VARIOUS

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Содержание

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DAPHNAIDES: OR THE ENGLISH LAUREL, FROM CHAUCER TO TENNYSON

They in thir time did many a noble dede,
And for their worthines full oft have bore
The crown of laurer leavés on the hede,
As ye may in your oldé bookés rede:
And how that he that was a conquerour
Had by laurer alway his most honour.

DAN CHAUCER: The Flowre and the Leaf.

It is to be lamented that antiquarian zeal is so often diverted from subjects of real to those of merely fanciful interest. The mercurial young gentlemen who addict themselves to that exciting department of letters are open to censure as being too fitful, too prone to flit, bee-like, from flower to flower, now lighting momentarily upon an indecipherable tombstone, now perching upon a rusty morion, here dipping into crumbling palimpsests, there turning up a tattered reputation from heaps of musty biography, or discovering that the brightest names have had sad blots and blemishes scoured off by the attrition of Time's ceaseless current. We can expect little from investigators so volatile and capricious; else should we expect the topic we approach in this paper to have been long ago flooded with light as of Maedler's sun, its dust dissipated, and sundry curves and angles which still baffle scrutiny and provoke curiosity exposed even to Gallio-llke wayfarers. It is, in fact, a neglected topic. Its derivatives are obscure, its facts doubtful. Questions spring from it, sucker-like, numberless, which none may answer. Why, for instance, in apportioning his gifts among his posterity, did Phoebus assign the laurel to his step-progeny, the sons of song, and pour the rest of the vegetable world into the pharmacopoeia of the favored Æsculapius? Why was even this wretched legacy divided in aftertimes with the children of Mars? Was its efficacy as a non-conductor of lightning as reliable as was held by Tiberius, of guileless memory, Emperor of Rome? Were its leaves really found green as ever in the tomb of St. Humbert, a century and a half after the interment of that holy confessor? In what reign was the first bay-leaf, rewarding the first poet of English song, authoritatively conferred? These and other like questions are of so material concern to the matter we have in hand, that we may fairly stand amazed that they have thus far escaped the exploration of archaeologists. It is not for us to busy ourselves with other men's affairs. Time and patience shall develope profounder mysteries than these. Let us only succeed in delineating in brief monograph the outlines of a natural history of the British Laurel,–*Laurea nobilis, sempervirens, florida*,–and in posting here and there, as we go, a few landmarks that shall facilitate the surveys of investigators yet unborn, and this our modest enterprise shall be happily fulfilled.

One portion of it presents no serious difficulty. There is an uninterrupted canon of the Laureates running as far back as the reign of James I. Anterior, however, to that epoch, the catalogue fades away in undistinguishable darkness. Names are there of undoubted splendor, a splendor, indeed, far more glowing than that of any subsequent monarch of the bays; but the legal title to the garland falls so far short of satisfactory demonstration, as to oblige us to dismiss the first seven Laureates with a dash of that ruthless criticism with which Niebuhr, the regicide, dispatched the seven kings of Rome. To mark clearly the bounds between the mythical and the indubitable, a glance at the following brief of the Laureate *fasti* will greatly assist us, speeding us forward at once to the substance of our story.

I. The MYTHICAL PERIOD, extending from the supposititious coronation of Laureate CHAUCER, *in temp. Edv. III., 1367*, to that of Laureate JONSON, *in temp. Caroli I.* To this period belong,

GEOFFREY CHAUCER,	1367-1400
JOHN SCOGAN,	1400-1413
JOHN KAY,	1465-
ANDREW BERNARD,	1486-
JOHN SKELTON,	1509-1529
EDMUND SPENSER,	1590-1599
SAMUEL DANIEL,	
MICHAEL DRAYTON,	1600-1630
BEN JONSON,	

II. The DRAMATIC, extending from the latter event to the demise of Laureate SHADWELL, *in temp. Gulielmi III., 1692.* Here we have

BEN JONSON,	1630-1637
WILL DAVENANT,	1637-1668
JOHN DRYDEN,	1670-1689
THOMAS SHADWELL,	1689-1692

III. The LYRIC, from the reign of Laureate TATE, 1693, to the demise of Laureate PYE, 1813:–

NAHUM TATE,	1693-1714
NICHOLAS ROWE,	1714-1718
LAURENCE EUSDEN,	1719-1730
COLLEY CIBBER,	1730-1757
WILLIAM WHITEHEAD,	1758-1785
THOMAS WARTON,	1785-1790
HENRY JAMES PYE,	1790-1813

IV. The VOLUNTARY, from the accession of Laureate SOUTHEY, 1813, to the present day:–

ROBERT SOUTHEY,	1813-1843
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH,	1843-1850
ALFRED TENNYSON,	1850-

Have no faith in those followers of vain traditions who assert the existence of the Laureate office as early as the thirteenth century, attached to the court of Henry III. Poets there were before Chaucer,–*vixere fortes ante Agamemnona*,–but search Rymer from cord to clasp and you shall find no documentary evidence of any one of them wearing the leaf or receiving the stipend distinctive of the place. Morbid credulity can go no farther back than to the "Father of English Poetry":–

"That renounced Poet,
Dan Chaucer, well of English undefyled,
On Fame's eternall beadroll worthie to be fyled":[1]

"Him that left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold;
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife":[2]

"That noble Chaucer, in those former times,
Who first enriched our English with his rhymes,
And was the first of ours that ever broke
Into the Muse's treasures, and first spoke
In mighty numbers."[3]

[1] SPENSER: *Faery Queen*. See also the *Two Cantos of Mutability,* Cant. VII.:–"That old Dan Geffrey, in whose gentle sprightThe pure well-head of poesie did dwell."

[2] MILTON: *Il Penseroso.*

[3] WORDSWORTH: *Poems of Later Years.*

Tradition here first assumes that semblance of probability which rendered it current for three centuries. Edward the Third–resplendent name in the constitutional history of England–is supposed to have been so deeply impressed with Chaucer's poetical merits, as to have sought occasion for appropriate recognition. Opportunely came that high festival at the capital of the world, whereat

> "Franccis Petrark, the laureat poete,
> … whos rethorike swete
> Enlumined all Itaille of poetrie,"[4]

received the laurel crown at the hands of the Senate of Rome, with a magnificence of ceremonial surpassed only by the triumphs of imperial victors a thousand years before. Emulous of the gorgeous example, the English monarch forthwith showered corresponding honors upon Dan Chaucer, adding the substantial perquisites of a hundred marks and a tierce of Malvoisie, a year. To this agreeable story, Laureate Warton, than whom no man was more intimately conversant with the truth there is in literary history, appears in one of his official odes to yield assent:–

> "Victorious Edward gave the vernal bough
> Of Britain's bay to bloom on Chaucer's brow:
> Fired with the gift, he changed to sounds sublime
> His Norman minstrelsy's discordant chime."[5]

The legend, however, does not bear inquiry. King Edward, in 1367, certainly granted an annuity of twenty marks to "his varlet, Geoffrey Chaucer." Seven years later there was a further grant of a pitcher of wine daily, together with the controllership of the wool and petty wine revenues for the port of London. The latter appointment, to which the pitcher of wine was doubtless incident, was attended with a requirement that the new functionary should execute all the duties of his post in person,–a requirement involving as constant and laborious occupation as that of Charles Lamb, chained to his perch in the India House. These concessions, varied slightly by subsequent patents from Richard II. and Henry IV., form the entire foundation to the tale of Chaucer's Laureateship.[6] There is no reference in grant or patent to his poetical excellence or fame, no mention whatever of the laurel, no verse among the countless lines of his poetry indicating the reception of that crowning glory, no evidence that the third Edward was one whit more sensitive to the charms of the Muses than the third William, three hundred years after. Indeed, the condition with which the appointment of this illustrious custom-house officer was hedged evinced, if anything, a desire to discourage a profitless wooing of the Nine, by so confining his mind to the incessant routine of an uncongenial duty as to leave no hours of poetic idleness. Whatever laurels Fame may justly garland the temples of Dan Chaucer withal, she never, we are obliged to believe, employed royal instrument at the coronation.

John Scogan, often confounded with an anterior Henry, has been named as the Laureate of Henry IV., and immediate successor of Chaucer. Laureate Jonson seems to encourage the notion:–

> "*Mere Fool.* Skogan? What was he?
>
> "*Jophiel.* Oh, a fine gentleman, and master of arts
> Of Henry the Fourth's time, that made disguises
> For the King's sons, and writ in ballad-royal

[4] CHAUCER: *Clerke's Tale*, Prologue.

[5] WARTON: *Ode on his Majesty's Birthday, 1787*

[6] Tyrwhitt's Chaucer: *Historical Notes on his Life.*

Daintily well.

"*Mere Fool*. But he wrote like a gentleman?

"*Jophiel*. In rhyme, fine, tinkling rhyme, and flowand verse,
With now and then some sense; and he was paid for't,
Regarded and rewarded; which few poets
Are nowadays."[7]

But Warton places Scogan in the reign of Edward IV., and reduces him to the level of Court Jester, his authority being Dr. Andrew Borde, who, early in the sixteenth century, published a volume of his platitudes.[8] There is nothing to prove that he was either poet or Laureate; while, on the other hand, it must be owned, one person might at the same time fill the offices of Court Poet and Court Fool. It is but fair to say that Tyrwhitt, who had all the learning and more than the accuracy of Warton, inclines to Jonson's estimate of Scogan's character and employment.

One John Kay, of whom we are singularly deficient in information, held the post of Court Poet under the amorous Edward IV. What were his functions and appointments we cannot discover.

Andrew Bernard held the office under Henry VII. and Henry VIII. He was a churchman, royal historiographer, and tutor to Prince Arthur. His official poems were in Latin. He was living as late as 1522.

John Skelton obtained the distinction of Poet-Laureate at Oxford, a title afterward confirmed to him by the University of Cambridge: mere university degrees, however, without royal indorsement. Henry VIII. made him his "Royal Orator," whatever that may have been, and otherwise treated him with favor; but we hear nothing of sack or salary, find nothing among his poems to intimate that his performances as Orator ever ran into verse, or that his "laurer" was of the regal sort.

A long stride carries us to the latter years of Queen Elizabeth, where, and in the ensuing reign of James, we find the names of Edmund Spenser, Samuel Daniel, and Michael Drayton interwoven with the bays. Spenser's possession of the laurel rests upon no better evidence than that, when he presented the earlier books of the "Faery Queen" to Elizabeth, a pension of fifty pounds a year was conferred upon him, and that the praises of *Gloriana* ring through his realm of Faëry in unceasing panegyric. But guineas are not laurels, though for sundry practical uses they are, perhaps, vastly better; nor are the really earnest and ardent eulogia of the bard of Mulla the same in kind with the harmonious twaddle of Tate, or the classical quiddities of Pye. He was of another sphere, the highest heaven of song, who

"Waked his lofty lay
To grace Eliza's golden sway;
And called to life old Uther's elfin-tale,
And roved through many a necromantic vale,
Portraying chiefs who knew to tame
The goblin's ire, the dragon's flame,
To pierce the dark, enchanted hall
Where Virtue sat in lonely thrall.
From fabling Fancy's inmost store
A rich, romantic robe he bore,
A veil with visionary trappings hung,

[7] *Masque of the Fortunate Islands*

[8] *History of English Poetry*, Vol. II. pp. 335-336, ed. 1840.

And o'er his Virgin Queen the fairy-texture flung."[9]

Samuel Daniel was not only a favorite of Queen Elizabeth, but more decidedly so of her successor in the queendom, Anne of Denmark. In the household of the latter he held the position of Groom of the Chamber, a sinecure of handsome endowment, so handsome, indeed, as to warrant an occasional draft upon his talents for the entertainment of her Majesty's immediate circle, which held itself as far as possible aloof from the court, and was disposed to be self-reliant for its amusements. Daniel had entered upon the vocation of courtier with flattering auspices. His precocity while at Oxford has found him a place in the "Bibliotheca Eruditorum Præcocium." Anthony Wood bears witness to his thorough accomplishments in all kinds, especially in history and poetry, specimens of which, the antiquary tells us, were still, in his time, treasured among the archives of Magdalen. He deported himself so amiably in society, and so inoffensively among his fellow-bards, and versified his way so tranquilly into the good graces of his royal mistresses, distending the thread, and diluting the sense, and sparing the ornaments, of his passionless poetry,–if poetry, which, by the definition of its highest authority, is "simple, sensuous, passionate," can ever be unimpassioned,–that he was the oracle of feminine taste while he lived, and at his death bequeathed a fame yet dear to the school of Southey and Wordsworth. Daniel was no otherwise Laureate than his position in the queen's household may authorize that title. If ever so entitled by contemporaries, it was quite in a Pickwickian and complimentary sense. His retreat from the busy vanity of court life, an event which happened several years before his decease in 1619, was hastened by the consciousness of a waning reputation, and of the propriety of seeking better shelter than that of his laurels. His eloquent "Defense of Rhyme" still asserts for him a place in the hearts of all lovers of stately English prose.

Old Michael Drayton, whose portrait has descended to us, surmounted with an exuberant twig of bays, is vulgarly classed with the legitimate Laureates. Southey, pardonably anxious to magnify an office belittled by some of its occupants, does not scruple to rank Spenser, Daniel, and Drayton among the Laurelled:–

"That wreath, which, in Eliza's golden days,
My master dear, divinest Spenser, wore,
That which rewarded Drayton's learned lays,
Which thoughtful Ben and gentle Daniel bore," etc.

But in sober prose Southey knew, and later in life taught, that not one of the three named ever wore the authentic laurel.[10] That Drayton deserved it, even as a successor of the divinest Spenser, who shall deny? With enough of patience and pedantry to prompt the composition of that most laborious, and, upon the whole, most humdrum and wearisome poem of modern times, the "Polyolbion," he nevertheless possessed an abounding exuberance of delicate fancy and sound poetical judgment, traces of which flash not unfrequently even athwart the dulness of his *magnum opus*, and through the mock-heroism of "England's Heroical Epistles," while they have full play in his "Court of Faëry." Drayton's great defect was the entire absence of that dramatic talent so marvellously developed among his contemporaries,–a defect, as we shall presently see, sufficient of itself to disqualify him for the duties of Court Poet. But, what was still worse, his mind was not gifted with facility and versatility of invention, two equally essential requisites; and to install him in a position where such faculties were hourly called into play would have been to put the wrong man in the worst possible place. Drayton was accordingly a court-pensioner, but not a court-poet. His laurel was the honorary tribute of admiring

[9] WARTON: *Birthday Ode*, 1787.

[10] See his *British Poets, from Chaucer to Jonson*, Art. *Daniel*. Southey contemplated a continuation of Warton's *History*, and, in preparing for that labor, learned many things he had never known of the earlier writers.

friends, in an age when royal pedantry rendered learning fashionable and a topic of exaggerated regard. Southey's admission is to this purpose. "He was," he says, "one of the poets to whom the title of Laureate was given in that age,–not as holding the office, but as a mark of honor, to which they were entitled." And with the poetical topographer such honors abounded. Not only was he gratified with the zealous labors of Selden in illustration of the "Polyolbion," but his death was lamented in verse of Jonson, upon marble supplied by the Countess of Dorset:–

"Do, pious marble, let thy readers know
What they and what their children owe
To Drayton's name, whose sacred dust
We recommend unto thy trust.
Protect his memory, and preserve his story;
Remain a lasting monument of his glory:
And when thy ruins shall disclaim
To be the treasurer of his name,
His name, that cannot fade, shall be
An everlasting monument to thee."

The Laureateship, we thus discover, had not, down to the days of James, become an institution. Our mythical series shrink from close scrutiny. But in the gayeties of the court of the Stuarts arose occasion for the continuous and profitable employment of a court-poet, and there was enough thrift in the king to see the advantage of securing the service for a certain small annuity, rather than by the payment of large sums as presents for occasional labors. The masque, a form of dramatic representation, borrowed from the Italian, had been introduced into England during the reign of Elizabeth. The interest depended upon the development of an allegorical subject apposite to the event which the performance proposed to celebrate, such as a royal marriage, or birthday, or visit, or progress, or a marriage or other notable event among the nobility and gentry attached to the court, or an entertainment in honor of some distinguished personage. To produce startling and telling stage effects, machinery of the most ingenious contrivance was devised; scenery, as yet unknown in ordinary exhibitions of the stage, was painted with elaborate finish; goddesses in the most attenuated Cyprus lawn, bespangled with jewels, had to slide down upon invisible wires from a visible Olympus; Tritons had to rise from the halls of Neptune through waters whose undulations the nicer resources of recent art could not render more genuinely marine; fountains disclosed the most bewitching of Naiads; and Druidical oaks, expanding, surrendered the imprisoned Hamadryad to the air of heaven. Fairies and Elves, Satyrs and Forsters, Centaurs and Lapithae, played their parts in these gaudy spectacles with every conventional requirement of shape, costume, and behavior *point-de-vice*, and were supplied by the poet, to whom the letter-press of the show had been confided, with language and a plot, both pregnant with more than Platonic morality. Some idea of the magnificence of these displays, which beggared the royal privy-purse, drove household-treasurers mad, and often left poet and machinist whistling for pay, may be gathered from the fact that a masque sometimes cost as much as two thousand pounds in the mechanical getting-up, a sum far more formidable in the days of exclusively hard money than in these of paper currency. Scott has described, for the benefit of the general reader, one such pageant among the "princely pleasures of Kenilworth"; while Milton, in his "Masque performed at Ludlow Castle," presents the libretto of another, of the simpler and less expensive sort. During the reign of James, the passion for masques kindled into a mania. The days and nights of Inigo Jones were spent in inventing machinery and contriving stage-effects. Daniel, Middleton, Fletcher, and Jonson were busied with the composition of the text; and the court ladies and cavaliers were all from morning till night in the hands of their dancing and music masters, or at private study, or at rehearsal, preparing for the pageant, the representation of which fell to their share

and won them enviable applause. Of course the burden of original invention fell upon the poets; and of the poets, Daniel and Jonson were the most heavily taxed. In 1616, James I., by patent, granted to Jonson an annuity for life of one hundred marks, to him in hand not often well and truly paid. He was not distinctly named as Laureate, but seems to have been considered such; for Daniel, on his appointment, "withdrew himself," according to Gifford, "entirely from court." The strong-boxes of James and Charles seldom overflowed. Sir Robert Pye, an ancestor of that Laureate Pye whom we shall discuss by-and-by, was the paymaster, and often and again was the overwrought poet obliged to raise

"A woful cry
To Sir Robert Pye,"

before some small instalment of long arrearages could be procured. And when, rarely, very rarely, his Majesty condescended to remember the necessities of "his and the Muses' servant," and send a present to the Laureate's lodgings, its proportions were always so small as to excite the ire of the insulted Ben, who would growl forth to the messenger, "He would not have sent me this, (*scil.* wretched pittance,) did I not live in an alley."

We now arrive at the true era of the Laureateship. Charles, in 1630, became ambitious to signalize his reign by some fitting tribute to literature. A petition from Ben Jonson pointed out the way. The Laureate office was made a patentable one, in the gift of the Lord Chamberlain, as purveyor of the royal amusements. Ben was confirmed in the office. The salary was raised from one hundred marks to one hundred pounds, an advance of fifty per cent, to which was added yearly a tierce of Canary wine,–an appendage appropriate to the poet's convivial habits, and doubtless suggested by the mistaken precedent of Chaucer's daily flagon of wine. Ben Jonson was certainly, of all men living in 1630, the right person to receive this honor, which then implied, what it afterward ceased to do, the primacy of the diocese of letters. His learning supplied ballast enough to keep the lighter bulk of the poet in good trim, while it won that measure of respect which mere poetical gifts and graces would not have secured. He was the dean of that group of "poets, poetaccios, poetasters, and poetillos,"[11] who beset the court. If a display of erudition were demanded, Ben was ready with the heavy artillery of the unities, and all the laws of Aristotle and Horace, Quintilian and Priscian, exemplified in tragedies of canonical structure, and comedies whose prim regularity could not extinguish the most delightful and original humor–Robert Burton's excepted–that illustrated that brilliant period. But if the graceful lyric or glittering masque were called for, the boundless wealth of Ben's genius was most strikingly displayed. It has been the fashion, set by such presumptuous blunderers as Warburton and such formal prigs as Gifford, to deny our Laureate the possession of those ethereal attributes of invention and fancy which play about the creations of Shakspeare, and constitute their exquisite charm. This arbitrary comparison of Jonson and Shakspeare has, in fact, been the bane of the former's reputation. Those who have never read the masques argue, that, as "very little Latin and less Greek," in truth no learning of any traceable description, went to the creation of *Ariel* and *Caliban*, *Oberon* and *Puck*, the possession of Latin, Greek, and learning generally, incapacitates the proprietor for the same happy exercise of the finer and more gracious faculties of wit and fancy. Of this nonsense Jonson's masques are the best refutation. Marvels of ingenuity in plot and construction, they abound in "dainty invention," animated dialogue, and some of the finest lyric passages to be found in dramatic literature. They are the Laureate's true laurels. Had he left nothing else, the "rare arch-poet" would have held, by virtue of these alone, the elevated rank which his contemporaries, and our own, freely assign him. Lamb, whose appreciation of the old dramatists was extremely acute, remarks,–"A thousand beautiful passages from his 'New Inn,' and from those numerous court masques and entertainments which he

[11] Jonson's classification. See his *Poetaster*.

was in the daily habit of furnishing, might be adduced to show the poetical fancy and elegance of mind of the supposed rugged old bard."[12] And in excess of admiration at one of the Laureate's most successful pageants, Herrick breaks forth,–

"Thou hadst the wreath before, now take the tree,
That henceforth none be laurel-crowned but thee."[13]

An aspiration fortunately unrealized.

It was not long before the death of Ben, that John Suckling, one of his boon companions

"At those lyric feasts,
Made at 'The Sun,'
'The Dog,' 'The Triple Tun,'
Where they such clusters had
As made them nobly wild, not mad,"[14]

handed about among the courtiers his "Session of the Poets," where an imaginary contest for the laurel presented an opportunity for characterizing the wits of the day in a series of capital strokes, as remarkable for justice as shrewd wit. Jonson is thus introduced:–

"The first that broke silence was good old Ben,
Prepared with Canary wine,
And he told them plainly he deserved the bays,
For his were called works, while others' were but plays;

"And bid them remember how he had purged the stage
Of errors that had lasted many an age;
And he hoped they did not think 'The Silent Woman,'
'The Fox,' and 'The Alchymist' outdone by no man.

"Apollo stopt him there, and bid him not go on;
'Twas merit, he said, and not presumption,
Must carry it; at which Ben turned about,
And in great choler offered to go out;

"But those who were there thought it not fit
To discontent so ancient a wit,
And therefore Apollo called him back again,
And made him mine host of his own 'New Inn.'"

This *jeu d'esprit* of Suckling, if of no value otherwise, would be respectable as an original which the Duke of Buckinghamshire,[15] Leigh Hunt,[16] and our own Lowell[17] have successfully and happily imitated.

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[12] *Lamb's Works, and Life*, by Talfourd, Vol. IV. p. 89.

[13] Hesperides, *Encomiastic Verses*.

[14] Herrick, *ubi supra.*--To the haunts here named must be added the celebrated *Mermaid*, of which Shakspeare was the *Magnus Apollo*, and *The Devil*, where Pope imagines Ben to have gathered peculiar inspiration:– "And each true Briton is to Ben so civil, He swears the Muses met him at *The Devil*." *Imitation of Horace*, Bk. ii. Epist. i.

[15] *Election of a Poet-Laureate*, 1719, Works, Vol. II.

In due course, Laureate Jonson shared the fate of all potentates, and was gathered to the laurelled of Elysium. The fatality occurred in 1637. When his remains were deposited in the Poet's Corner, with the eloquent laconism above them, "O Rare Ben Jonson!" all the wits of the day stood by the graveside, and cast in their tribute of bays. The rite over, all the wits of the day hurried from the aisles of Westminster to the galleries of Whitehall to urge their several claims to the successorship. There were, of the elder time, Massinger, drawing to the close of a successful career,–Ford, with his growing fame,–Marmion, Heywood, Carlell, Wither. There was Sandys, especially endeared to the king by his orthodox piety, so becoming the son of an archbishop, and by his versions of the "Divine Poems," which were next year given to the press, and which found a place among the half-dozen volumes which a decade later solaced the last hours of his royal master. There were the names, in the junior class, of Tom Carew, noted for his amatory songs and his one brilliant masque,–Tom Killigrew, of pleasant humor, and no mean writer of tragedy,–Suckling, the wittiest of courtiers, and the most courtly of wits,–Cartwright, Crashaw, Davenant, and May. But of all these, the contest soon narrowed down to the two latter. William Davenant was in all likelihood the son of an innkeeper at Oxford; he was certainly the son of the innkeeper's wife. A rumor, which Davenant always countenanced, alleged that William Shakspeare, a poet of some considerable repute in those times, being in the habit of passing between Stratford-on-the-Avon and London, was wont to bait and often lodge at this Oxford hostelry. At one of these calls the landlady had proved more than ordinarily frail or the poet more than ordinarily seductive,–who can wonder at even virtue stooping to folly when the wooer was the Swan of Avon, beside whom the bird that captivated Leda was as a featherless gosling?–and the consequence had been Will Davenant, born in the year of our Lord 1605, Shakspeare standing as godfather at the baptism. A boy of lively parts was Will, and good-fortune brought those parts to the notice of the grave and philosophic Greville, Lord Brooke, whose dearest boast was the friendship in early life of Sir Philip Sidney. The result of this notice was a highly creditable education at school and university, and an ultimate introduction into the foremost society of the capital. Davenant, finding the drama supreme in fashionable regard, devoted himself to the drama. He also devoted himself to the cultivation of Ben Jonson, then at the summit of renown, assisting in an amateur way in the preparation of the court pageants, and otherwise mitigating the Laureate's labors. From 1632 to 1637, these aids were frequent, and established a very plausible claim to the succession. Thomas May, who shortly became his sole competitor, was a man of elevated pretensions. As a writer of English historical poems and as a translator of Lucan he had earned a prominent position in British literature; as a continuator of the "Pharsalia" in Latin verse of exemplary elegance, written in the happiest imitation of the martyred Stoic's unimpassioned mannerism, he secured for British scholarship that higher respect among Continental scholars which Milton's Latin poems and "Defensio pro Populo Anglicano" presently after confirmed. Of the several English writers of Latin verse, May stands unquestionably in the front rank, alongside of Milton and Bourne,–taking precedence easily of Owen, Cowley, and Gray. His dramatic productions were of a higher order than Davenant's. They have found a place in Dodsley's and the several subsequent collections of early dramas, not conceded to the plays of the latter. Masque-making, however, was not in his line. His invention was not sufficiently alert, his dialogue not sufficiently lively, for a species of poetry which it was the principal duty of the Laureate to furnish. Besides, it is highly probable, his sympathies with rebellious Puritanism were already so far developed as to make him an object of aversion to the king. Davenant triumphed. The defeated candidate lived to see the court dispersed, king and Laureate alike fugitive, and to receive from the Long Parliament the place of Historiographer, as a compensation for the lost bays. When, in 1650, he died, Cromwell and his newly-inaugurated court did honor to his obsequies. The body was deposited in Westminster Abbey; but the posthumous honor was in reserve for it, of being torn

[16] *Feast of the Poets*, 1814.

[17] *Fable for Critics*, 1850.

from the grave after the Restoration, and flung into a ditch along with the remains of three or four other republican leaders.

Davenant's career in office was unfortunate. There is reason to doubt whether, even before the rebellion broke out, his salary was regularly paid him. During the Civil War he exchanged the laurel for a casque, winning knighthood by his gallant carriage at the siege of Gloucester. Afterward, he was so far in the confidence of Queen Henrietta Maria, as to be sent as her envoy to the captive king, beseeching him to save his head by conceding the demands of Parliament. When, the errand proving abortive, the royal head was lost, Davenant returned to Paris, consoled himself by finishing the first two books of his "Gondibert," and then, despairing of a restoration, embarked (in 1650) from France for Virginia, where monarchy and the rights of Charles II were unimpaired. Fate, however, had not destined him for a colonist and backwoodsman. His ship, tempest-tossed, was driven into an English port, and the poet was seized and carried close prisoner to London. There the intervention of Milton, the Latin Secretary of the Council, is said to have saved his life. He was kept in the Tower for at least two years longer, however. The date of his release is uncertain, but, once at liberty, Davenant returned ardently to his former pursuits. A license was procured for musical exhibitions, and the phrase "musical exhibitions" was interpreted, with official connivance, as including all manner of dramatic performances. To the Laureate and to this period belongs the credit of introducing scenery, hitherto restricted to court masques, into the machinery of the ordinary drama. The substitution of female for male actors, in feminine characters, was also an innovation of this period. And as an incident of the Laureateship there is still another novelty to be noted. There is no crown without its thorns. The laurel renders the pillow of the wearer as knotty, uneasy, and comfortless as does a coronal of gold and jewels. Among the receipts of the office have been the jokes, good and bad, the sneers, the satire of contemporary wits,–such being the paper currency in which the turbulent subjects of the laurel crown think proper to pay homage to their sovereign. From the days of Will Davenant to these of ours, the custom has been faithfully observed. Davenant's earliest assailants were of his own political party, followers of the exiled Charles, the men whom Milton describes as "perditissimus ille peregrinantium aulieorum grex." These–among them a son of the memorable Donne, Sir John Denham, and Alan Broderick–united in a volume of mean motive and insignificant merit, entitled, "Verses written by Several of the Author's Friends, to be reprinted with the Second Edition of Gondibert." This was published in 1653. The effect of the onslaught has not been recorded. We know only that Davenant, surviving it, continued to prosper in his theatrical business, writing most of the pieces produced on his stage until the Restoration, when he drew forth from its hiding-place his wreath of laurel-evergreen, and resumed it with honor.

A fair retrospect of Davenant's career enables us to select without difficulty that one of his labors which is most deserving of applause. Not his "Gondibert," notwithstanding it abounds in fine passages,–notwithstanding Gay thought it worth continuation and completion, and added several cantos,–notwithstanding Lamb eulogized it with enthusiasm, Southey warmly praised, and Campbell and Hazlitt coolly commended it. Nor his comedies, which are deservedly forgotten; nor his improvements in the production of plays, serviceable as they were to the acting drama. But to his exertions Milton owed impunity from the vengeance otherwise destined for the apologist of regicide, and so owed the life and leisure requisite to the composition of "Paradise Lost." Davenant, grateful for the old kindness of the ex-secretary, used his influence successfully with Charles to let the offender escape.[18] This is certainly the greenest of Davenant's laurels. Without it, the world might not have heard one of the sublimest expressions of human genius.

Davenant died in 1668. The laurel was hung up unclaimed until 1670, when John Dryden received it, with patent dated back to the summer succeeding Davenant's death. Dryden assures us that it was Sir Thomas Clifford, whose name a year later lent the initial letter to the "Cabal," who presented

[18] This story rests on the authority of Thomas Betterton, the actor, who received it from Davenant.

him to the king, and procured his appointment.[19] Masques had now ceased to be the mode. What the dramatist could do to amuse the *blasé* court of Charles II. he was obliged to do within the limits of legitimate dramatic representation, due care being taken to follow French models, and substitute the idiom of Corneille and Molière for that of Shakspeare. Dryden, whose plays are now read only by the curious, was, in 1670, the greatest of living dramatists. He had expiated his Cromwellian backslidings by the "Astraea Redux," and the "Annus Mirabilis." He had risen to high favor with the king. His tragedies in rhyming couplets were all the vogue. Already his fellow-playwrights deemed their success as fearfully uncertain, unless they had secured, price three guineas, a prologue or epilogue from the Laureate. So fertile was his own invention, that he stood ready to furnish by contract five plays a year,–a challenge fortunately declined by the managers of the day. Thus, if the Laureate stipend were not punctually paid, as was often the case, seeing the necessitous state of the royal finances and the bevy of fair ladies, whose demands, extravagant as they were, took precedence of all others, his revenues were adequate to the maintenance of a family, the matron of which was a Howard, educated, as a daughter of nobility, to the enjoyment of every indulgence. These were the Laureate's brightest days. His popularity was at its height, a fact evinced by the powerful coalitions deemed necessary to diminish it. Indeed, the laurel had hardly rested upon Dryden's temples before he experienced the assaults of an organized literary opposition. The Duke of Buckingham, then the admitted leader of fashionable prodigacy, borrowed the aid of Samuel Butler, at whose "Hudibras" the world was still laughing,–of Thomas Sprat, then on the high-road to those preferments which have given him an important place in history,–of Martin Clifford, a familiar of the green-room and coffee-house,–and concocted a farce ridiculing the person and office of the Laureate. "The Rehearsal" was acted in 1671. The hero, *Mr. Bayes*, imitated all the personal peculiarities of Dryden, used his cant phrases, burlesqued his style, and exposed, while pretending to defend, his ridiculous points, until the laugh of the town was fairly turned upon the "premier-poet of the realm." The wit was undoubtedly of the broadest, and the humor at the coffee-room level; but it was so much the more effective. Dryden affected to be indifferent to the satire. He jested at the time taken[20] and the number of hands employed upon the composition. Twenty years later he was at pains to declare his perfect freedom from rancor in consequence of the attack.

There, is much reason to suspect, however, that "The Rehearsal" was not forgotten, when the "Absalom and Achitophel" was written, and that the character of *Zimri* gathered much of its intense vigor and depth of shadow from recollections of the ludicrous *Mr. Bayes*. The portrait has the look of being designed as a quittance in full of old scores. "The Rehearsal," though now and then recast and reënacted to suit other times, is now no otherwise remembered than as the suggester of Sheridan's "Critic."

Upon the heels of this onslaught others followed rapidly. Rochester, disposed to singularity of opinion, set up Elkanah Settle, a young author of some talent, as a rival to the Laureate. Anonymous bardings lampooned him. *Mr. Bayes* was a broad target for every shaft, so that the complaint so feelingly uttered in his latter days, that "no man living had ever been so severely libelled" as he, had a wide foundation of fact. Sometimes, it must be owned, the thrusts were the natural result of controversies into which the Laureate indiscreetly precipitated himself; sometimes they came of generous partisanship in behalf of friends, such friends, for example, as Sir Robert Howard, his brother-in-law, an interminable spinner of intolerable verse, who afflicted the world in his day

[19] Dedication of the *Pastorals* of Virgil, to Hugh, Lord Clifford, the son of Sir Thomas.

[20] There were some indications that portions of the farce had been written while Davenant was living and had been intended for him. *Mr. Bayes* appears in one place with a plaster on his nose, an evident allusion to Davenant's loss of that feature. In a lively satire of the time, by Richard Duke, it is asserted that Villiers was occupied with the composition of *The Rehearsal* from the Restoration down to the day of its production on the stage:–"But with playhouses, wars, immortal wars,He waged, and ten years' rage produced a farce.As many rolling years he did employ,And hands almost as many, to destroyHeroic rhyme, as Greece to ruin Troy.Once more, says Fame, for battle he prepares,And threatens rhymers with a second farce:But, if as long for this as that we stay,He'll finish Clevedon sooner than his play." The Review

with plays worse than plagues, and poems as worthless as his plays. It was to a quarrel for and a quarrel against this gentleman that we are indebted for the most trenchant satire in the language. Sir Robert had fallen out with Dryden about rhyming tragedies, of which he disapproved; and while it lasted, the contest was waged with prodigious acrimony. Among the partisans of the former was Richard Flecknoe, a Triton among the smaller scribbling fry. Flecknoe–blunderingly classed among the Laureates by the compiler of "Cibber's Lives of the Poets"–was an Irish priest, who had cast his cassock, or, as he euphuistically expressed it, "laid aside the mechanic part of priesthood," in order to fulfil the loftier mission of literary garreteer in London. He had written poems and plays without number; of the latter, but one, entitled "Love's Dominion," had been brought upon the stage, and was summarily hissed off. Jealousy of Dryden's splendid success brought him to the side of Dryden's opponent, and a pamphlet, printed in 1668, attacked the future Laureate so bitterly, and at points so susceptible, as to make a more than ordinary draft upon the poet's patience, and to leave venom that rankled fourteen years without finding vent.[21] About the same time, Thomas Shadwell, who is represented in the satire as likewise an Irishman, brought Sir Robert on the stage in his "Sullen Lovers," in the character of *Sir Positive At-all*, a caricature replete with absurd self-conceit and impudent dogmatism. Shadwell was of "Norfolcian" family, well-born, well-educated, and fitted for the bar, but drawn away from serious pursuits by the prevalent rage for the drama. The offence of laughing at the poet's brother-in-law Shadwell had aggravated by accepting the capricious patronage of Lord Rochester, by subsequently siding with the Whigs, and by aiding the ambitious designs of Shaftesbury in play and pamphlet,–labors the value of which is not to be measured by the contemptuous estimate of the satirist. The first outburst of the retributive storm fell upon the head of Shadwell. The second part of "Absalom and Achitophel," which appeared in the autumn of 1682, contains the portrait of *Og*, cut in outlines so sharp as to remind us of an unrounded alto-rilievo:–

Now stop your noses, readers, all and some,
For here's a tun of midnight work to come,
Og, from a treason-tavern rolling home;
Round as a globe, and liquored every chink,
Goodly and great he sails behind his link.
With all his bulk, there's nothing lost in Og,
For every inch that is not fool is rogue ....

The midwife laid her hand on his thick skull
With this prophetic blessing, Be thou dull!
Drink, swear, and roar, forbear no lewd delight
Fit for thy bulk; do anything but write.
Eat opium, mingle arsenic in thy drink,
Still thou mayst live, avoiding pen and ink.
I see, I see, 'tis counsel given in vain;
For treason botched in rhyme will be thy bane ....

A double noose thou on thy neck dost pull,
For writing treason, and for writing dull…

I will not rake the dunghill of thy crimes,
For who would read thy life who reads thy rhymes?

[21] It is little to the credit of Dryden, that, having saved up his wrath against Flecknoe so long, he had not reserved it altogether. Flecknoe had been dead at least four years when the satire appeared.

But of King David's foes be this the doom,
May all be like the young man Absalom!
And for my foes, may this their blessing be,
To talk like Doeg, and to write like thee!

Of the multitudinous rejoinders and counterblasts provoked by this thunder, Dryden, it is supposed, ascribed the authorship of one of the keenest to Shadwell. We are to conceive some new and immediate provocation as added to the old grudge, to call for a second attack so soon; for it was only a month later that the "MacFlecknoe" appeared; not in 1689, as Dr. Johnson states, who, mistaking the date, also errs in assuming the cause of Dryden's wrath to have been the transfer of the laurel from his own to the brows of Shadwell. "MacFlecknoe" is by common consent the most perfect and perfectly acrid satire in English literature. The topics selected, the foibles attacked, the ingenious and remorseless ridicule with which they are overwhelmed, the comprehensive vindictiveness which converted every personal characteristic into an instrument for the more refined torment of the unhappy victim, conjoin to constitute a masterpiece of this lower form of poetical composition;–poetry it is not. While Flecknoe's pretensions as a dramatist were fairly a subject of derision, Shadwell was eminently popular. He was a pretender to learning, and, entertaining with Dryden strong convictions of the reality of a literary metempsychosis, believed himself the heir of Jonson's genius and erudition. The title of the satire was, therefore, of itself a biting sarcasm. His claims to sonship were transferred from Jonson, then held the first of dramatic writers, to Flecknoe, the last and meanest; and to aggravate the insult, the "Mac" was inserted as an irritating allusion to the alleged Irish origin of both,–an allusion, however harmless and senseless now, vastly significant at that era of Irish degradation. Of the immediate effect of this scarification upon Shadwell we have no information; how it ultimately affected his fortunes we shall see presently.

During the closing years of Charles, and through the reign of James, Dryden added to the duties of Court Poet those of political pamphleteer and theological controversialist. The strength of his attachment to the office, his sense of the honor it conferred, and his appreciation of the salary we may infer from the potent influence such considerations exercised upon his conversion to Romanism. In the admirable portrait, too, by Lely, he chose to be represented with the laurel in his hand. After his dethronement, he sought every occasion to deplore the loss of the bays, and of the stipend, which in the increasing infirmity and poverty of his latter days had become important. The fall of James necessarily involved the fall of his Laureate and Historiographer. Lord Dorset, the generous but sadly undiscriminating patron of letters, having become Lord Chamberlain, it was his duty to remove the reluctant Dryden from the two places,–a duty not to be postponed, and scarcely to be mitigated, so violent was the public outcry against the renegade bard. The entire Protestant feeling of the nation, then at white heat, was especially ardent against the author of the "Hind and Panther," who, it was said, had treated the Church of England as the persecutors had treated the primitive martyr, dressed her in the skin of a wild beast, and exposed her to the torments of her adversaries. It was not enough to eject him from office,–his inability to subscribe the test oaths would have done so much,–but he was to be replaced by that one of his political and literary antagonists whom he most sincerely disliked, and who still writhed under his lash. Dorset appears to have executed the disagreeable task with real kindness. He is said to have settled upon the poet, out of his own fortune, an annuity equal to the lost pension,–a statement which Dr. Johnson and Macaulay have repeated upon the authority of Prior. What Prior said on the subject may be found in the Dedication of Tonson's noble edition of his works to the second Earl of Dorset:–"When, as Lord Chamberlain, he was obliged to take the king's pension from Mr. Dryden, (who had long before put himself out of a possibility of receiving any favor from the court,) my Lord allowed him an equivalent out of his own estate. However displeased with the conduct of his old acquaintance, he relieved his necessities; and while he gave him his assistance in private, in public he extenuated and pitied his error." But there is some reason for thinking this

equivalent was only the equivalent of one year's salary, and this assistance casual, not stated; else we are at a loss to understand the continual complaints of utter penury which the poet uttered ever after. Some of these complaints were addressed to his benefactor himself, as in the Dedication to Juvenal and Persius, 1692:–"Age has overtaken me, and *want*, a more insufferable evil, through the change of the times, *has wholly disenabled me*. Though I must ever acknowledge, to the honor of your Lordship, and the eternal memory of your charity, that, since this revolution, wherein I have patiently suffered the ruin of my small fortune, and the loss of that poor subsistence I had from two kings, whom I served more faithfully than profitably to myself,–then your Lordship was pleased, out of no other motive than your own nobleness, without any desert of mine, or the least solicitation from me, to make me a most bountiful *present*, which, in that time when I was most in want of it, came most seasonably and unexpectedly to my relief." This passage was the sole authority, we suspect, Prior had for a story which was nevertheless sufficiently true to figure in an adulatory dedication; and, indeed, Prior may have used the word "equivalent" loosely, and had Dorset's gift been more than a year's income, Dryden would hardly have called it a "present,"–a phrase scarcely applicable to the grant of a pension.[22]

Dismissed from office and restored to labors more congenial than the dull polemics which had recently engaged his mind, Dryden found himself obliged to work vigorously or starve. He fell into the hands of the booksellers. The poems, it deserves remark, upon which his fame with posterity must finally rest, were all produced within the period bounded by his deposition and his death. The translations from Juvenal, the versions of Persius and of Virgil, the Fables, and the "Ode upon St. Cecilia's Day," were the works of this period. He lived to see his office filled successively by a rival he despised and a friend who had deserted him, and in its apparently hopeless degradation perhaps found consolation for its loss.

Thomas Shadwell was the Poet-Laureate after Dryden, assuming the wreath in 1689. We have referred to his origin; Langbaine gives 1642 as the date of his birth; so that he must have set up as author early in life, and departed from life shortly past middle-age. Derrick assures us that he was lusty, ungainly, and coarse in person,–a description answering to the full-length of *Og*. The commentators upon "MacFlecknoe" have not made due use of one of Shadwell's habits, in illustration of the reason why a wreath of poppies was selected for the crown of its hero. The dramatist, Warburton informs us, was addicted to the use of opium, and, in fact, died of an overdose of that drug. Hence

> "His temples, last, with poppies were o'er-spread,
> That nodding seemed to consecrate his head."

A couplet which Pope echoes in the "Dunciad":–

> "Shadwell nods, the poppy on his brows."

A similar allusion may be found in the character of *Og*:–

> "Eat opium, mingle arsenic in thy drink," etc.

[22] Macaulay quotes Blackmore's *Prince Arthur*, to illustrate Dryden's dependence upon Dorset:–"The poets' nation did obsequious waitFor the kind dole divided at his gate.Laurus among the meagre crowd appeared,An old, revolted, unbelieving bard,Who thronged, and shoved, and pressed, and would be heard."Sakil's high roof, the Muse's palace, rungWith endless cries, and endless songs he sung.To bless good Sakil Laurus would be first;But Sakil's prince and Sakil's God he curst.Sakil without distinction threw his bread,Despised the flatterer, but the poet fed."*Laurus*, of course, stands for Dryden, and *Sakil* for Dorset.

That the Laureate was heavy-gaited in composition, taking five years to finish one comedy,–that he was, on the other hand, too swift, trusting Nature rather than elaborate Art,–that he was dull and unimaginative,–that he was keen and remarkably sharp-witted,–that he affected a profundity of learning of which he gave no evidences,–that his plays were only less numerous than Dryden's, are other particulars we gather from conflicting witnesses of the period. Certainly, no one of the Laureates, Cibber excepted, was so mercilessly lampooned. What Cibber suffered from the "Dunciad" Shadwell suffered from "MacFlecknoe." Incited by Dryden's example, the poets showered their missiles at him, and so perseveringly as to render him a traditional butt of satire for two or three generations. Thus Prior:–

"Thus, without much delight or grief,
I fool away an idle life,
Till Shadwell from the town retires,
Choked up with fame and sea-coal fires,
To bless the wood with peaceful lyric:
Then hey for praise and panegyric;
Justice restored, and nations freed,
And wreaths round William's glorious head."

And Parnell:–

"But hold! before I close the scene,
The sacred altar should be clean.
Oh, had I Shadwell's second bays,
Or, Tate! thy pert and humble lays,–
Ye pair, forgive me, when I vow
I never missed your works till now,–
I'd tear the leaves to wipe the shrine,
That only way you please the Nine;
But since I chance to want these two,
I'll make the songs of Durfey do."

And in a far more venomous and violent style, the noteless mob of contemporary writers.

Shadwell, after all, was very far from being the blockhead these references imply. His "Third Nights" were probably far more profitable than Dryden's.[23] By his friends he was classed with the liveliest wits of a brilliant court. Rochester so classed him:–

"I loathe the rabble: 'tis enough for me,
If Sedley, Shadwell, Shephard, Wycherley,
Godolphin, Butler, Buckhurst, Buckingham,
And some few more, whom I omit to name,
Approve my sense: I count their censure fame."[24]

And compares him elsewhere with Wycherley:–

[23] *The Squire of Alsatia* is said to have realized him £130.

[24] *An Allusion to the Tenth Satire of the First Book of Horace*.–The word "censure" will, of course, be understood to mean *judgment*, not *condemnation*.

"Of all our modern wits, none seem to me
Once to have touched upon true comedy,
But hasty Shadwell and slow Wycherley.
Shadwell's unfinished works do yet impart
Great proofs of force of nature, none of art;
With just, bold strokes, he dashes here and there,
Showing great mastery with little care,
Scorning to varnish his good touches o'er
To make the fools and women praise them more.
But Wycherley earns hard whate'er he gains;
He wants no judgment, and he spares no pains," etc.

And, not disrespectfully, Pope:–

"In all debates where critics bear a part,
Not one but nods, and talks of Jonson's art,
Of Shakspeare's nature, and of Cowley's wit;
How Beaumont's judgment checked what Fletcher writ;
How Shadwell hasty, Wycherley was slow;
But for the passions, Southerne, sure, and Rowe!
These, only these, support the crowded stage,
From eldest Heywood down to Cibber's age."[25]

Sedley joined him in the composition of more than one comedy. Macaulay, in seeking illustrations of the times and occurrences of which he writes, cites Shadwell five times, where he mentions Etherege, Wycherley, and Congreve once.[26] From his last play, "The Stockjobbers," performed in November, 1692, while its author was on his death-bed, the historian introduces an entire scene into his text.[27] Any one, indeed, who can clear his mind from the unjust prejudice produced by Dryden's satire, and read the comedies of Shadwell with due consideration for the extemporaneous haste of their composition, as satires upon passing facts and follies, will find, that, so far from never deviating into sense, sound common-sense and fluent wit were the Laureate's staple qualities. If his comedies have not, like those of his contemporaries just named, enjoyed the good-fortune to be collected and preserved among the dramatic classics, the fact is primarily owing to the ephemeral interest of the hits and allusions, and secondarily to "MacFlecknoe."

[To be continued.]

[25] *Imitation of Horace*, Bk. ii. Epist. i.

[26] See the *History of England*, Vol. IV., Chapter 17, for reference to Shadwell's *Volunteers*.

[27] *History of England*, Chapter 19.

THE ROMANCE OF A GLOVE

"Halt!" cried my travelling companion. "Property overboard!"

The driver pulled up his horses; and, before I could prevent him, Westwood leaped down from the vehicle, and ran back for the article that had been dropped.

It was a glove,–my glove, which I had inadvertently thrown out, in taking my handkerchief from my pocket.

"Go on, driver!" and he tossed it into my hand as he resumed his seat in the open stage.

"Take your reward," I said, offering him a cigar; "but beware of rendering me another such service!"

"If it had been your hat or your handkerchief, be sure I should have let it lie where it fell. But a glove,–that is different. I once found a romance in a glove. Since then, gloves are sacred." And Westwood gravely bit off the end of his cigar.

"A romance? Tell me about that. I am tired of this endless stretch of sea-like country, these regular ground-swells; and it's a good two-hours' ride yet to yonder headland, which juts out into the prairie, between us and the setting sun. Meanwhile, your romance."

"Did I say romance? I fear you would hardly think it worthy of the name," said my companion. "Every life has its romantic episodes, or, at least, incidents which appear such to him who experiences them. But these tender little histories are usually insipid enough when told. I have a maiden aunt, who once came so near having an offer from a pale stripling, with dark hair, seven years her junior, that to this day she often alludes to the circumstance, with the remark, that she wishes she knew some competent novel-writer in whom she could confide, feeling sure that the story of that period of her life would make the groundwork of a magnificent work of fiction. Possibly I inherit my aunt's tendency to magnify into extraordinary proportions trifles which I look at through the double convex lens of a personal interest. So don't expect too much of my romance, and you shall hear it.

"I said I found it in a glove. It was by no means a remarkable glove,–middle-sized, straw-colored, and a neat fit for this hand, in which I now hold your very excellent cigar. Of course, there was a young lady in the case;–let me see,–I don't believe I can tell you the story," said Westwood, "after all!"

I gently urged him to proceed.

"Pshaw!" said he, after kindling his cigar with a few vigorous whiffs, "what's the use of being foolish? My aunt was never diffident about telling her story, and why should I hesitate to tell mine? The young lady's name,–we'll call her simply Margaret. She was a blonde, with hazel eyes and dark hair. Perhaps you never heard of a blonde with hazel eyes and dark hair? She was the only one I ever saw; and there was the finest contrast imaginable between her fair, fresh complexion, and her superb tresses and delicately-traced eyebrows. She was certainly lovely, if not handsome; and–such eyes! It was an event in one's life, Sir, just to look through those luminous windows into her soul. That could not happen every day, be sure! Sometimes for weeks she kept them turned from me, the ivory shutters half-closed, or the mystic curtains of reserve drawn within; then, again, when I was tortured with unsatisfied yearnings, and almost ready to despair, she would suddenly turn them upon me, the shutters thrown wide, the curtains away, and a flood of radiance streaming forth, that filled me so full of light and gladness, that I had no shadowy nook left in me for a doubt to hide in. She must have been conscious of this power of expression. She used it so sparingly, and, it seemed to me, artfully! But I always forgave her when she did use it, and cherished resentment only when she did not.

"Margaret was shy and proud; I could never completely win her confidence; but I knew, I knew well at last, that her heart was mine. And a deep, tender, woman's heart it was, too, despite her reserve. Without many words, we understood each other, and so–Pshaw!" said Westwood, "my cigar is out!"

"On with the story!"

"Well, we had our lovers' quarrels, of course. Singular, what foolish children love makes of us!–rendering us sensitive, jealous, exacting, in the superlative degree. I am sure, we were both amiable and forbearing towards all the world besides; but, for the powerful reason that we loved, we were bound to misinterpret words, looks, and actions, and wound each other on every convenient occasion. I was pained by her attentions to others, or perhaps by an apparent preference of a book or a bouquet to me. Retaliation on my part and quiet persistence on hers continued to estrange us, until I generally ended by conceding everything, and pleading for one word of kindness, to end my misery.

"I was wrong,–too quick to resent, too ready to concede. No doubt, it was to her a secret gratification to exercise her power over me; and at last I was convinced that she wounded me purposely, in order to provoke a temporary estrangement, and enjoy a repetition of her triumph.

"It was at a party; the thing she did was to waltz with a man whom she knew I detested, whom *I* knew *she* could not respect, and whose half-embrace, as he whirled her in the dance, almost put murder into my thoughts.

"'Margaret,' I said, 'one last word! If you care for me, beware!'

"That was a foolish speech, perhaps. It was certainly ineffectual. She persisted, looking so calm and composed, that a great weight fell upon my heart. I walked away; I wandered about the saloons; I tried to gossip and be gay; but the wound was too deep.

"I accompanied her home, late in the evening. We scarcely spoke by the way. At the door, she looked me sadly in the face,–she gave me her hand; I thought it trembled.

"'Good-night!' she said, in a low voice.

"'Good-bye!' I answered, coldly, and hurried from the house.

"It was some consolation to hear her close the door after I had reached the corner of the street, and to know that she had been listening to my footsteps. But I was very angry. I made stern resolutions; I vowed to myself, that I would wring her heart, and never swerve from my purpose until I had wrung out of it abundant drops of sorrow and contrition. How I succeeded you shall hear.

"I had previously engaged her to attend a series of concerts with me; an arrangement which I did not now regret, and for good reasons. Once a week, with famous punctuality, I called for her, escorted her to the concert-room, and carefully reconducted her home,–letting no opportunity pass to show her a true gentleman's deference and respect,–conversing with her freely about music, books, anything, in short, except what we both knew to be deepest in each other's thoughts. Upon other occasions, I avoided her, and even refrained from going to places where she was expected,–especially where she knew that I knew she was expected.

"Well," continued Westwood, "my designs upon her heart, which I was going to wring so unmercifully, did not meet with very brilliant success. To confess the humiliating truth, I soon found that I was torturing myself a good deal more than I was torturing her. As a last and desperate resort, what do you think I did?"

"You probably asked her to ask your forgiveness."

"Not I! I have a will of adamant, as people find, who tear away the amiable flowers and light soil that cover it; and she had reached the impenetrable, firm rock. I neither made any advances towards a reconciliation nor invited any. But I'll tell you what I did do, as a final trial of her heart. I had, for some time, been meditating a European tour, and my interest in her had alone kept me at home. Some friends of mine were to sail early in the spring, and I now resolved to accompany them. I don't know how much pride and spite there was in the resolution,–probably a good deal. I confess I wished to make her suffer,–to show her that she had calculated too much upon my weakness,–that I could be strong and happy without her. Yet, with all this bitter and vindictive feeling, I listened to a very sweet and tender whisper in my heart, which said, 'Now, if her love speaks out,–now, if she says to me one true, kind, womanly word,–she shall go with me, and nothing shall ever take her from me again!' The thought of what *might* be, if she would but say that word, and of what *must* be, irrevocably, if her pride held out, shook me mightily. But my resolution was taken: I would trust the rest to fate.

"On the day of the last concert, I imparted the secret of my intended journey to a person who, I felt tolerably sure, would rush at once to Margaret with the news. Then, in the evening, I went for her; I was conscious that my manner towards her was a little more tender, or rather, a little less coldly courteous, that night, than it had usually been of late; for my feelings were softened, and I had never seen her so lovely. I had never before known what a treasure I was about to lose. The subject of my voyage was not mentioned, and if she had heard of it, she accepted the fact without the least visible concern. Her quietness under the circumstances chilled me,–disheartened me quite. I am not one of those who can give much superfluous love, or cling with unreasonable, blind passion to an object that yields no affection in return. A quick and effectual method of curing a fancy in persons of my temperament is to teach them that it is not reciprocated. Then it expires like a flame cut off from the air, or a plant removed from the soil. The death-struggle, the uprooting, is the painful thing; but when the heart is thoroughly convinced that its love is misplaced, it gives up, with one last sigh as big as fate, sheds a few tears, says a prayer or two, thanks God for the experience, and becomes a wiser, calmer,–yes, and a happier heart than before."

"True," I said; "but our hearts are not thus easily convinced."

"Ay, there's the rub. It is for want of a true perception. There cannot be a true love without a true perception. Love is for the soul to know, from its own intuition,–not for the understanding to believe, from the testimony of those very unreliable witnesses, called eyes and ears. This seems to have been my case,–my soul was aware of *her* love, and all the evidence of my external senses could not altogether destroy that interior faith. But that evening I said,–'I believe you now, my senses! I doubt you now, my soul!–she never loved me!' So I was really very cold towards her–for about twenty minutes.

"I walked home with her;–we were both silent; but at the door she asked me to go in. Here my calmness deserted me, and I could hardly hold my heart, while I replied,–

"'If you particularly wish it.'

"'If I did not, I should not ask you,' she said; and I went in.

"I was ashamed and vexed at myself for trembling so,–for I was in a tremor from head to foot. There was company in the parlors,–some of Margaret's friends. I took my seat upon a sofa, and soon she came and sat by my side.

"'I suppose,' said one, 'Mr. Westwood has been telling Margaret all about it.'

"'About what?' Margaret inquired,–and here the truth flashed upon me,–the news of my proposed voyage had not yet reached her! She looked at me with a troubled, questioning expression, and said,–

"'I felt that something was going to happen. Tell me what it is.'

"I answered,–'Your friend can best explain what she means.'

"Then out came the secret. A shock of surprise sent the color from Margaret's face; and raising her eyes, she asked, quite calmly, but in a low and unnatural tone,–

"'Is this so?'

"I said, 'I suppose I cannot deny it.'

"'You are really going?'

"'I am really going.'

"She could not hide her agitation. Her white face betrayed her. Then I was glad, wickedly glad, in my heart,–and vain enough to be gratified that others should behold and know I held a power over her. Well,–but I suffered for that folly.

"'I feel hurt,' she said, after a little while, 'because you have not told me this. You have no sister,' (this was spoken very quietly,) 'and it would have been a privilege for me to take a sister's place, and do for you those little things which sisters do for brothers who are going on long journeys.'

"I was choked;–it was a minute before I could speak. Then I said that I saw no reason why she should tax her time or thoughts to do anything for me.

"'Oh, you know,' she said, 'you have been kind to me,–so much kinder than I have deserved!'

"It was unendurable,–the pathos of the words! I was blinded, stifled,–I almost groaned aloud. If we had been alone, there our trial would have ended. I should have snatched her to my soul. But the eyes of others were upon us, and I steeled myself.

"'Besides,' I said, 'I know of nothing that you can do for me.'

"'There must be many little things;–to begin with, there is your glove, which you are tearing to pieces.'

"True, I was tearing my glove,–she was calm enough to observe it! That made me angry.

"'Give it to me; I will mend it for you. Haven't you other gloves that need mending?'

"I, who had triumphed, was humbled.

"My heart was breaking,–and she talked of mending gloves! I did not omit to thank her. I coldly arose to go.

"Well, I felt now that it was all over. The next day I secured my passage in the steamer in which my friends were to sail. I took pains that Margaret should hear of that, too. Then came the preparations for travel,–arranging affairs, writing letters, providing myself with a compact and comfortable outfit. Europe was in prospect,–Paris, Switzerland, Italy, lands to which my dreams had long since gone before me, and to which I now turned my eyes with reawakening aspirations. A new glory arose upon my life, in the light of which Margaret became a fading star. It was so much easier than I had thought, to give her up, to part from her! I found that I could forget her, in the excitement of a fresh and novel experience; while she–could she forget me? When lovers part, happy is he who goes! alas for the one that is left behind!

"One day, when I was busy with the books which I was to take with me, a small package was handed in. I need not tell you that I experienced a thrill, when I saw Margaret's handwriting upon the wrapper. I tore it open,–and what think you I found? My glove! Nothing else. I smiled bitterly, to see how neatly she had mended it; then I sighed; then I said, 'It is finished!' and tossed the glove disdainfully into my trunk.

"On the day before that fixed for the sailing of the steamer, I made farewell calls upon many of my friends,–among others, upon Margaret. But, through the perversity of pride and will, I did not go alone,–I took with me Joseph, a mutual acquaintance, who was to be my *compagnon de voyage*. I felt some misgivings, to see how Margaret had changed; she was so softened, and so pale!

"The interview was a painful one, and I cut it short. As we were going out, she gently detained me, and said,–

"'Did you receive–your glove?'

"'Oh, yes,' I said, and thanked her for mending it.

"'And is this all–all you have to say?' she asked.

"'I have nothing more to say–except good-bye.'

"She held my hand. 'Nothing else?'

"'No,–it is useless to talk of the past, Margaret; and the future–may you be happy!–Good-bye!'

"I thought she would speak; I could not believe she would let me go; but she did! I bore up well, until night. Then came a revulsion. I walked three times past the house, wofully tempted, my love and my will at cruel warfare; but I did not go in. At midnight I saw the light in her room extinguished; I knew she had retired, but whether to sleep, or weep, or pray–how could I tell? I went home. I did not close my eyes that night. I was glad to see the morning come, after *such* a night!

"The steamer was to sail at ten. The bustle of embarkation; strange scenes and strange faces; parting from friends; the ringing of the bell; last adieus,–some, who were to go with us, hurrying aboard, others, who were to stay behind, as hastily going ashore; the withdrawal of the plank,–sad sight to many eyes! casting off the lines, the steamer swinging heavily around, the rushing, irregular motion of the great, slow paddles; the waving of handkerchiefs from the decks, and the responsive signals from the crowd lining the wharf; off at last,–the faces of friends, the crowd, the piers, and,

lastly, the city itself, fading from sight; the dash of spray, the freshening breeze, the novel sight of our little world detaching itself and floating away; the feeling that America was past, and Europe was next;–all this filled my mind with animation and excitement, which shut out thoughts of Margaret. Could I have looked with clairvoyant vision, and beheld her then, locked in her chamber, should I have been so happy? Oh, what fools vanity and pride make of us! Even then, with my heart high-strung with hope and courage, had I known the truth, I should have abandoned my friends, the voyage, and Europe, and returned in the pilot's boat, to find something more precious than all the continents and countries of the globe, in the love of that heart which I was carelessly flinging away."

Here Westwood took breath. The sun was now almost set. The prairie was still and cool; the heavy dews were beginning to fall; the shadows of the green and flowered undulations filled the hollows, like a rising tide; the headland, seen at first so far and small, was growing gradually large and near; and the horses moved at a quicker pace. Westwood lighted his cigar, drew a few whiffs, and proceeded.

"We had a voyage of eleven days. But to me an immense amount of experience was crowded into that brief period. The fine exhilaration of the start,–the breeze gradually increasing to a gale; then horrible sea-sickness, home-sickness, love-sickness; after which, the weather which sailors love, games, gayety, and flirtation. There is no such social freedom to be enjoyed anywhere as on board an ocean steamer. The breaking-up of old associations, the opening of a fresh existence, the necessity of new relationships,–this fuses the crust of conventionality, quickens the springs of life, and renders character sympathetic and fluent. The past is easily put away; we become plastic to new influences; we are delighted at the discovery of unexpected affinities, and astonished to find in ourselves so much wit, eloquence, and fine susceptibility, which we did not before dream we possessed.

"This freedom is especially provocative of flirtation. We see each fair brow touched with a halo whose colors are the reflection of our own beautiful dreams. Loveliness is ten-fold more lovely, bathed in this atmosphere of romance; and manhood is invested with ideal graces. The love within us rushes, with swift, sweet heart-beats, to meet the love responsive in some other. Don't think I am now artfully preparing your mind to excuse what I am about to confess. Take these things into consideration, if you will; then think as you please of the weakness and wild impulse with which I fell in love with–

"We will call her Flora. The most superb, captivating creature that ever ensnared the hearts of the sons of Adam. A fine olive complexion; magnificent dark auburn hair; eyes full of fire and softness; lips that could pout or smile with incomparable fascination; a figure of surprising symmetry, just voluptuous enough. But, after all, her great power lay in her freedom from all affectation and conventionality,–in her spontaneity, her free, sparkling, and vivacious manners. She was the most daring and dazzling of women, without ever appearing immodest or repulsive. She walked with such proud, secure steps over the commonly accepted barriers of social intercourse, that even those who blamed her and pretended to be shocked were compelled to admire. She was the belle, the Juno, of the saloon, the supreme ornament of the upper deck. Just twenty,–not without wit and culture,–full of poetry and enthusiasm. Do you blame me?"

"Not a whit," I said; "but for Margaret"–

"Ah, Margaret!" said Westwood, with a sigh. "But, you see, I had given her up. And when one love is lost, there sink such awful chasms into the soul, that, though they cannot be filled, we must at least bridge them over with a new affection. The number of marriages built in this way, upon false foundations of hollowness and despair, is incomputable. We talk of jilted lovers and disappointed girls marrying 'out of spite.' No doubt, such petty feeling hurries forward many premature matches. But it is the heart, left shaken, unsupported, wretchedly sinking, which reaches out its feelers for sympathy, catches at the first penetrable point, and clings like a helpless vine to the sunny-sided wall of the nearest consolation. If you wish to marry a girl and can't, and are weak enough to desire her still, this is what you should do: get some capable man to jilt her. Then seize your chance. All the

affections which have gone out to him, unmet, ready to droop, quivering with the painful, hungry instinct to grasp some object, may possibly lay hold of you. Let the world sneer; but God pity such natures, which lack the faith and fortitude to live and die true to their best love!

"Out of my own mouth do I condemn myself? Very well, I condemn myself; *peccavi*! I If I had ever loved Margaret, then I did not love Flora. The same heart cannot find its counterpart indifferently in two such opposites. What charmed me in one was her purity, softness, and depth of soul. What fascinated me in the other was her bloom, beauty, and passion. Which was the true sympathy?

"I did not stop to ask that question when it was most important that it should be seriously considered. I rushed into the crowd of competitors for Flora's smiles, and distanced them all. I was pleased and proud that she took no pains to conceal her preference for me. We played chess; we read poetry out of the same book; we ate at the same table; we sat and watched the sea together, for hours, in those clear, bright days; we promenaded the deck at sunset, her hand upon my arm, her lips forever turning up tenderly towards me, her eyes pouring their passion into me. Then those glorious nights, when the ocean was a vast, wild, fluctuating stream, flashing and sparkling about the ship, spanned with a quivering bridge of splendor on one side, and rolling off into awful darkness and mystery, on the other; when the moon seemed swinging among the shrouds like a ball of white fire; when the few ships went by like silent ghosts; and Flora and I, in a long trance of happiness, kept the deck, heedless of the throng of promenaders, forgetful of the past, reckless of the future, aware only of our own romance, and the richness of the present hour.

"Joseph, my travelling-companion, looked on, and wrote letters. He showed me one of these, addressed to a friend of Margaret's. In it he extolled Flora's beauty, piquancy, and supremacy; related how she made all the women jealous and all the men mad; and hinted at my triumph. I knew that that letter would meet Margaret's eyes, and was vain enough to be pleased.

"At last, one morning, at daybreak, I went on deck, and saw the shores of England. Only a few days before, we had left America behind us, brown and leafless, just emerging from the long gloom of winter; and now the slopes of another world arose green and inviting in the flush of spring. There was a bracing breeze; the dingy waters of the Mersey rolled up in wreaths of beauty; the fleets of ships, steamers, sloops, lighters, pilot-boats, bounding over the waves, meeting, tacking, plunging, swaying gracefully under the full-swelling canvas, presented a picture of wonderful animation; and the mingling hues of sunshine and mist hung over all. I paced the deck, solemnly joyful, swift thoughts pulsing through me of a dim far-off Margaret, of a near radiant Flora, of hope and happiness superior to fate. It was one of those times when the excited soul transfigures the world, and we marvel how we could ever succumb to a transient sorrow while the whole universe blooms, and an infinite future waits to open for us its doors of wonder and joy.

"In this state of mind I was joined by Flora. She laid her hand on my arm, and we walked up and down together. She was serious, almost sad, and she viewed the English hills with a pensiveness which became her better than mirth.

"'So,' she sighed, 'all our little romances come to an end!'

"'Not so,' I said; 'or if one romance ends, it is to give place to another, still truer and sweeter. Our lives may be all a succession of romances, if we will make them so. I think now I will never doubt the future; for I find, that, when I have given up my dearest hopes, my best-beloved friends, and accepted the gloomy belief that all life besides is barren,–then comes some new experience, filling my empty cup with a still more delicious wine.'

"'Don't vex me with your philosophy!' said Flora. 'I don't know anything about it. All I know is this present,–this sky, this earth, this sea, and the joy between, which I can't give up quite so easily as you can, with your beautiful theory, that something better awaits you.'

"'I have told you,' I replied,–for I had been quite frank with her,–'how I left America,–what a blank life was to me then; and did I not turn my back upon all that to meet face to face the greatest

happiness which I have ever yet known? Ought not this to give me faith in the divinity that shapes our ends?'

"'And so,' she answered, 'when I have lost you, I shall have the satisfaction of thinking that you are enjoying some still more exquisite consolation for the slight pangs you may have felt at parting from me! Your philosophy will make it easy for you to say, "Good-bye! it was a pretty romance; I go to find prettier ones still"; and then forget me altogether!'

"'And you,' I said, 'will that be easy for you?'

"'Yes,' she cried, with spirit,–'anything is easy to a proud, impetuous woman, who finds that the brief romance of a ten-days' acquaintance has already become tiresome to the second party. I am glad I have enjoyed what I have; that is so much gain, of which you cannot rob me; and now I can say good-bye as coolly as you, or I can die of shame, or I can at once walk over this single rail into the water, and quench this little candle, and so an end!'

"She sprang upon a bench, and, I swear to you, I thought she was going down! I was so exalted by this passionate demonstration, that I should certainly have gone over with her, and felt perfectly content to die in her arms,–at least, until I began to realize what a very disagreeable bath we had chosen to drown in.

"I drew her away; I walked up and down with that superb creature panting and palpitating almost upon my heart; I poured into her ear I know not what extravagant vows; and before the slow-handed sailors had fastened their cable to the buoy in the channel, we had knotted a more subtile and difficult noose, not to be so easily undone!

"Now see what strange, variable fools we are! Months of tender intercourse had failed to bring about anything like a positive engagement between Margaret and myself; and here behold me irrevocably pledged to Flora, after a brief ten-days' acquaintance!

"Six mortal hours were exhausted in making the steamer fast,–in sending off her Majesty's mails, of which the cockney speaks with a tone of reverence altogether disgusting to us free-minded Yankees,–and in entertaining the custom-house inspectors, who paid a long and tedious visit to the saloon and our luggage. Then we were suffered to land, and enter the noisy, solid streets of Liverpool, amid the donkeys and beggars and quaint scenes which strike the American so oddly upon a first visit. All this delay, the weariness and impatience, the contrast between the morning and the hard, grim reality of mid-day, brought me down from my elevation. I felt alarmed to think of what had passed. I seemed to have been doing some wild, unadvised act in a fit of intoxication. Margaret came up before me, sad, silent, reproachful; and as I gazed upon Flora's bedimmed face, I wondered how I had been so charmed.

"We took the first train for London, where we arrived at midnight. Two weeks in that vast Babel,–then, ho! for Paris! Twelve hours by rail and steamer carried us out of John Bull's dominions into the brilliant metropolis of his French neighbor. Joseph accompanied us, and wrote letters home, filled with gossip which I knew, or hoped, would make Margaret writhe. I had not found it so easy to forget her as I had supposed it would be. Flora's power over me was sovereign; but when I was weary of the dazzle and whirl of the life she led me,–when I looked into the depths of my heart, and saw what the thin film of passion and pleasure concealed,–in those serious moments which would come, and my soul put stern questions to me,–then, Sir,–then–Margaret had her revenge.

"A month, crowded and glittering with novelty and incident, preceded our departure for Switzerland. I accompanied Flora's party; Joseph remained behind. We left Paris about the middle of June, and returned in September. I have no words to speak of that era in my life. I saw, enjoyed, suffered, learned so much! Flora was always glad, magnificent, irresistible. But, as I knew her longer, my moments of misgiving became more frequent and profound. If I had aspired to nothing higher than a life of sensuous delights, she would have been all I could wish. But–

"We were to spend the winter in Italy. Meanwhile, we had another month in Paris. Here I had found Joseph again, who troubled me a good deal with certain rumors he had received concerning

Margaret. According to these, she had been in feeble health ever since we left, and her increasing delicacy was beginning to alarm her friends. 'But,' added another of Joseph's correspondents, 'don't let Westwood flatter himself that he is the cause, for she is cured of him; and there is talk of an engagement between her and a handsome young clergyman, who is both eloquent and fascinating.'

"This bit of gossip made me very bitter and angry. 'Forget me so soon?' I said; 'and receive the attentions of another man?' You see how consistent I was, to condemn her for the very fault I had myself been so eager to commit!

"Well, the round of rides, excursions, soirées, visits to the operas and theatres, walks on the Boulevards, and in the galleries of the Louvre, ended at last. The evening before we were to set out for the South of France, I was at my lodgings, unpacking and repacking the luggage which I had left in Joseph's care during my absence among the Alps; I was melancholy, dissatisfied with the dissipations which had exhausted my time and energies, and thinking of Margaret. I had not preserved a single memento of her; and now I wished I had one,–if only a withered leaf, or a line of her writing. In this mood, I chanced to cast my eye upon a stray glove, in the bottom of my trunk. I snatched at it eagerly, and, in the impulse of the moment,–before I reflected that I was wronging Flora,–pressed it to my lips. Yes, I found the place where it had been mended, the spot Margaret's fingers had touched, and gave it a kiss for every stitch. Then, incensed at myself, I flung it from me, and hurried from the room. I walked towards the Place de la Concorde, where the brilliant lamps burned like a constellation. I strolled through the Elysian Fields, and watched the lights of the carriages swarming like fire-flies up the long avenue; stopped by the concert gardens, and listened to the glorified girls singing under rosy and golden pavilions the last songs of the season; wandered about the fountains,–by the gardens of the Tuileries, where the trees stood so shadowy and still, and the statues gleamed so pale,–along the quays of the Seine, where the waves rolled so dark below,–trying to settle my thoughts, to master myself, to put Margaret from me.

"Weary at length, I returned to my chamber, seated myself composedly, and looked down at the glove which lay where I had thrown it, upon the polished floor. Mechanically I stooped and took up a bit of folded paper. It was written upon,–I unrolled it, and read. It was as if I had opened the record of doom! Had the apparition of Margaret herself risen suddenly before me, I could not have been more astounded. It was a note from her,–and such a note!–full of love, suffering, and humility,–poured out of a heart so deep and tender and true, that the shallowness of my own seemed utterly contemptible, in comparison with it. I cannot tell you what was written, but it was more than even my most cruel and exacting pride could have asked. It was what would once have made me wild with joy,–now it almost maddened me with despair. I, who had often talked fine philosophy to others, had not a grain of that article left to physic my own malady. But one course seemed plain before me, and that was, to go quietly and drown myself in the Seine, which I had seen flowing so swift and dark under the bridges, an hour ago, when I stood and mused upon the tragical corpses its solemn flood had swallowed.

"I am a little given to superstition, and the mystery of the note excited me. I have no doubt but there was some subtile connection between it and the near presence of Margaret's spirit, of which I had that night been conscious. But the note had reached me by no supernatural method, as I was at first half inclined to believe. It was, probably, the touch, the atmosphere, the ineffably fine influence which surrounded it, which had penetrated my unconscious perceptions, and brought her near. The paper, the glove, were full of Margaret,–full of something besides what we vaguely call mental associations,–full of emanations of the very love and suffering which she had breathed into the writing.

"How the note came there upon the floor was a riddle which I was too much bewildered to explain by any natural means. Joseph, who burst in upon me, in my extremity of pain and difficulty, solved it at once. It had fallen out of the glove, where it had lain folded, silent, unnoticed, during all this intervening period of folly and vexation of soul. Margaret had done her duty, in time; I had only myself to blame for the tangle in which I now found myself. I was thinking of Flora, upon the deck of the steamship, when, in a moment of chagrin, she had been so near throwing herself over; wondering

to what fate her passion and impetuosity would hurry her now, if she knew; cursing myself for my weakness and perfidy; while Joseph kept asking me what I intended to do.

"'Do? do?' I said, furiously,–'I shall kill you, that is what I shall do, if you drive me mad with questions which neither angels nor fiends can answer!'

"'I know what you will do,' said Joseph; 'you will go home and marry Margaret.'

"You can have no conception of the effect of these words,–*Go home and marry Margaret.* I shook as I have seen men shake with the ague. All that might have been,–what might be still,–the happiness cast away, and perhaps yet within my reach,–the temptation of the Devil, who appealed to my cowardice, to fly from Flora, break my vows, risk my honor and her life, for Margaret,–all this rushed through me tumultuously. At length I said,–

"'No, Joseph; I shall do no such thing. I can never be worthy of Margaret; it will be only by fasting and prayer that I can make myself worthy of Flora.'

"'Will you start for Italy in the morning?' he asked, pitilessly.

"'For Italy in the morning?' I groaned. Meet Flora, travel with her, play the hypocrite, with smiles on my lips and hell in my heart,–or thunderstrike her at once with the truth;–what was I to do? To some men the question would, perhaps, have presented few difficulties. But for me, Sir, who am not quite devoid of conscience, whatever you may think,–let me tell you, I'd rather hang by sharp hooks over a roasting fire than be again suspended as I was betwixt two such alternatives, and feel the torture of both!

"Having driven Joseph away, I locked myself into my room, and suffered the torments of the damned in as quiet a manner as possible, until morning. Then Joseph returned, and looked at me with dismay.

"'For Heaven's sake!' he said, 'you ought not to let this thing kill you,–and it will, if you keep on.'

"'So much the better,' I said, 'if it kills nobody but me. But don't be alarmed. Keep perfectly cool, and attend to the commission I am going to trust to you. I can't see Flora this morning; I must gain a little time. Go to the station of the Lyons railway, where I have engaged to meet her party; say to her that I am detained, but that I will join her on the journey. Give her no time to question you, and be sure that she does not stay behind.'

"'I'll manage it,–trust me!' said Joseph. And off he started. At the end of two hours, which seemed twenty, he burst into my room, crying,–

"'Good news! she is gone! I told her you had lost your passport, and would have to get another from our minister.'

"'What!' I exclaimed, 'you lied to her?'

"'Oh! there was no other way!' said Joseph, ingenuously,–'she is so sharp! They're to wait for you at Marseilles. But I'll manage that, too. On their arrival at the Hotel d'Orient, they'll find a telegraphic dispatch from me. I wager a hat, they'll leave in the first steamer for Naples. Then you can follow at your leisure.'

"'Thank you, Joseph.'

"I felt relieved. Then came a reaction. The next day I was attacked by fever. I know not how long I struggled against it, but it mastered me. The last things I remember were the visits of friends, the strange talk of a French physician, whispers and consultations, which I knew were about me, yet took no interest in,–and at length Joseph rushing to my bedside, in a flutter of agitation, and gasping,–

"'Flora!'

"'What of Flora?' I demanded.

"'I telegraphed, but she wouldn't go; she has come back; she is here!'

"I was sinking back into the stupor from which I had been roused, when I heard a rustling which seemed afar off, yet was in my chamber; then a vision appeared to my sickened sight,–a face which I dimly thought I had seen before,–a flood of curls and a rain of kisses showering upon me,–

sobs and devouring caresses,–Flora's voice calling me passionate names; and I lying so passive, faintly struggling to remember, until my soul sank whirling in darkness, and I knew no more.

"One morning, I cannot tell you how long after, I awoke and found myself in a strange-looking room, filled with strange objects, not the least strange of which was the thing that seemed myself. At first I looked with vague and motionless curiosity out of the Lethe from which my mind slowly emerged; painless, and at peace; listlessly questioning whether I was alive or dead,–whether the limp weight lying in bed there was my body,–the meaning of the silence and the closed curtains. Then, with a succession of painful flashes, as if the pole of an electrical battery had been applied to my brain, memory returned,–Margaret, Flora, Paris, delirium. I next remember hearing myself groan aloud,–then seeing Joseph at my side. I tried to speak, but could not. Upon my pillow was a glove, and he placed it against my cheek. An indescribable, excruciating thrill shot through me; still I could not speak. After that, came a relapse. Like Mrs. Browning's poet, I lay

> "'Twixt gloom and gleam,
> With Death and Life at each extreme.'

"But one morning I was better. I could talk. Joseph bent over me, weeping for joy.

"'The danger is past!' he said. 'The doctors say you will get well!'

"'Have I been so ill, then?'

"'Ill?' echoed Joseph. 'Nobody thought you could live. We all gave you up, except her;–and she'–

"'She!' I said,–'is she here?'

"'From the moment of her arrival,' replied Joseph, 'she has never left you. Oh, if you don't thank God for her,'–he lowered his voice,–'and live all the rest of your life just to reward her, you are the most ungrateful wretch! You would certainly have died but for her. She has scarcely slept, till this morning, when they said you would recover.'

"Joseph paused. Every word he spoke went down like a weight of lead into my soul. I had, indeed, been conscious of a tender hand soothing my pillow, of a lovely form flitting through my dreams, of a breath and magnetic touch of love infusing warm, sweet life into me,–but it had always seemed Margaret, never Flora.

"'The glove?' I asked.

"'Here it is,' said Joseph. 'In your delirium you demanded it; you would not be without it; you caressed it, and addressed to it the tenderest apostrophes.'

"'And Flora,–she heard?'

"'Flora?' repeated Joseph. 'Don't you know–haven't you any idea–what has happened? It has been terrible!'

"'Tell me at once!' I said. 'Keep nothing back!'

"'Immediately on her return from Marseilles,–you remember that?'

"'Yes, yes! go on!'

"'She established herself here. Nobody could come between her and you; and a brave, true girl she proved herself. Oh, but she was wild about you! She offered the doctors extravagant sums–she would have bribed Heaven itself, if she could–not to let you die. But there came a time,–one night, when you were raving about Margaret,–I tell you, it was terrible! She would have the truth, and so I told her,–everything, from the beginning. It makes me shudder now to think of it,–it struck her so like death!'

"'What did she say?–what did she do?'

"'She didn't say much,–"Oh, my God! my God!"–something like that. The next morning she showed me a letter which she had written to Margaret.'

"'To Margaret?' I started up, but fell back again, helpless, with a groan.

"'Yes,' said Joseph,–'and it was a letter worthy of the noblest woman. I wrote another, for I thought Margaret ought to know everything. It might save her life, and yours, too. In the mean time, I had got worse news from her still,–that her health continued to decline, and that her physician saw no hope for her except in a voyage to Italy. But that she resolutely refused to undertake, until she got those letters. You know the rest.'

"'The rest?' I said, as a horrible suspicion flashed upon me. 'You told me something terrible had happened.'

"'Yes,–to Flora. But you have heard the worst. She is gone; she is by this time in Rome.'

"'Flora gone? But you said she was here.'

"'*She?* So *she* is! But did you think I meant Flora? I supposed you knew. Not Flora,–but Margaret! Margaret!'

"I shrieked out, 'Margaret?' That's the last I remember,–at least, the last I can tell. She was there,–I was in her arms;–she had crossed the sea, not to save her own life, but mine. And Flora had gone, and my dreams were true; and the breath and magnetic touch of love, which infused warm, sweet life into me, and seemed not Flora's, but Margaret's, were no illusion, and–what more can I tell?

"From the moment of receiving those letters, Margaret's energies were roused, and she had begun to regain her health. There is no such potent medicine as hope and love. It had saved her, and it saved me. My recovery was sure and speedy. The happiness which had seemed too great, too dear to be ever possible, was now mine. She was with me again, all my own! Only the convalescent, who feels the glow of love quicken the pure pulses of returning health, knows what perfect bliss is.

"As soon as I was strong enough to travel, we set out for Italy, the faithful Joseph accompanying us. We enjoyed Florence, its palaces and galleries of art, the quaint old churches, about which the religious sentiment of ages seems to hang like an atmosphere, the morning and evening clamor of musical bells, the Arno, and the olive-crowned Tuscan hills,–all so delightful to the senses and the soul. After Florence, Naples, with its beautiful, dangerous, volcanic environs, where the ancients aptly located their heaven and hell, and where a luxurious, passionate people absorbs into its blood the spirit of the soil, and the fire and languor of the clime. From Naples to Rome, where we saw St Peter's, that bubble on the surface of the globe, which the next earthquake may burst, the Vatican, with its marvels of statuary, the ruined temples of the old gods and heroes, the Campagna, the Pope, and–Flora. We had but a glimpse of her. It was one night, at the Colosseum. We had been musing about that vast and solemn pile by the moonlight, which silvered it over with indescribable beauty, and at last, accompanied by our guides, bearing torches, we ascended through dark and broken passages to the upper benches of the amphitheatre. As we were passing along one side, we saw picturesquely moving through the shadows of the opposite walls, with the immense arena between, the red-flaring torches and half-illuminated figures of another party of visitors. I don't know whether it was instinct, or acuteness of vision, that suggested Flora; but, with a sudden leap of the heart, I felt that she was there. We descended, and passed out under the dark arches of the stupendous ruin. The other visitors walked a little in advance of us,–two of the number lingering behind their companions; and certain words of tenderness and passion we heard, which strangely brought to my mind those nights on the ocean-steamer.

"'What is the matter with you?' said Margaret, looking in my face.

"'Hush!' I whispered,–'there–that woman–is Flora!'

"She clung to me,–I drew her closer, as we paused; and the happy couple went on, over the ancient Forum, by the silent columns of the ruined temples, and disappeared from sight upon the summit of the Capitoline Hill.

"A few months later, we heard of the marriage of Flora to an English baronet; she is now *my Lady*, and I must do her the justice to say that I never knew a woman better fitted to bear that title. As for Margaret,–if you will return with me to my home on the Hudson, after we have finished our

hunt after those Western lands, you shall see her, together with the loveliest pair of children that ever made two proud parents happy.

"And here," added Westwood, "we have arrived at the end of our day's journey; we have had the Romance of the Glove, and now–let's have some supper."

TO –

ON RECEIVING HIS

"FEW VERSES FOR A FEW FRIENDS."

"(PRINTED, NOT PUBLISHED.)"

Well thought! Who would not rather hear
The songs to Love and Friendship sung,
Than those which move the stranger's tongue
And feed his unselected ear?

Our social joys are more than fame;
Life withers in the public look:
Why mount the pillory of a book,
Or barter comfort for a name?

Who in a house of glass would dwell,
With curious eyes at every pane?
To ring him in and out again
Who wants the public crier's bell?

To see the angel in one's way,
Who wants to play the ass's part,
Bear on his back the wizard Art,
And in his service speak or bray?

And who his manly locks would shave
And quench the eyes of common sense,
To share the noisy recompense
That mocked the shorn and blinded slave?

The heart has needs beyond the head,
And, starving in the plenitude
Of strange gifts, craves its common food,
Our human nature's daily bread.

We are but men: no gods are we
To sit in mid-heaven, cold and bleak,
Each separate, on his painful peak,
Thin-cloaked in self-complacency!

Better his lot whose axe is swung
In Wartburg woods, or that poor girl's
Who by the Ilm her spindle whirls
And sings the songs that Luther sung,

Than his, who, old and cold and vain,
At Weimar sat, a demigod,
And bowed with Jove's imperial nod
His votaries in and out again!

Ply, Vanity, thy wingèd feet!
Ambition, hew thy rocky stair!
Who envies him who feeds on air
The icy splendors of his seat?

I see your Alps above me cut
The dark, cold sky,–and dim and lone
I see ye sitting, stone on stone,
With human senses dulled and shut.

I could not reach you, if I would,
Nor sit among your cloudy shapes;
And (spare the fable of the Grapes
And Fox) I would not, if I could.

Keep to your lofty pedestals!
The safer plain below I choose:
Who never wins can rarely lose,
Who never climbs as rarely falls.

Let such as love the eagle's scream
Divide with him his home of ice:
For me shall gentler notes suffice,–
The valley-song of bird and stream,

The pastoral bleat, the drone of bees,
The flail-beat chiming far away,
The cattle-low at shut of day,
The voice of God in leaf and breeze!

Then lend thy hand, my wiser friend,
And help me to the vales below,
(In truth, I have not far to go,)
Where sweet with flowers the fields extend.

THE SINGING-BIRDS AND THEIR SONGS

Those persons enjoy the most happiness, if possessed of a benevolent heart and favored by ordinary circumstances of fortune, who have acquired by habit and education the power of deriving pleasure from objects that lie immediately around them. But these common sources of happiness are opened to those only who are endowed with genius, or who have received a certain kind of intellectual training. The more ordinary the mental and moral organization and culture of the individual, the more far-fetched and dear-bought must be his enjoyments. Nature has given us in full development only those appetites which are necessary to our physical well-being. She has left our moral appetites and capacities in the germ, to be developed by education and circumstances. Hence those agreeable sensations that come chiefly from the exercise of the imagination, which may be called the pleasures of sentiment, are available only to persons of a peculiar refinement of mind. The ignorant and rude may be dazzled and delighted by physical beauty, and charmed by loud and stirring sounds; but those more simple melodies and less attractive colors and forms that appeal to the mind for their principal effect act more powerfully upon individuals of superior culture.

In proportion as we have been trained to be agreeably affected by the outward forms of Nature, and the sounds that proceed from the animate and inanimate world, are we capable of being made happy without resorting to expensive and vulgar recreations. It ought, therefore, to be one of the chief points in the education of youth, while teaching them the still more important offices of humanity, to cultivate and enliven their susceptibility to the charms of natural objects. Then would the aspects of Nature, continually changing with the progress of the seasons and the sounds that enliven their march, satisfy, in a great measure, that craving for agreeable sensations which leads mankind away from humble and healthful pursuits to those of a more artificial and exciting life. The value of such pleasures consists not so much in their cheapness as in their favorable moral influences, which improve the heart, while they lead the mind to observations that pleasantly exercise and develope, without tasking its powers. The quiet emotions, half musical and half poetical, which are awakened by listening to the songs of birds, belong to this class of refined enjoyments.

But the music of birds, though agreeable to all, conveys positive and durable pleasure only to those who have learned to associate with their notes, in connection with the scenes of Nature, a thousand interesting and romantic images. To many persons of this character it affords more delight than the most brilliant music of the opera or the concert. In vain, therefore, will it be said, as an objection, that the notes of birds have no charm, save that which is derived from association, and that, considered as music, they do not equal that of the most simple reed or flageolet. It is sufficient to remark, that the most delightful influences of Nature proceed from those sights and sounds that appeal to the imagination and affections through the medium of slight and almost insensible impressions made upon the eye and the ear. At the moment when these physical impressions exceed a certain mean, the spell is broken, and the enjoyment becomes sensual, not intellectual. How soon, indeed, would the songs of birds lose their effect, if they were loud and brilliant, like a band of instruments! It is their simplicity that gives them their charm.

As a further illustration of this point, it may be remarked that simple melodies have among all people exercised a greater power over the imagination than louder and more complicated music. Nature employs a very small amount of physical sensation to create an intellectual passion, and when an excess is used a diminished effect is produced. I am persuaded that the effect of a great part of our sacred music is lost by an excess of harmony and a too great volume of sound. On the same principle, a loud crash of thunder deafens and terrifies; but its low and distant rumbling produces an agreeable emotion of sublimity.

The songs of birds are as intimately allied with poetry as with music. The lark has been aptly denominated a "feathered lyric" by one of the English poets; and the analogy becomes apparent

when we consider how much the song of a bird resembles a lyrical ballad in its influence on the mind. Though it utters no words, how plainly it suggests a long train of agreeable images of love, beauty, friendship, and home! When a young person has suffered any severe wound of the affections, he seldom fails, if endowed with a sensitive mind, to listen to the birds as sharers in his affliction. Through them the deities of the groves seem to offer him their consolation. By indulging this habit of making companionship with the objects of Nature, all pleasing sights and sounds gradually become certain anodynes for his sorrow; and those who have this mental alembic for turning grief into a poetic melancholy can seldom be reduced to a state of absolute despondency. Poetry, or rather the poetic sentiment, exalts all our pleasures and soothes all our afflictions by some illusive charm, whether it be turned into the channel of religion or romance. Without this reflection of light from the imagination, what is the passion of love? and what is our love of beauty and of sweet sounds, but a mere gravitation?

The voice of every singing-bird has its associations in the minds of all susceptible persons who were born and nurtured within the precincts of its untutored minstrelsy. The music of birds is modulated in pleasant unison with all the chords of affection and imagination, filling the soul with a lively consciousness of happiness and beauty, and soothing it with romantic visions of memory,–of love, when it was an ethereal sentiment of adoration and not a passion, and of friendship, when it was a passion and not an expedience,–of dear and simple adventures, and of comrades who had part in them,–of dappled mornings, and serene and glowing sunsets,–of sequestered nooks and mossy seats in the old wood,–of paths by the riverside, and flowers that smiled a bright welcome to our rambling,–of lingering departures from home, and of old by-ways, overshadowed by trees and hedged with roses and viburnums, that spread their shade and their perfume around our path to gladden our return. By this pleasant instrumentality has Nature provided for the happiness of those who have learned to be delighted with the survey of her works, and with the sound of those voices which she has appointed to communicate to the human soul the joys of her inferior creation.

The singing-birds, with reference to their songs, may be divided into four classes. First, the Rapid Singers, whose song is uninterrupted, of considerable length, and uttered with fervor, and in apparent ecstasy. Second, the Moderate Singers, whose notes are slowly modulated, but without pauses or rests between their different strains. Third, the Interrupted Singers, who seldom modulate their notes with rapidity, and make decided pauses between their several strains, of which there are in general from five to eight or nine. Fourth, the Warblers, whose notes consist of only one or two strains, not combined into a song.

The canary, among foreign birds, and the linnet and bobolink, among American birds, are familiar examples of the first class; the common robin and the veery of the second; the wood-thrush, the cat-bird, and the mocking-bird, of the third; and the blue-bird, the pewee, and the purple martin, of the fourth class. It may be added, that some birds are nearly periodical in their habits of singing, preferring the morning and evening, and occasional periods in other parts of the day, while others sing almost indifferently at all hours. The greater number of species, however, are more tuneful in the early morning than at any other hour.

June, in this part of the world, is the most vocal month of the year. Many of our principal songsters do not arrive until near the middle of May; and all, whether they come early or late, continue in song throughout the month of June. The bobolink, which is one of the first to become silent, continues vocal until the second week in July. So nearly simultaneous is the discontinuance of the songs of this species, that it might seem as if their silence were preconcerted, and that by a vote they had, on a certain day, adjourned over to another year. If an unusually genial day occurs about the seventh of July, we may hear multitudes of them singing merrily on that occasion. Should this time be followed by two or three successive days of chilly and rainy weather, their tunefulness is so generally brought to a close during this period, that we may not hear another musical note from a single individual after the seventh. The songs of birds are discontinued as soon as their amorous

dalliances and the care of their offspring have ceased. Hence those birds that raise but one brood of young during the season, like the bobolink, are the first to become silent.

No one of the New England birds is an autumnal warbler; though the song-sparrow often greets the fine mornings in October with his lays, and the shore-lark, after spending the summer in Labrador and about the shores of Hudson's Bay, is sometimes heard in autumn, soaring and singing at the dawn of day, while on his passage to the South. The bobolink, the veery, or Wilson's thrush, the red thrush, and the golden robin, are silent after the middle of July; the wood-thrush, the cat-bird, and the common robin, not until a month later; but the song-sparrow alone continues to sing throughout the summer. The tuneful season of the year, in New England, embraces a period of about four months, from the middle of April to the middle of August.

There are certain times of the day, as well as certain seasons of the year, when the birds are most musical. The grand concert of the feathered tribe takes place during the hour between dawn and sunrise. During the remainder of the day they sing less in concert, though many species are very musical at noonday, and seem, like the nocturnal birds, to prefer the hour when others are silent. At sunset there is an apparent attempt to unite once more in chorus, but this is far from being so loud or so general as in the morning. The little birds which I have classed in the fourth division are a very important accompaniment to the anthem of dawn, their notes, though short, serving agreeably to fill up the pauses made by the other musicians. Thus, the hair-bird (*Fringilla Socialis*) has a sharp and trilling note, without any modulation, and not at all melodious, when heard alone; but in the morning it is the chief harmonizer of the whole chorus, and serves, more than any other voice, to give unity and symphony to the multitude of miscellaneous parts.

There are not many birds whose notes could be accurately described upon the gamut. The nearest approach we can make to accuracy is to give some general idea of their time and modulation. Their musical intervals can be distinguished but with difficulty, on account of the rapidity of their utterance. I have often attempted to transcribe some of their notes upon the musical scale, but I am persuaded that such sketches can be only approximations to literal correctness. As different individuals of the same species sing very differently, the notes, as transcribed from the song of one individual, will never exactly represent the song of another. If we listen attentively, however, to a number of songs, we shall detect in all of them a *theme*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.