elijah piece." I directed him how to get admission, and the next I saw of him he was in the front rank of the bassos, joining his voice with the thousands around him in the grand swelling anthem of praise.

To-day has been given almost exclusively to the school-children. It was a grand sight to look at the adult chorus, but it was a beautiful sight to look at the children. Eight thousand of them were gathered together from the public schools. The girls were clad in white, and filled the wings, the boys occupying the places of the tenors and bassos. The children arrived promptly—do they ever arrive any other way?—and took their places without a particle of disorder. The white dresses of the girls, trimmed with ribbons of varied colors, their fresh young faces, and the eager, enthusiastic faces of the boys, made up a picture of beauty not often looked upon. It was like a huge garden *parterre* of flowers, and, as great shafts of sunlight shot in through the windows and bathed them with gold, and fans waved in the happy throng like the wings of a multitude of birds, it made a sight which may be the sight of a lifetime. The audience also was an immense one, completely filling the building, and thus the *coup d'œil* was fully as beautiful, if not as imposing, as on any day during the week.

[286] The performance commenced with the overture to "William Tell," which was rendered with more animation than on Wednesday. The effects of the cellos, headed by Wulf Fries, were particularly striking. Never before have I heard this noblest of all instruments develop the human voice tones as it has to-day. The applause had hardly subsided when Eichberg rapped the juvenile chorus to attention with his baton. The rising of the children was not like that of the adults. The latter invariably rose slowly and successively, rank after rank. The children, in their impatience, fairly sprang to their feet, and stood, books in hand, eager for the signal. When it was given, they took the beat together grandly, and commenced "Hail Columbia" in unison. As they progressed, however, the instruments were quicker than they, and there was some lagging, but the effect was very novel and striking. Although the girls outnumbered the boys, the latter's voices were much

stronger and made themselves most clearly heard. The freshness, purity and clearness of the voices easily rendered them superior to the orchestra, and even the organ seemed to affect them but little. There was no difficulty in hearing them, for each one of the little people was singing for dear life and working with all the zest and enthusiasm of a child's nature. By some process known only to children, they came out together at the end of each stanza, although they sometimes diverged widely in the middle.

Think of children singing Mercadante's music! But they did it, and superbly, too. His chorus, "Now the Twilight Softly Stealing," was given by them admirably. It was arranged as a solo for sopranos and altos, and then taken in unison by the full chorus, and I have no musical memory sweeter than the cadences of that chorus, which were given with such beauty and freshness by these children. [287]

Miss Phillipps is set down for the next number, and, as she advances down through the musicians to the stand, the children give her a handsome ovation, the girls waving their handkerchiefs and the boys cheering as only boys can cheer. She is going to sing the *brindisi* from Lucrezia Borgia—"II Segreto." Everybody has heard her sing it in the bewitching *role* of *Maffeo Orsini*, but we may never hear her sing it again under circumstances like these, for she is now singing it to at least forty thousand people. Eichberg was cool enough with the children, but he is very nervous now, and he gives the *tempo* so fast to the orchestra that Rosa and half a dozen others look up in surprise. Adelaide herself grows pale and says to him, "Too fast, too fast." The baton moves slower—and how marvelously the instruments obey! It is all right. Adelaide does not look much like *Maffeo* in her high-necked white dress, but she sings the famous drinking-song in excellent taste, and succeeds in making her voice heard throughout the hall better than she has heretofore. She gets a hearty *encore*, and repeats the aria, accompanying it this time with a prolonged trill, which was superbly formed.

Again, the children are on their feet. Brinley Richards' solo and chorus "So Merrily over the Ocean Spray," are the numbers. The air is given with a rocking, undulating rhythm, which is admirably preserved by the children, and the effect gains in intensity as the full chorus and organ add their volume of sound.

[288] Almost before the children are in their seats, the tall form of Ole Bull comes down the aisle, and they rise and give him a hearty reception. He chooses his little *andante* minor melody, the "Mother's Prayer," bends his head over his violin, closes his eyes, and plays away, ravishingly sweet, but so *pianissimo* that only the orchestra and a few of the front rows can hear him. Those who do hear him have a great treat, and the orchestra is so charmed that it raps lustily upon the backs of its violins.

Parepa, clad in an elegant black moire-antique, receives an enthusiastic ovation. She sings "Let the Glad Seraphim," which she sang the other day when poor Mrs. Dunlap was dying, accompanied by Arbuckle whose cornet needs only a few tricks of tonguing to be superior to Levy's. What superb responses the cornet makes to her, and how perfectly voice and instrument match each other! It is something to remember, this duo. But there is another duo even better. It is Rossini's matchless *Quis est Homo*. And who is to sing it? Only Parepa and Adelaide Phillipps! Aren't you glad now you came to the Jubilee? I will wager something you will never hear this sung again as these two women sing it. I am afraid hereafter I shall listen to the amateurs practising the great duo with less than my usual patience. I never expect to hear it sung better. I never expected it would be allowed me to hear it sung so well. What expression! What style! What artistic method! What a rare and rich vocal blending! Even the orchestra gets enthusiastic, and some of the old veterans look up in absolute surprise at this alto in white and this soprano in black, as they reach the *cadenza* in a magnificent burst of melody, which starts people to their feet, wild with enthusiasm, crying bravo, waving handkerchiefs, hats, canes and umbrellas. Of course, they have to repeat it, and of course everybody gets wild again. [289]

And then the children sing Old Hundred, and the audience rising, sings it with them. And they sing well, for there are only 9,000 of the choristers in the audience. Isn't it sublime?

> "Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,
> Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost."

And the Jubilee is over. The music is hushed. The voice of the great organ is silent. The great waves of the chorus have subsided. The singers and the players have gone, but I think, to their latest day, they will not tire of telling their children that they sang and played at the great Peace Jubilee.

There are a few parting incidents in the press room, and among them a very graceful deed upon the part of the orchestra in presenting Mr. Gilmore with an elegant watch and chain. And then everybody gives Gilmore three cheers.

The man who has carried this thing in his head two years, and finally organized it into a success, smilingly says:

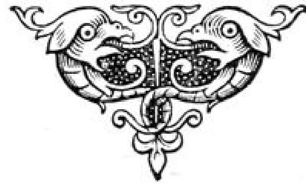
"*Gentlemen*: We propose to repeat this Jubilee as a centennial—one hundred years hence. You are all engaged."

One hundred years hence! Every heart in the great sea of humanity which has surged in and out of the Coliseum this week will be silent then. We shall all be silent then. We shall all be sleeping the sleep of the just, with a stone at our heads and a stone at our feet, where no sound of music [290]

can reach us. Other voices will sing above us, and other instruments play, and little shall we reck of it. The record of the Jubilee will outlive us all. But will they have in the music of the future anything better, anything grander, anything sublimer than the music of this week has been?

I think not. And so to the great chorus whose sound has been as the voice of many waters; to the great orchestra which has given us the immortal Fifth Symphony as Beethoven never heard it given; to the mighty pulsation of the great organ heart; to the voices of the children in their sweet, fresh unison; to her that died in the midst of the music, and was translated to the heavens in a chariot of harmony, whose beauty, and loveliness, and true womanliness will be forever sacred to those who knew her; to the Peace Jubilee, with all its pleasant associations and grand accomplishments, hail and farewell.

"Let us have peace."



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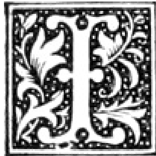
THE DOUBLE LIFE.



I WRITE from the pleasant little hamlet of Cherry Valley, under the grateful shade of the locusts and poplars. Scarlet fuschias, pendant from their curved stems, are swaying in the gentle west wind, which is the favorite wind of the flowers. The odorous breath of the geranium and sweet-briar loads the languid air with fragrant blessing. The leaves of the trees overhead just ripple in the wind, like little green waves, and sometimes seem to be whispering together about some of those secrets of nature which you and I can never know, as our ears are too gross—the same secrets which little bugs tell each other in the grass—which the lightnings tell the clouds, as they dart in and out their ragged fringes, like swallows darting in and out the eaves—which the night-winds tell the mountain-tops in the solemn darkness—which the birds sing to each other in umbrageous tree-tops—which the fairies above the earth and gnomes under the earth tell to each other at sunrise and set—the secrets which the Faun knew when he called the animals to him. Some drowsy birds in the trees are piping summer songs to each other. A magic stillness broods in the air in this enchanted valley. Enchanted, because all sounds—the patter of the leaves, the songs of [292] birds, the laughter of children, the lowing of herds, even the drowsy hum of the house-fly—somehow seem to you to be at a distance and, in traveling the distance, come to you fraught with suggestions of music and like veiled spirits of sound, rather than the real substance. The leaves of the corn are flashing like green blades in the sunshine, and the grain-fields on these fertile hill-sides map the country in alternate strips of green and emerald. And overhead, the great concave of the sky, which shuts down upon this valley like a cover, is enameled in blue and white, and scrolled with tufts and whirls of fleecy clouds, past the skill of all cunning architects.

You see, Old Blobbs and Mrs. Blobbs, and Mignon and Celeste, and Aurelia and the baby, and even Boosey and Fitz-Herbert, are all out here together. The circle is complete, save the link that was broken last winter, when the Maiden Aunt went to rejoin him she had mourned so long and for whom she had waited so patiently. But, somehow, we never think of her as gone, although she is sleeping in sound of the surf she loved to hear and in sight of the waves which used to talk to her, in the nights when the storms were all abroad and great ships hurried by in the darkness, like cloudy ghosts of argosies long since rotted in the sands. She seems always to be with us, she was so lovable, so closely bound to us, so gentle in soul, and yet so mysterious in her life—or, rather, in her double life; for I do not think she lived altogether here. Have you never had the feeling come over you, suddenly as a flash leaps from a cloud, that your soul has left the body—that you have shed, as it were, the physical shell which has hemmed you in, and that you are no [293] longer confined within the bounds of matter, but are free as a bird to roam through space? I sometimes think this must be the feeling when death severs the connection between soul and body, and that the effect must be ecstatic to a degree of which we have little comprehension, when every emotion is tempered with this "vesture of decay." I think the Maiden Aunt lived this double life. Sometimes she was intensely human, and her love and care for us all were unbounded. But again there came a strange expression in her eyes and a strange look in her face, as if a chink in the heavens had suddenly opened, and the glamor of its light shone upon her, and through the cloudy rent she were talking with some familiar friend who had gone before. At such times, she did not seem to see us, or even to be aware of our presence. Her eyes had that far-off, penetrating look which you sometimes see in children; and we always left her alone at such

times, for she was then very sacred to us.

In the sunset light last evening—and what a sunset it was!—the whole West a sea of rare transparent greenish-blue, flecked with clouds of gold, and purple, and pink, and mother-of-pearl, which floated in it like islands, melting into all fanciful shapes, as the ferns, and palms, and turrets melt in the mirage, the whole landscape bathed in a translucent flood of golden light—in such a sunset, we took one of the Maiden Aunt's letters, which we keep tied up with a lock of her dark and silver-sprinkled hair, and I read therefrom an extract, in which she says:

"I think we live two lives. One of them is the life of this world, a thoroughly material and physical life. It is made up of toils and cares, burdens and pains. It grows out of the lives of others, is closely interwoven with them, and almost depends upon them for its existence. It attaches itself, sometimes, to one other life, as a vine attaches itself to the tree; sometimes it draws sustenance from many. It is, more or less, a superficial life, although it may accomplish great deeds and suffer heroic sufferings. It is of the earth, however, and never soars beyond it. No mystery attaches to it, for it is never called upon to perform mysterious deeds. It is comprised within the limits of threescore-and-ten, and has no past or future. Its mission belongs to the body, and when the body perishes, its mission ends. It has no recollections coming from any time before itself. It makes no prophecies of events in the future. [294]

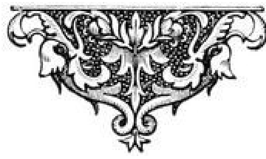
"The other life we live in ourselves, and it is as mysterious as was the enigma of the Sphinx in the solemn silence of the desert. It takes no thought for the body, for it is the life of the soul. We cannot explain this life to others, for we do not understand it ourselves. It is a starry stranger, imprisoned within the corporeal bars and of mysterious origin and destiny. The fates who weave the fabric of our lives, and Atropos, who stands by with the unerring shears to sever the thread, have no power over it. Have we not lived this life before, and shall we not live it again when the light of this physical life is snuffed out like a farthing rush? If not, how is it that sometimes a sweet strain of music we have never heard before, a solemn voice in the wash of the waves, a perfume of some flower by the wayside, a tone in some human voice, will recall the dim image of something we are confident has never happened in this physical life? If not in this physical life, when and where did it happen? Have we ever lived before this life, and shall we live in it again after this body has decayed? Do we fulfil the mission of this world in the brief span of one life-time? If our life has no end, has it ever had a beginning? Has immortality or eternity a commencement? These are questions which occur to me, especially after those moments when, as I confidently believe, the soul leaves the body, and expands into space and embraces the infinite. I acknowledge that I cannot answer these questions. They are a part of the great mystery of life, which not only envelopes us, but all nature, in its cloud, and reaches, in its influences and its developments, from the grain of sand on the sea-shore up to the Throne of God. [295]

"I think this life, also, is not altogether of itself. Other lives, other fates and other natures are working together in us to add to its mystery. These mysterious influences at work within us compel us to commit acts, which we call impulses, for which we are no more accountable than the hurricane for its destruction. They give us moments when we are filled with a joy almost hysterical, for which we cannot account; and other moments when we are sunk into depths of despair, and all the world seems veiled in black, although we know the sun is shining. At such times, others are acting in us and through us. It may be some old ancestor, who died hundreds of years ago, whose life was so strong in some trait that he sent it down through the years from this one to that one, and it makes its first appearance in you. He or she—he whose life was lost in the passion of some great ecstasy, or she whose life was eclipsed in a cloud of despair which dethroned reason—is speaking with your tongue, and is looking out of your eyes. At such times, your voice assumes a tone not your own; your eyes show a light which is foreign to you. Another has entered and taken possession of you. You cannot estimate the great influence which all those men and women who hang upon your walls and look down upon you from their dim canvasses exercise upon you. [296]

"And this life also manifests itself in sleep, when it takes us into the gorgeous cloudland of dreams, and paints such fantastic images, and unveils a world of which we get glimpses in no other manner—a world of prophecies and strange presentiments, in which, freed from the trammels of the body, the soul roams at will, and sees what has passed and what is to come; in which we suffer tortures keener than those of earth, and enjoy the beatitudes of the blest; in which the poor man is richer than Dives, and Lazarus finds rest from his troubles; and in which all of us get compensation for the loss of all we held precious, in communion with and possession of them, although only for a little moment."

This is the substance of what the Maiden Aunt said in her letter, and we all talked about it in the fast-fading light until the darkness set in and the rain commenced to patter down upon the lilac leaves with a dreamy sort of sound. We gathered about the piano, and sang those four-part *Lieder* of Felix Mendelssohn's, and then we pledged the memory of the Maiden Aunt in the golden Verzenay and drank the good night willie wacht, and thus we spent a memorial day at Cherry Valley, nestling down in the hollow of the hills like a callow robin in its nest, and we slept the sleep of the just, lulled to rest by the rain-drops playing merry fantasies on the shingles, each of us agreeing that the day was one to be tied up with white ribbon and laid away among the precious keepsakes. And in our dreams came to each the form of a loved one, and our sleep was made beautiful with all pleasant images. [297]

July 17, 1869.



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LOVE AND THE BLUE FLOWER.

E were all at tea last evening, and at the tea-table we talk more than usual, for the tea is but the shadow of a meal with the harmless inspiration of the tea-pot. Thus it happened that each began to tell of what had occurred in his or her little world during the day. Aurelia had a thousand things to tell about the intellectual and physical miracles performed by that wonderful baby, which, of course, every baby, from Cain down, has performed. But they were performed for the first time for her, and of course we listen to them as if they were new revelations to us, and we would not for the world dissipate the bright colors with which she invests all that little one does by telling her that every mother's world is glowing with the same pretty colors, or that all of us once were just as wonderful babies as hers, only somehow we lost all our supernatural powers as the years came and went. Celeste had been shopping, and her tongue ran glibly on the "beautiful," "sweet pretty," "lovely," "delightful," "loves of," etc., fabrics which she had seen at Hamlin's, and she grew quite indignant when she told how young Yard Stick became angry when he had pulled [299] down seventy-three different pieces of dress goods, only to find that she merely dropped in to look about a little; neither was it any compensation to that intellectual and highly artistic youth when she purchased a ball of tape. Mrs Blobbs said but little, for it had not been with her one of those days which we lay away tied up with white ribbon. Old Blobbs had come home from the office earlier than usual, looking very pale and very feeble. A dark shadow is sweeping across the house—so dark that we do not see any light beyond it, and the waters through which the dear good woman is wading, grow deeper and deeper, and the mists which begin to blind her eyes are those which forever haunt the Valley of the Shadow. Old Blobbs was with us at the table but said nothing. The contracted brow and firmly-set mouth, the great veins in his forehead and the far-off look in his eyes, told us of suffering, and that even now he foresaw a messenger coming to him with tidings, of the purport of which he was well aware. Fitz-Herbert had had nothing to do all the livelong day, and Boosey was not much better off, so these two young gentlemen had little to say for themselves. Mignon had dreamed the day away, feeding the canary, tending her mignonettes, and heliotropes, and fuschias, and weaving delicious little reveries on the piano. She lives only among beautiful things, and could not exist away from them, any more than a humming bird could live, deprived of its roses and tulips.

Blanche's story was supplied by a letter which Mignon had just received from her, and as it contained an important piece of intelligence, she read it to us, as follows:

[300] SARATOGA, August 10.

Dear, Darling Mignon:

Lean down your head to me and let me whisper in your ear that I am engaged. You are aware that I have known Harry a long time, and that he is possessed of all those good and noble qualities calculated to make me happy. I am already in a new world in which I know no one but my hero. You do not know how good and kind and beautiful he is. Our world is quite apart from this fashionable world, where every man is a gambler or a fortune-hunter, and every woman an enameled *decolette*. We ask for nothing but each other's society and we are content to let the others play out their little comedies and farces to the bitter end. I have given him my whole heart, and yet, Mignon, there is love for you still, and for all our little circle. I cannot stop now to tell you of Saratoga life, it seems so tame and so tawdry to the great happiness which Harry brought to me last evening, as we were strolling under the elms. It seems to me there is no one here but Harry. He is my world and I live in him, and after him I send to you, Mignon, my best love.

I must stop, for Harry will get impatient. He is waiting to take me to ride, but I could not go until I had informed you of my great happiness.

Your devoted friend,

BLANCHE.

P. S.—Kiss Celeste and Aurelia for me.

B.

P. S. No. 2—Write me soon.

B.

As Mignon closed the letter, she asked me why I was smiling, and I said:

My dear Mignon: I was smiling at this repetition of the old, old story. It is one of the most curious revelations in these *affairs de cœur*, that the engaged parties always leave this world and create one of their own of the most gorgeous description. In that new world the skies are always translucent, the air is full of winged Cupids and young cherubim, flowers grow under their feet, birds sing on every branch, and no inhabitants grosser than fairies dwell in it. In that world there are no storms, no pains, no sorrows. Every breeze is laden with odors, and the beautiful rainbow of promise always spans its sky from one horizon to the other. There are none of the vulgar realities or harassing cares of this world in that. The happy pair feed on ambrosia and nectar supplied for them gratuitously, and have no fears based upon bread and butter or other provender, which troubles us mortals so much to provide for ourselves. They look upon everything through some peculiar medium which transforms it into beauty and clothes it with the sheen of the prism. All gross sounds are turned into music. All the faculties of the soul become merged in the one faculty of the imagination, and that imagination knows no bound especially in the case of the woman. She always makes the man a hero. She surrounds him with a halo just as pious Catholics surround their saints. She looks at him through an atmosphere which magnifies him into something quite above the follies and stupidities of the world. The other day, as I was passing along Lake street, I met an engaged couple. They had just come in from Kankakee to see the sights of the city, and as they wandered along, hand in hand, looking into the shop windows, the future bridegroom munching an apple, and the future bride doing the same to a pear, I could not but regard these two innocent lambs with interest. To be sure, the future bridegroom was a tall, shambling, ungainly, awkward, red-faced lout, but to her he was the Admirable Crichton, the ideal of her dreams, and the hero of her life. She was in that world of which I have spoken. She did not see the smiling faces about her as they regarded this innocent simplicity. She was walking on roses with him. The pear she munched was ambrosia bought of a beneficent old fairy at the street corner, who sold them for ten cents a piece. A year or two hence, when they get settled down upon their Kankakee farm, he will be nothing but the old man and she will be plain Hannah, superintending the dairy and the kitchen garden. But now John Thomas is a hero.

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It is another fact that the man himself was not aware that he was such a hero. Neither were those who have been acquainted with him aware that he was made of heroic stuff. To himself and to them, he has been plain Smith or plain Brown, a decent sort of fellow, plodding along, making money enough to pay his board bills with, and never supposing he was destined to set the world on fire. He had never before dreamed that he was a hero. He had never before supposed that the rhythm of his very prosaic life would ever assume the epic form. The same fact is true in fiction. The heroes of the novels are very commonplace people, but the heroines always make them believe they are supernatural people. Auerbach appreciated this weakness in human nature when he made Irma—that splendid, womanly type—fall in love with the King, and invest him with all the attributes of a demi-god, when, in reality, he was nothing but a very ordinary, commonplace, selfish, ungrateful mortal, who could no more rise to the great height of her nature than the clod can rise to the cloud. You will find that same weakness brought out in that new book of Spielhagen's—"Problematic Characters"—where Melitta, a beautiful type of woman, falls in love with Oswald, a vain, shallow, purposeless coxcomb, who adores every pretty face he meets. Yet Melitta invests him with all the heroic attributes, and wastes her great love upon him, as the ancient maiden wasted her kisses upon the marble insensibility of Apollo.

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Thus it is that once in every man's life, at least, he becomes a hero, whether he will or not, and it is not the least curious part of the matter that he does not question at all, but accepts the position at once, and allows himself to be set up as an object of idolatry. He knows it is all humbug, but he is willing to accept it, and usually ends by temporarily convincing himself he is a hero and an idol. Of course, after hero and heroine become one flesh, he gets the conceit knocked out of him, takes off his insignia, quietly gets down from his pedestal, and consents to become what he was before his hero-existence—a very ordinary mortal, who has to pay taxes, work for a weekly stipend, earn bread and butter, and eat it. Now, this is precisely the case with our mutual friend, Blanche. Harry is, undoubtedly, a well-meaning, good-natured fellow, who will earn a good living and take care of Blanche in a creditable manner; but Blanche has magnified him into a hero, and looks at him through other spectacles than ours. Usually, these cases suggest their own remedies, and carry their cure with them. The disease wears itself out, like whooping-cough or cold in the head. But there is danger in allowing it to run and get seated, so that the inevitable tumble which must come, sooner or later, will hurt them. After a specified time, the rainbow will dissipate into a dull, leaden color, the flowers will fade, the nectar will grow sour, the gorgeous palaces will transform themselves into wooden cottages or brick fronts, the cupids and cherubim will go in out of the wet, and the birds will hush their songs. In other words, the dull round of life, which every man must tread, the ever-pressing, vulgar cares and anxieties which follow one like a Nemesis, will overtake the hero and the heroine, and it will be well for them to be prepared for the catastrophe. Flying is a pleasant feat to perform, and causes very thrilling sensations, but if you go too near the sun, remember the fate of Icarus, and look out for your head when you fall. If Mignon is so disposed, when she writes to Blanche, she might suggest these things, and mingle a little caution with her congratulations.

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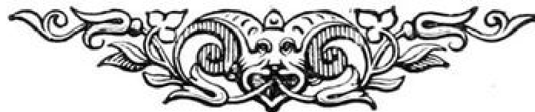
There is another view of love which is very sad, because it is fatal. Ordinarily these attachments are part and parcel of that world-spirit which is ever changing and yet ever constant, which allies the present and past together, and convinces you there is nothing new, but that each event, although it may seem to be done for the first time, is only a repetition of the old miracle. This fatality of love, for which there is no cure, has been beautifully likened in one of Novalis' works to a Blue Flower, for which a lone Minnesinger once pined in vain and died. No eye of mortal ever saw this flower, no man knows where it blooms. Yet its beauty is known of men, and its fragrance [305] fills the world. There are few whose senses are delicate enough to perceive this perfume; few whose eyes can see the Blue Flower, even though it blooms right before them. Novalis further says that the nightingale, pouring out its sad songs to the moon, knows and loves this flower; that all men and women, who have tried to voice their sorrow in poetry, and yet could not tell their feelings, have inhaled this perfume of the Blue Flower. The perfume of this flower is in music. It is in Beethoven's sonatas and symphonies, and in some of Mendelssohn's songs, although it was not in Mendelssohn's life, but there are few souls sensitive and delicate enough to feel it. Dante felt it, and the Blue Flower blossomed through all their lives. They inhaled its perfume, and then there was no more peace, for he who once breathes it lives forever after in sorrow. It is a malady which can never be cured. I pray that none of you may ever breathe its fatal breath.

And as I closed my screed, Old Blobbs looked at me with a look full of unutterable pain, and I knew at once that down under all his asperity of manner and his sarcasm of speech; under all his seeming philosophical composure and his hearty hatred of shams, this Blue Flower had blossomed, and that he had inhaled its fatal fragrance. He had presented to us but one side of his double life, and that was so honest that we could not but love him while we winced at his utterances of truth. But in that other life which he had lived within himself, and of which he had given us no token, but which was now rapidly making itself apparent, because it was his true life, [306] was the Blue Flower, which entails only suffering, and for which there is no remedy but death.

And he said to us with his weak, trembling voice, so unlike his hearty, powerful tones of a few months ago: "You have spoken rightly. There is a Blue Flower, and I pray God you may never know its fearful influence, beautiful as it is. I have found that flower, but I think its beauty is fading now, and its perfume is dissipating, and that for the pain He will give pleasure, and for the trial He will give rest." And then he arose from the table and leant upon my arm and we walked out into the garden together. And then the twilight stole in upon us, and the darkness fell out of the heavens, and the stars peeped out of the sky, and all the world was veiled with a holy hush. We talked long together, and as we retired for the night, he shook me warmly by the hand and only said: "When you grow old you will feel the wonderful beauty of that line, 'He giveth His beloved sleep,' as you have never felt it before, for the old have a long, long night in which to sleep. After the battle comes Peace; after the toil, Rest."

I knew what he meant, but I could not speak of it to the others.

August 15, 1869.



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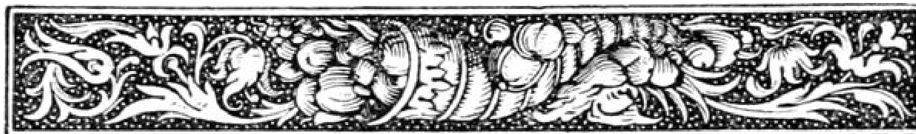


MARRIAGE.

T was just like Fitz-Herbert to break in upon the conversation in his insufferable, dawdling manner, merely because Old Blobbs was absent and could not reply to him. F. H. had heard a story that he was about to be married, and he protested against it with all the indignation and power of which he was capable, somewhat in the following manner: "'Pon honor, that story isn't twue. Would be vewy absurd to sacwifice my fweedom."

This was the longest speech F. H. had ever been known to deliver at one time, and it naturally created quite a sensation in the company. He seized this occasion to deliver it, as I have said before, because Old Blobbs was absent. The latter is confined to his room with a painful illness, and it would do you good to see the courage with which the old veteran bears his serious indisposition, and the calm serenity with which he awaits the decision of fate. I had no idea, however, of letting Fitz-Herbert off so easily, and, much to his astonishment, therefore, I replied to him, as he sat uneasily twirling his moustache, in words to the following effect:

My dear Fitz-Herbert: I cannot allow your very silly remark to pass unnoticed, for two reasons:

First. You would never sacrifice anything in marrying any woman. The woman who marries you [308]

will do all the sacrificing. The hymeneal altar, in her case, will be eminently a sacrificial altar, and she will be the garlanded and orange-blossomed victim, to be carved up with the sacrificial knife. You have everything to gain—she has everything to lose.

Second. Neither your reason, nor any other, is valid against marriage. I am often amused at the excuses men make when they approach this question. Brown thinks it is too expensive, and, of all silly excuses, I think this is the silliest. Brown is earning a good salary, and yet Brown, at the end of the year, has no more money than when he commenced. He has expenses for cigars and meerschaums, for suppers for his bachelor friends, for fast horses, for baskets of champagne, for wagers based on trifles, for the wear and tear of clothes, and for a thousand and one little items, none of which he would or need incur in married life. Then, again, if Brown knew, as any milliner can tell him, how many seasons that same bonnet is made over; how it comes out bran new every spring and fall, by some of those mysterious alterations, of a bit of lace here or a few flowers there, of which only women are capable; how that same dress is made over from year to year by the cunning hand of some dressmaker; how a piece of lace, which may seem costly at first, does duty in a dozen different ways—now serving a term on a bonnet-crown, now appearing on the sleeve of a basque, anon reappearing as the trimming of a dress, then laid away, only to appear once more in some useful and graceful manner, connected with the gear of the little folks; and if Brown further knew that nine women out of ten, not only in low life but in high life, practice this [309] economy—making the old new, and serving up old dishes in new forms—Brown would be ashamed to offer such a flimsy excuse. Marriage is the essence of economy. Brown, alone, with two thousand a year, lays up nothing. Brown and a wife, with the same amount per year, would lay up five hundred.

And now comes Jones, like Fitz-Herbert, with his twaddle of sacrificing his freedom. The plea is so flimsy that it is hardly worth an answer. Jones may lose the freedom to get drunk; the freedom to waste his money; the freedom to squander his earnings at the gaming-table; the freedom to indulge in dissipation; and the freedom to practice unlimited selfishness. And the sooner he loses all these freedoms, the better it will be for him. In the place of these losses, he gains the freedom to be the emperor of a little household; to love a woman; to make the future President of the United States; to make some one happy; and to show a certificate that he is a Man, and has fulfilled the mission of a Man.

Next comes Smith, whining that his friend Thompson has married unhappily, and he gets off the old story that marriage is a lottery in which there are a thousand blanks to one prize. Bosh! It may be that his friend Thompson deliberately sought happiness in something which was not capable of affording it. Or it may be that he made money the complement of his desires and the goal of his ambition. In either case, he would be and ought to be disappointed. But it is more probable that Thompson, as obtains in ninety-nine out of a hundred of these disappointments, while carrying his head among the stars, stumbled over the stone at his feet, which he would [310] have seen if he had had his head where it ought to have been. Thompson, like scores of others, indulged in a love which smacked both of the romance and the theatre—made it in a style and clothed it with sentiments which have no more to do with common life than the integral calculus has to do with everlasting salvation, and in his terrific flights of the imagination, soared to heights occupied by angels and cherubim, and other creatures who have nothing in common with human life. He assumed without question that his inamorata was an angel, and, while in his amorous embryo, would have throttled you if you had suggested that he might have been mistaken. Of course, when he had chipped off his shell, got his eyes open, and stepped out into the open air of common sense, he saw his mistake. Women are not angels at all, although it may be ungallant to say so. For certain romantic purposes, and by a sort of poetical license, we call them such. They don't believe they are angels themselves; but they accept the assurance from their lovers, just as the lover accepts the assurance from his mistress that he is a hero, both good and noble, when he is nothing but plain Tompkins. Now, Thompson, before he married his wife, was convinced that she was an angel, and would have considered it a serious defect if you, or any one else had imputed human nature as one of her characteristics. If he had married Mrs. Thompson as a woman with a human nature, subject to diseases, old age, sullenness, peevish fits, and other infirmities to which flesh is heir, possessed of the same bad qualities, and capable of showing just as many good qualities, he would have been a happy man, and by combining an even [311] temper with a sensible judgment, he never would have had any trouble. It might as well be settled now as at any time that there are no angels in this world. Angels dwell in quite another place, and have nothing to do whatever with marriage, their time being mainly spent in playing harps, and, if "Gates Ajar" be true, pianos, fiddles, and other musical instruments, and in eating lotus, which is of a better quality up there than that which grows on the Nile. The other class of angels, if the iron-clad theology be true, is down below, engaged in the anthracite coal and brimstone business; but there is no record of any on earth. If Thompson had married a woman instead of a creature whom, without any reason, he supposed to be an angel, he would have been a happy man. It is, therefore, his own fault that he is not happy. And it is the fault of the majority of men who are not happy.

Now, also, on general principles, I contend that it is a man's duty to be married. Man is not complete when single. He is all head without any heart. Man has his work, woman has hers, and no life-work is complete which is not a union of the two.

Man has the work of the intellect to perform; woman the work of the affections. If man does his work alone, it is cold, hard, selfish and one-sided.

Man represents brute strength; woman represents beauty. If man stands alone, not clothing his

strength with beauty, he occupies exactly the position of the horse and the ox.

Man, to sum up, is the head; woman, the heart. United, they are perfect; single, they are simply monstrosities. They were made to go together.

And, again, my dear Fitz-Herbert, did you ever happen to think that you were born in marriage? That without marriage the world would have been deprived of your inestimable entity, which, undoubtedly, is good for something, although, at this present moment, I am not prepared to say what? I contend, therefore, that if you persistently choose to remain single you insult the condition in which you were born, and place yourself in the attitude of the foolish Euripides, who always lamented that he had not been produced by some other agency than that of a mother. [312]

Again, Fitz-Herbert, did you ever stop to think that it is the duty, and equally the pleasure, of man to perpetuate himself? And that, if, by refusing to marry, you do not perpetuate yourself, you tacitly acknowledge you are not worth perpetuating? I will not stop here to explain to you the great beauty and blessing of children, or to point out how much better and brighter the world is for their presence, but I will only state the point in its abstract form—that if you do not marry some woman, and issue a little blue-and-gold-edition of yourself, and then another edition revised and corrected, and so on *ad infinitum* or *ad libitum*, you simply say to the world, "I am an incapable and good-for-nothing, not worth perpetuating." This point is worth such attention as you can spare from your back hair and neck-tie; and I advise you whenever you have time enough to put your whole mind upon it, to astonish your mind by doing so.

Now, as my last general principle—or, as Parson Creamcheese would say, eighthly and lastly—I assume that God Almighty has pointed out this duty of marriage, and this fact that you are incomplete when single, in every conceivable manner. The whole of Nature is one grand system of marriage, and without it, Nature could not exist for a single minute. Although the animals cannot feel the influence of love, because they are bereft of sentiment, still instinct teaches them they are happiest in pairs, and compels them to recognize the dual principle. You never saw a flower in your life which was not the personification of the marriage principle, the stamens playing the part of a woman, and the pistil that of a man, although you should not follow the botanical analogy too literally, by taking more than one stamen. All ideas, all beauty, all feelings, all effects in the great world of nature and humanity depend for their existence upon this dual principle, which only takes shape and exerts influence in the form of marriage. Now, you see, my dear Fitz-Herbert, it does not look well in you to set yourself against the inevitable tendency of nature and humanity and the fixed purpose of the Creator, by remaining single, merely because you think you are going to "sacwifice your fweedom." As I said before, it is all bosh. [313]

This is a plain statement of the facts in the premises, and now I am going to suggest a remedy for the wretchedness which is consequent upon their violation and a penalty for their violator.

The penalty does not apply to women, for there is not a woman in the world who would not marry if she had a chance.

In fixing this penalty, it is necessary to assume the indisputable fact that for every man in the world there is a woman somewhere waiting and waiting anxiously. She may be in the same house with you, in the same neighborhood, or the same city, or she may be in a distant quarter of the globe. You may not meet her this year or next year, but, nevertheless, Fitz-Herbert, there is a woman waiting for you somewhere, who wants to be married to you, to be loved by you, to be fed by you, to have you take her to the opera and the concerts, and to have you pay her milliner and dressmaker. In return, she will be your best friend, will make a man out of you, will suffer for you, never cease to love you, and, if necessary, die for you. Now, it is your duty to set about and find that woman, and go to work loving and feeding her, and paying her bills without grumbling, because all you can do for her will not be worth mention by the side of that wonderful love she will bestow on you—the same love which your father had for your mother. You probably won't have to look long or far for her. You will be astonished at the ease with which you will find her, if you commence looking for her in earnest. She must be supported by some one. If you don't support her, then some other man must be taxed to do it, and thus the burden falls upon those who already have wives. This, of course, is unfair. No man should be compelled to take care of more than one woman. [314]

This is your plain duty, and my penalty to be imposed upon those who won't perform it is simply levying of a tax. Granted that there is a woman for every man, ready to be supported by that man, then I propose to compel that man to support that woman, whether he will marry that woman or not. I would do nothing rashly. I would give him a lee-way for choice until he was thirty years of age. If he didn't make a choice in thirty years, I should take it for granted that he didn't intend to at all, and I should then commence the operation of my tax levy. At the age of thirty, I should impose a yearly tax, equivalent to a woman's yearly legitimate expenses; at the age of thirty-five, an equivalent for a woman and two children; at forty, an equivalent for a woman and four children; at forty-five, an equivalent for a woman and six children. If the man were sickly, or absent any considerable length of time, the number of children might be reduced one-half. After the age of forty-five, the juvenile tax might cease increasing. At the age of fifty, however, I would impose a special tax upon him as a general fund for the support of aged and decayed spinsters. At the age of sixty, he should be compelled to contribute a special sum to maintain Old Ladies' Homes. And when he died, he should be compelled to bequeath a portion of his property to building orphan asylums, and the balance should go towards the maintenance of the public schools. If, in addition to his refusal to marry a woman, he should be a confirmed woman-hater, then I would force him to equalize male and female wages by paying the difference to sewing [315]

girls, factory girls and female clerks in our dry goods stores, who do a man's work for a woman's stipend.

You see this is perfectly fair. Not only would every woman be properly provided for, but married men would be relieved from the onerous burden of supporting more than one woman, which is improper, but these old bachelors who are of no account would be turned to a good use by contributing to the support of spinsters, old women and little children. Then, when they got to the gate of Heaven, they could at least have their tax-receipts, to show that their punishment might be mitigated, and that a few of the thousand years of purgatory on the banks of the Styx might be omitted. [316]

I trust, Fitz-Herbert, that you coincide with my views, or, at least, that you will give them some attention. F. H. had evidently never looked at the subject in this light, for he seemed quite bewildered, and twirled his moustache very vigorously, especially when Mignon and Celeste and Aurelia all chimed in with me, and said I was quite right.

August 21, 1869.

I am glad to notice that my letter of two Sundays ago, upon the subject of marriage, has had such good effects. During the past week, the number of marriages has trebled, and even quadrupled, in this city. To be sure, the number of divorces has kept even pace, and, for every pair which has come boldly up to the altar and joined hands in eternal friendship, another pair has severed the bond in twain and parted company, like two ships which meet upon the ocean, hold converse for a little minute, and then set sail for the different horizons. The Clown in Twelfth Night spoke more wisely than he knew, when he said that many a good hanging prevented many a bad marriage. From the ease with which divorces are now obtained, it seems to me a few good hangings would have a healthy influence upon this matter of marriage, and would make that declaration of the minister's, upon which he dwells with such solemn unction, "What God hath joined, let not man put asunder," savor less of the ridiculous. [317]

And all this reminds me of several letters I have received during the past two weeks, taking issue with me upon one small remark contained in my letter. "Ferniania," "Ada," "Kitty," and a half a dozen other anonyma, are highly indignant that I should have said "Any woman who has a chance will get married."

I expected to be overwhelmed with an avalanche of female indignation when I wrote that sentence. I wrote it with a realizing sense of the wrath to come.

The wrath has come, and I find at least a dozen female gauntlets on the floor before me which I am expected to take up.

I confess I do not like anonymous gauntlets. I should like to know the antecedents of some of them before I accept the wager and do battle for my proposition.

In the first place, I would like to know how many of these pretty Amazons have had a chance to get married, and if they had a chance, then I want to know why they didn't get married. I have no more sympathy for a woman who won't get married than I have for a man. She is just as much a jug without a handle or a bow without the arrow as the man is. The very first record we have of the very first woman that ever lived, after she got her fig-leaf *panier* made, is of her marriage to Adam, and the next thing of any consequence is the birth of the rapscallion Cain, and the good little boy Abel. It is just as much the woman's duty to get married as the man's.

Good heavens! my dear Madame, or my dear Mademoiselle, what would you have done, if your parents hadn't got married? Would you have written me that indignant letter? Would you ever have gone to see Enoch Arden? Would you have ever known the Paradise of new fall hats and George Eliot's last new book? [318]

I should say not.

At least it strikes me that way upon a mere glance.

Then wherein are you any better than your parents? I would like to be assured, therefore, that you have had a chance to get married, and why you refused the chance, before I answer you.

Of course I expect a very torrent of affirmation. A woman had better be dead than never to have had a chance. I would rather face a Nubian lion than tell a woman to her face that she had never had an opportunity to get married. Do not the dear, delightful old women, sitting in their arm-chairs, grow garrulous over their tea, and tell their grand-daughters of the numberless chances they had when they were young and their faces were smooth and the wrinkles and crows-feet had not been written upon their foreheads by the implacable Time? Do not mature married ladies, who have just gone round the corner, and are beginning to feel just the slightest touch in the world of neuralgia, now and then delight to give their husbands a realizing sense of their inferiority, by recalling the number of chances they have had and how they might have done better here and lived easier there? Do not young ladies in *les confidences* with their numerous bosom friends—confidences which are as mysterious as a sum in simple addition and as eternal as the life of a sand-fly—divulge to each other the chances they have had, and the prospects for chances ahead, with the stereotyped exactions of promises never to tell, upon penalty of [319]

immediate severance of the ties which bind, etc.? Do not the delightful little creatures from five to ten display the first sign of womanhood in getting up flirtations with the little boy in the next house, and writing the most astonishing little notes to the effect that

> 'If you love me as I love you,
> No knife shall cut our loves in two.'

etc., etc.?

This story of chances is an old, old story. It is a failing of human nature. There isn't a young woman in the world who has been gazed at admiringly by a young man, but has imagination strong enough to convert that look into a chance. That story won't do. I want something more definite.

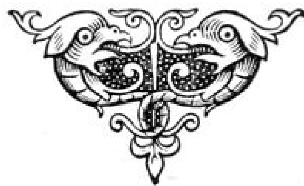
In the second place, I would like to know if any of my correspondents who have had so many chances improved one of them and got married? If so, I would like again to know, what in the world you are complaining of? Is it quite complimentary to your other half, who buys your bonnets, provides your beefsteaks, pays your washerwoman, and looks after the pocket-book side of your marital contract? With that estimable man in your eye—and I should hate to deny in your presence, Madame, that he was not estimable—how can you have the assurance to deny that there are women who would marry, if they had the chance? Are the grapes which grow on your vines soured? Has the honeymoon grown bitter in its waxings and wanings? Have you put your finger in the fire and been burned?

I hope not, but it looks so, my dear—it looks so.

I have a letter from still another correspondent—written in a savage, vinegary sort of chirography [320] —who lugs in that stale crowd, Anna Dickinson, Miss Anthony, etc., to prove that women will not always marry when they have a chance. I do not recognize anything womanly in these clamorous individuals bawling from stumps, and crying themselves hoarse for rights which any of them can have if they have sense enough to take them. If a woman will deliberately unsex herself, she has no right to expect chances. If she ever, by some mysterious dispensation of Divine Providence, gets a chance, it is kindness to the dumb brute who gave her the chance, when she refuses it. The good God, when He established the relation of the sexes, never intended that man should ally himself to a woman with ice-water in her veins and a head full of syllogisms. He might as well marry a treatise on metaphysics and have done with it. I am sick of this crowd of one-idea women who are invariably trotted out when it is necessary to do or say anything. They are exceptions to all rules, and prove nothing. A cow with five legs and a hen with no tail furnish no data from which to judge of the general family of cows and hens.

It is rather curious that nearly all my correspondents hurl my Maiden Aunt in my face to prove that I am wrong in asserting that every woman would marry if she had a chance. The Maiden Aunt *did* have a chance, and would have accepted the chance, had not Death stepped in and taken it away from her. She could not love twice, and so she preferred to wait until she could be united to him eternally. It would have been the crowning glory of her life, if she could have married him for whom she wore the forget-me-not so long, and her life therein would have been [321] more perfect than it was. She was ready to marry when she had the chance, but Fate ordered it otherwise, and she bowed her head and submitted to the decree which forbade the chance, but could not forbid the love. And they who were divided in life were united in death, and I know are quite happy now.

September 4, 1869.



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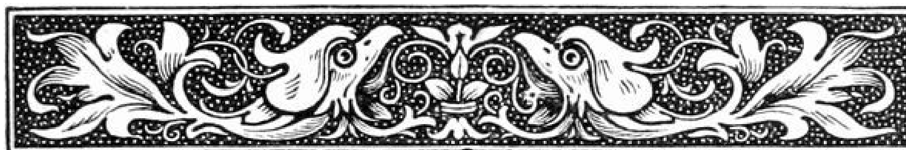
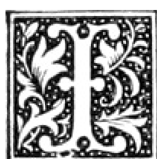


OLD BLOBBS REDIVIVUS.



THINK you never saw a happier little family circle than gathered about the breakfast table this morning. The dark cloud which has hovered over us so long, casting its shadow over all the household, has dissipated, and behind it we saw that the sun was still shining, although we faint hearts had begun to believe that we should never sit in the sunshine again.

Old Blobbs has past the crisis and weathered the storm. The staunch old man has baffled *pallida mors* by resolutely contesting every inch with him. For a day he hovered on the brink of the chasm between the two worlds, but there was no trace of terror, or even of impatience, in his serene face. I think he was so near to Heaven that gleams of its light irradiated him, for I never saw such a rapt face before. I think that he heard the sound of the harps coming faintly to him, as we sometimes hear music coming over the water in the hush of night, for now and then he would close his eyes and listen very attentively, seeming to forget us who were standing around, fearing that at any moment he might see the gate of Paradise and pass through, leaving us disconsolate on this side. And I know, by a quick glow of recognition and a smile of ineffable pleasure, which [323] once lit up his face, that he saw the Maiden Aunt, and a little child who once left us, somewhere in that land so far from us, but so near to him, for he raised his thin white hand as if he would grasp the hand of another. We could not speak to him. In that solemn time we dared not. The doctor sat upon the bedside and watched him with anxious face. Mignon, in the intensity of her grief, sat with her face buried in her hands. She had placed the faded forget-me-not, which the Maiden Aunt sent to her as her dying souvenir, in Blobbs' hand, thinking, perhaps, that he might take it to her, as they do not grow where she is, for memory There is eternal.

It was growing towards sunset, and through the interlacing leaves of the ivy which covers the window, a golden shaft of sunlight shot into the room and fell upon the bed. It caught Old Blobbs' eye. He faintly smiled, turned his head away, and closed his eyes. The doctor lightly felt the pulse and motioned us to be silent. In a few minutes, the doctor beckoned us to retire to another room, and then said to us: "Your friend is sleeping. He has passed the crisis and will be spared to you. It is only necessary that he should be kept quiet."

On the day before the crisis, Parson Primrose called to see Old Blobbs in the performance of official duty, and undoubtedly actuated by a sincere desire to smooth his pathway into the Valley of the Shadow. There was just the faintest expression of impatience upon Blobbs' face, when he saw him enter. Primrose had assumed a conventional, business-like look of grief, not unmixed with a slight anxiety, as if he were not at all certain that Blobbs' pathway needed any smoothing. [324] And I knew that Blobbs was convinced how utterly impotent Primrose was to afford him any consolation or shed any light upon the future.

In a dry, formalistic way, Primrose asked: "My dear brother, are you prepared for the great change!"

I never shall forget Blobbs' look of profound astonishment as he replied: "Yes, sir! Certainly. I have always been prepared for this from my boyhood up. I supposed it was a man's first duty to have his household always in order for such changes—most of all, the common change which may come any minute. Why, of course, sir, I am prepared, and hope I shall meet the change like a gentleman."

Primrose added: "And have you prepared yourself for this great change by attendance upon divine worship?"

"Yes, sir," replied Old Blobbs. "I may say to you, however, as we had better understand each other, that I have not always deemed it important to attend divine worship within four walls. I have been rather oppressed, sir, by this gregarious form of worship, and have not always received satisfaction or consolation from the gentlemen of your cloth—and this, with all respect, sir. I imagine that I have been rather exacting, and expected to find a guide, rather than a companion who knew no more of the way than myself. In such cases, I always found that I got much nearer the Great Father by going out into Nature, the house which He built, and by loving my fellow-man and all the forms of life which He has created, even down to the insects. There has always, I may say, sir, been more satisfaction to me in this warm, active love than in that [325] affection which has been regulated by rules and bounded by dogmas."

"Then you have never settled upon any creed or form of belief," said Primrose.

Blobbs' face again wore an impatient look, as he replied: "Belief with me, sir, has been instinctive. It never had any prescribed form, and never needed defining by any ritual. I have never troubled myself much about any creed, as I have never seen any record of creeds where I may soon go. I do not expect, if I had a creed, that it would be anything but an impediment to me in crossing the river. If I got safely over with it, I am confident, sir, that St. Peter would make me leave it outside the gate, as something for which they had no use inside."

"Then, you have believed in no doctrine, and belonged to no church, my dear friend?" said Primrose.

"You mistake me, sir," said Blobbs, rather impatiently. "I have always believed in charity, which is greater than faith or hope, and in the sublime words which Christ, and Confucius before Christ, uttered: 'Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you.' I have always belonged to the great church of humanity, which, I think, sir, in ages to come, will be the church of mankind ——"

"When the millenium comes, and man is perfect?" interposed Primrose.

"No, sir!" replied Blobbs, emphatically. "I look for no millenium of perfection. Man can never fully develop, if this world shall stand for millions of ages yet. To assume that, would be to deny the principle of infinity which is in him. The perfect development can never be attained except in [326] eternity. We must be freed from this frail envelope of the body before the soul can rise,

untrammelled."

"Upon what, then, if you have no doctrine, or creed, or church, do you depend for your salvation?" said Primrose.

"Upon the love of our common Father," replied Blobbs. "He has carried me, sir, in the hollow of His hand since childhood, and has never done me harm. I am not afraid now, sir, to trust myself to Him, confident that He knows better than I what is best for me, and that He will do what is best. I think that He will solve all these mysteries, so that what is dark to my feeble comprehension will become quite light. I am willing, sir, to trust myself to Him, and, sir, if you can throw any light upon the place to which I am going, I shall be very grateful to receive it. As to the manner of going, I am quite willing to leave that to Him who knows more than I."

Primrose, after a few generalities, took his leave, satisfied that at least he had done his duty, but Old Blobbs turned his face to the wall with a feeble smile and a shake of the head.

I think Blobbs was fully convinced, as well as the rest of us, that he should not live long, for on that same day he handed me his diary, which he desired me to keep. He has since that time expressed his willingness to have me use what I please of it. On looking it over, I found some thoughts which perhaps may interest you.

In one place he says:

"I think I have but one regret in leaving this world. When I look into the past and see what is doing, I would like to live into the future some centuries, to see what a magnificent world this will be." [327]

Again he says:

"Every man carries in his breast an aspiration and a skeleton. The one is a yearning for an ideal which is never realized here. He will never find it, be his search ever so long or so faithful. It must always end in the fate of the Prince who sought the fountain of perpetual youth, and the alchemists who wasted their lives and energies looking for the philosopher's stone. And yet it seems to me this unattainable ideal is one of the surest proofs of immortality. The other is the reverse of the ideal—a fearful secret—a chained tiger—a terrible power. Sometimes it assumes only the form of a melancholy. Sometimes of a despair which kills."

Again:

"The keen, earnest love of Nature always involves the warmer love of man as the noblest type of Nature, and yet the love of Nature is the compensation for the loss of man. When all men forget you—when the bright hues with which you have invested the ideal of the soul fade like a morning mist—when the heart in its lowest depths of despair finds only artificial instead of real men, when you even despair of humanity—vivifying Nature remains a faithful friend, and brings compensation in her flowers and birds, her mountains and cataracts."

Again:

"Sympathy with anything that is beautiful can never be completely exercised when you are alone. It must find expression, and there must be the presence of another who shall be the recipient of that expression. Worship demands isolation, which begets reverence. Sympathy demands the presence of another, and begets friendship or love, according to the nature of the object and the companion. Either in the presence of nature, which inspires friendship, or of music and some forms of art, which inspire love, the presence of the second person is essential to complete sympathy; and he who has sought either love or friendship, and lost both, is richer than he who has never sought either." [328]

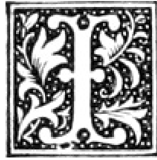
Blobbs' diary contains also some pretty severe strictures, which I might be tempted to give you were it not for the fact that he will now soon be with us again and speak for himself. I saw him this morning, and he is quite like himself again. He took me by the hand and said: "Well, my dear boy, they say the old ship is going to weather the storm."

I congratulated him upon his improvement, and he added:

"I thought we were getting into the haven and coming to anchor. But the voyage isn't quite over yet, so we must clear away the decks, crowd on all sail and out again into the blue waters, with the rest of our little fleet, and trust all to the good Pilot at the helm, Who knows what is best, after all."

August 28, 1869.

A TRIP TO HELL.

F you should ask me why I went to Hell, I do not know that I could answer you. I only know that I have often wanted to go there. I have more than once envied Swedenborg, who could go in a jiffy where he pleased, and the rat who lived in a well, and when he died went——you know where. If you do not know, I can tell you that the place rhymes with well.

I only know that I went there and came back safe and unsinged, and with no smell of fire in my garments, although I saw and talked with him who is never mentioned in polite company, strange to say, considering that he is the politest person that I ever met.

It may have been owing to the fact that, just before I went to sleep, I was thinking of these coming fall days; of the maple boughs which will soon be blazing with the red and scarlet flames of the frost; of the smoky haze which will soon hide the hill-sides; of the sumachs and vines which will soon sheet the road-sides with flame. It may have been this smoke and fire which sent me there, for the most of us form no other idea of that place, under the heavens, except in the light of brimstone, sulphur, anthracite coal, lava, molten iron, and other pleasant compounds, into [330] which we are to be immersed forever and a day, to roast, boil, and bake, and yet never get cooked.

But, as I said before, I have been to Hell and got back safely, and I should be unfaithful to my post as a public benefactor, and my duties as a journalistic chronicler, did I not tell you what I saw.

You may remember that some months ago I told you of my trip to Heaven. My route to the other place was partially the same. I passed through our system of stars and planets, dodged the comets as before, found that the Man in the Moon was ill from the effects of the recent eclipse, saw the Archer-road milkmen still running from the stump-tail cows in the Milky Way, passed from planet to planet, and from galaxy to galaxy into other systems, and at last reached the sea of golden light, of which I told you before—the sea of Immortality. Between this and the crystal sea above it, however, I diverged, and my way led through rifts of dark leaden clouds, across blank moors, which were illumined by a lurid light which seemed to come from no source. There were strange whisperings in the air. Dark-winged birds now and then flitted by me, and ever and anon I could hear a sullen roar in the distance, which seemed to come from the flow of a river. Thus, on over the blank moors, until my way led to a hill-side, at the foot of which I was stopped by one of Lucifer's officials, who briefly examined me, and then said I was qualified to proceed.

I proceeded up the hill, and at the top I looked down to a river—the River of Lethe—flowing sluggishly along through a valley. Across this river I could see a country of vast extent, which was [331] very thickly peopled. I went down the hill-side, and came to the river, and there I found an old ferryman and his boat waiting to convey me over the dark flood. He asked me for the obolus with which to pay toll across the river, but, unfortunately, I hadn't a cent with me. He then asked, rather impatiently, if my friends were so poor when I died that they couldn't afford to put an obolus in the coffin with me. I smilingly replied that I wasn't aware I had ever died, whereat he answered, very seriously, that he had carried a great many dead men across, but never any dead-heads. I tried to coax the old man into giving me a ride gratis, but he obstinately refused, saying that only the disembodied were allowed to cross, and that if he took me over he would catch the ——

"Just the man I want to see," said I. "If I cannot go to him, except as a blessed defunct, will you have the goodness to hand my card to him, and say that I come from Chicago?"

The old man took the card, and, after taking on board two or three people whom I used to know, and supposed were saints, he paddled across and soon returned, saying that the Devil had sent his compliments and was willing to see me. He also sent word that he was desirous of sending back by me his thanks to Chicago, which was just now conferring a great favor upon him in the way of business.

I accordingly jumped into the boat. The old man had to work very hard in getting me over. The spirits which he was accustomed to carry weigh nothing and pack close, but I was quite substantial.

[332] In my passage across the river I observed that it was full of robes, mitres, crosiers, censers, creeds, canons, and other articles floating along, and I asked the old man the cause of it. He simply replied that he didn't know what they were. He believed they were some sort of stuff which some people brought along with them and had to throw away because nobody used them here or in the other place. When we had reached the other shore I landed, and the old man informed me I was in Hell, and would find the Devil a short distance away. I found him without difficulty. As soon as he had settled a little dispute between some Board of Trade men who had

been getting up a corner,—which he declared was too disgraceful even for *his* country,—he turned to me and bade me welcome.

I must acknowledge that I was disappointed in his appearance. He was a very polite, affable person, and, apparently, a perfect gentleman. There were certainly no claws upon his fingers. His feet were not cloven. There were no horns upon his head. Neither did I, after a rather secret and anxious scrutiny, discover any indications of a tail. He greeted me as if he knew me well, and at once put me at ease with himself. I made bold to congratulate him upon his personal appearance, whereat he smiled and said: "Yes, the old story—horns, hoofs and tail, I suppose. I know it is the custom for you people on that little planet, which is called, I think, the Earth, when you wish to represent anything infamous or abominable, to paint the Devil, and you generally paint him very black. Now we know a thing or two here, and we always return the compliment, for when we wish to represent anything infamous or abominable we paint Man in his natural colors. I assure you sir, I am not so black as they paint me. Why, sir, I have been obliged to blush more than once at the crimes which some men have committed who come here for cleansing." [333]

I acknowledged the justness of his remarks and then, anxious to settle a suspicion which had been troubling me, I asked him where the fire was. He smiled again, and said:

"Fire? It is all round you. Hell-fire is by no means a falsehood. Look at these people. They have brought all their passions with them. We cannot manufacture a fire which can burn and consume like the fires of passion in man's breast. We know of no hell so terrible as the hell in a man's bosom. Let me tell you there isn't a man or woman on your Earth without a tiger chained in his breast. Let him but once unloose the beast and hell has broken loose in himself. These tides of passion never ebb. They are resistless in their flow, and they burn and kill, as they flow, like a stream of molten lava running down the side of the volcano into the fertile plains. That man there, who killed his brother is none the less a murderer now, only that his passion to kill is intensified without the means of its gratification; and you will notice that he carries the skeleton of that brother tied to him, from which he cannot escape. Do you think fire would be any such punishment to him? That miser, who was eaten up with avarice in his mortal life, is doubly the miser now, only the gains which he hoards are forever swept from him. So with them all. They bring their passions with them here only to have them intensified, to have their capacities for passion correspondingly increased, and never to have the opportunities of gratifying them. That is the kind of hell-fire we have here, and it burns until the victim is burnt out, and purified, and regenerated, and rendered capable of receiving pure enjoyment. We who are placed in charge of them have no sympathy with them, for we have no passions. We have living brains, but dead hearts. [334]

"And yet," I remarked, "many of these people seem to be very quiet and calm. They do not look as if they were troubled at all by passions."

"There is where you make a great mistake," the Devil replied. "Appearances are as deceitful here as they are on Earth. Outward quietness is no sign of inward peace. The ocean, which is in continual war with the elements, lashing its surface into ungovernable fury, is secret and silent in its depth, while some hidden lake in the mountains, or some pool in the valleys, which never feels the ocean storm blowing over its surface, yet mirrors every storm-cloud in its breast and is disturbed in its depths by violent currents. Appearances are deceitful, even here, you see."

The Devil then offered to show me about his dominions, and we trudged along together. I was surprised to find so many people there I had known on Earth and supposed were saints; men whom I had known with serene faces, and upturned eyes, and saintly expressions, who were all the time deprecating the sinfulness of Earth; who held up their hands in holy horror at pleasures and snuffed evil in every wind that blew; and among them some whose names had been blown abroad loud and long, and who had mounted upon the top of popular opinion by means of the step-ladders of piety. The Devil noticed my surprise and said: "Yes! we have a good many of that sort. They are all entered on the books as hypocrites. One of our choicest vintages, which we serve on State occasions, is their tears bottled up. They are much superior in flavor to the tears of the crocodile." [335]

He took me further on and showed me the men who had been cruel to animals, each of whom was tormented by the animals he had tormented in life. Brutal cartmen, who had lashed their horses to death, were in harness, and the horses were lashing them. In one place, there was an entire horse-railroad company drawing overloaded cars. A man who was cruel to his dog was pursued and constantly bitten by a howling pack of them. Another, who had wantonly killed a little bird, was chained to a rock, like Prometheus, and vultures were forever pecking at him. Nero, who took delight in killing flies, was forever stung by swarms of insects. This one, who had been cruel to his ox, was harnessed to a plow, and the ox was goading him along. That one, who had been unnecessarily cruel to a fish, was forever swimming in bottomless waters, pursued by sharks. Thus each was punished in kind, and cruelty to the dumb beast brought its own compensation. Whereat I rejoiced, and quietly pressed the hand of the Devil in token of satisfaction.

And he said to me: "Even we devils, bad as we are supposed to be, hardly know a crime so wicked as the crime of cruelty to the animal, from man down to the insect. We have no worse punishments than that for violations of the law of kindness, which is the law of love."

[336] We wandered on, and found several other classes of persons, each of whom was punished in some unique manner. There were pot-house politicians by the multitude, who were chasing after offices which constantly eluded their grasp just as they thought they had them. There was an

army of street-corner organ-grinders condemned to wander for a term of years and never to cease grinding "Captain Jinks," while the man who wrote "Captain Jinks" was condemned to follow them and listen to it as long as they played it. There was a large multitude of people from Cincinnati, condemned to sit for a thousand years upon a bank of a river and read the daily papers of Chicago. There was a crowd of tradesmen, who cheated with false weights, condemned to trudge for centuries with their weights hung about their necks; and others, who mixed sand with sugar, and turmeric with butter, and sold other villainous compounds for the genuine article, who were forced to eat their own abominable adulterations incessantly. And thus we went on until we came to a spot where there was a fearful chattering and screaming. The Devil stopped his ears as we approached, and I immediately discovered a crowd of able-bodied, stout-armed women chasing a piece of paper which was fluttering through the air. Every time that they were on the point of seizing it, a puff of wind would blow it away again. And on the paper was written the single word "Ballot." I smiled as I recognized some of them.

Thus we went on, but it was everywhere the same story. Those who had bad passions on Earth brought their bad passions along with them, and made their own hells. Those who were foolish on Earth were foolish here, and everyone was punished in kind. Each person had his crime fastened upon him, and whatever chalice he had forced others to drink was now commended to his own lips. [337]

And as we retraced our steps, I asked the Devil if there was no cessation from these punishments, and he answered: "Love will finally triumph at last, for it is the law of laws, both on the Earth and in the Heavens."

We again reached the River Lethe, and I asked him what word he wished to send to Earth. He smiled, as he answered: "Nothing special. My business is doing well there, and I have no fault to find with your representation. The supply quite exceeds the demand."

He paused a minute, and said: "And yet I think I might send some advice by you. A great many good souls upon Earth are troubled about the meaning of life. There was one poor fool named Dr. Faust, who once sold himself to me, in order to get at the meaning of the riddle. Tell them that any one who can appreciate the littleness of life and not lose his own dignity has come near enough to solving the problem. Tell them, also, to realize, if they can, that their condition is human, and that, whenever they try to ape the divine, they are opposing the eternal fitness of things. The best happiness, and glory, and virtue they can reach is in being *men*, and loving their fellow-men. If they become angels on Earth, they have nothing left to do when they get up there. That old poet whom you are accustomed to style a heathen was just right when he said: 'I am human, and I deem nothing human a stranger to me.'"

I promised the Devil I would take his message to Earth, and then said: "I have but one more question to ask." [338]

"What is that?" he replied.

"Do editors come here often?"

"No! they have quite enough of this place where they are."

I thanked him from my heart of hearts, and bade him good-bye as one not utterly bereft of comfort and consolation.

As the old ferryman landed I noticed that his boat was full of stock speculators, and that the Devil looked utterly disgusted when they stepped into his dominions.

We passed over the river in silence. I climbed the hill and crossed the blank moors, passed through the golden sea again, and then on through the systems until I reached Earth and awaked.

It may be barely possible that a quarter section of hot mince pie had something to do with this visit.

September 19, 1869.

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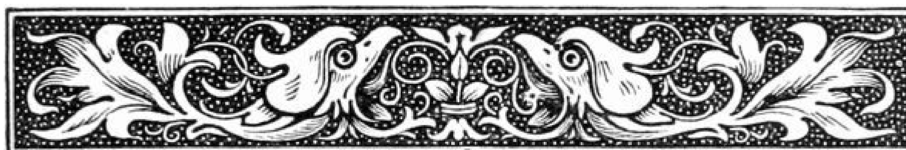
[339]



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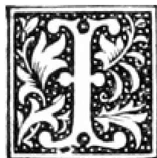
T is only a few brief lines, and I must say good-bye to the reader, and the book closes. You and I have kept company together through nearly three years of pleasant intercourse—a brief time as numbered by years, but long enough in the calendar of words and deeds. I trust neither of us is the worse for the company, and that we shall part with kindly words, good wishes and mutual blessings, until we see each other again. I trust that in these preceding pages, each one of you may have found some thought you will deem worthy to lay away for preservation among the locks of hair and old letters and faded flowers and other souvenirs which each of you keep and look at when the world presses heavily upon you with its cares and anxieties.

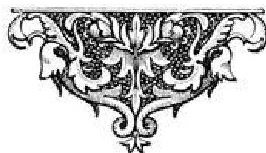
I trust that you may have found something that is beautiful in the lives of each one of our little family with whom you have been made acquainted, in your companionship with me. I frankly confess to you that I have a tender regard for them all, and that I shall be disappointed if you do not share the same, as I have only been their mouthpiece when they have spoken. I know that they regret the parting with you as much as I, and that if we ever meet again, they will extend to you the same warm welcome as I.

And now the book closes, just as the birds are flying to the warmer South and the groves are growing strangely silent; just as the flowers are fading in the gardens and in the fields; just as the leaves are falling in the forests, and the hill-sides are beginning to drape themselves in the melancholy and tender beauty of the Autumn. I cannot make this parting without a feeling of regret and a certain sadness; and, as I extend my hand to each and all of you—to some whom I have met daily, to some whose faces have grown familiar, and to some whom I have never seen and may never see, and yet have sent me precious words of sympathy and encouragement during these past three years—I should be ungrateful were I not to acknowledge the constant kindness which has greeted these careless letters as they have appeared in the columns of the Tribune.

Hoping that, in some future time, we may meet together again as now, it only remains to say Farewell, and to write those saddest of all words—

THE END.

September 22, 1869.



FOOTNOTES:

[1] The Northwestern Saengerfest, held at Chicago, June, 1868.

[2] The completion of the Pacific Railroad.

Transcriber's Notes:

Obvious typographical errors were repaired.

Archaic or variant stylistic spellings, and hyphenation inconsistencies, were retained.

Redundant title page at the beginning—displaying only "Letters of Peregrine Pickle"—was removed.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK LETTERS OF PEREGRINE PICKLE ***

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