VARIOUS

BLACKWOOD'S EDINBURGH MAGAZINE - VOLUME 55, NO. 343, MAY 1844

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Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine. Volume 55, No. 343, May 1844

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Содержание

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TRADITIONS AND TALES OF UPPER LUSATIA

No. I

The Fairies' Sabbath

What is a fairy?
Read!
["*A Wood near Athens.—Enter a Fairy on one side, and Puck on the other.*[1]]

"*Puck.* How now, Spirit! whither wander you?

Fairy. Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander ever where,
Swifter than the moones sphere;
And I serve the Fairy Queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green:
The cowslips tall her pensioners be;
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours:
I must go seek some dewdrops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.
Farewell, thou lob of spirits, I'll begone;
Our queen and all our elves come here anon.

Puck. The King doth keep his revels here to-night;
Take heed, the queen come not within his sight.
For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,
Because that she, as her attendant, hath
A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king;
She never had so sweet a changeling.
And jealous Oberon would have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild:

[1] Midsummer Night's Dream.

But she, perforce, withholds the loved boy:
Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy:
And now they never meet in grove, or green,
By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,
But they do square; that all their elves, for fear,
Creep into acorn cups, and hide them there."

And there, then, they are!—The blithe and lithe, bright and fine darlings of your early-bewitched and for ever-enamoured fancy! There they are! The King and the Queen, and the Two royal Courts of shadowy, gorgeous, remote, and cloud-walled Elf-land: The fairies of the vision once wafted, "by moon or star light," upon the "creeping murmur" of the Avon!—The Fairies in England! Your fairies!

Nevertheless you, from of old, are discreet. And you mistrust information which discountenances itself, by borrowing the magical robe of verse! Or you misdoubt this medley of our English blood, which in the lapse of ages must, as you deem, have confounded, upon the soil, the confluent streams of primitively distinct superstitions! Or your suspicious inquisition rebels against this insular banishment of ours, which, sequestering us from the common mind of the world, may, as you augur, have perverted, into an excessive individuality of growth, our mythological beliefs: Or —Southwards then!

One good stride over salt water lands you amongst a people, who, from the old, have kept themselves to themselves; whose warm, bold, *thorough*-loyal hearts hereditarily believe, after the love and reverence owed from the children's children to the fathers' fathers. Here are—for good and for ill—and from a sure hand:—"The Fairies in Lower Britanny; *alio nomine*—The Korrigans."

"Like these holy virgins, (the Gallicenæ or Barrigenæ of Mela,) our Korrigans predict the future. They know the skill of healing incurable maladies with particular charms; which they impart, it is affirmed, to magicians that are their friends. Ingenious Proteuses, they take the shape of any animal at their pleasure. In the twinkling of an eye they whisk from one end of the world to the other. Annually, with returning spring, they celebrate a high nocturnal festivity. A tablecloth, white as the driven snow, is spread upon the greensward, by the margin of a fountain. It is covered with the most delicious viands; in the midst sparkles a crystal goblet, which sheds such a splendour as serves in the stead of torches. At the close of the repast, this goblet goes round from hand to hand; it holds a miraculous beverage, one drop of which, it is averred, would make omniscient, like the Almighty. At any least breath or stir of human kind, all vanishes.

"In truth, it is near fountains that the Korrigans are oftenest met with; especially near such as rise in the neighbourhood of *dolmens*.[2] For in the sequestered spots whence the Virgin Mary, who is held for their chief foe, has not yet driven them, they still preside over the fountains. Our traditions bestow upon them a strong passion for music, with sweet voices; but do not, like those of the Germanic nations, make dancers of them. The popular songs of all countries frequently depict them combing their fine fair hair, which they seem daintily to cherish. Their stature is that of the other European fairies: they are not above two feet in height. Their shape, exquisitely proportioned, is as airy, slight, and pellucid as that of the wasp. They have no other dress than a white veil, which they wrap around their body. Seen by night, they are very beautiful: in the daytime, you perceive that their hair is grey —that their eyes are red—that their face is wrinkled. Accordingly, they begin to show themselves only at the shut of eve; and they loathe the light. *Every thing about them denotes fallen intelligences.* The Breton peasants maintain that *they are high princesses, who, because they would not embrace*

[2] Dolmen; literally, *stone table*. Remarkable structures, learnedly ascribed to the Druids; unlearnedly, to the dwarfs and fairies; and numerous throughout Western Britanny. One or more large and massive flat stones, overlaying great slabs planted edgeways in the ground, form a rude and sometimes very capacious chamber, or grotto. The superstition which cleaves to these relics of a forgotten antiquity, stamps itself in the names given to many of them by the peasantry:—*Grotte aux fées*, *Roche aux fées*, &c.

Christianity when the apostles came to preach in Armorica, were stricken by the curse of God. The Welsh recognise in them, souls of Druids doomed to penance. This coincidence is remarkable.

"They are universally believed to feel a vehement hatred for the clergy, and for our holy religion, which has confounded them with the spirits of darkness—a grand motive, as it appears, of displeasure and offence to them. The sight of a surplice, *the sound of bells*, scares them away. The popular tales of all Europe would, meanwhile, tend to support the church, in viewing them as maleficent genii. As in Britanny; the blast of their breath is mortal in Wales, in Ireland, in Scotland, and in Prussia. They cast weirds.[3] Whosoever has muddied the waters of their spring, or caught them combing their hair, or counting their treasures beside their *dolmen*, (for they there keep, it is believed, concealed mines of gold and of diamonds,) almost inevitably dies; especially should the misencounter fall upon a Saturday, which day, holy to the Virgin Mother, is inauspicious for their kind,"[4] &c. &c. &c.

Here, in the stead of the joyously-sociable monarchal hive, you behold a republic of solitarily-dwelling, and not unconditionally beautiful, naiads! No dancing! And a stature, prodigiously disqualifying for the asylum of an acorn cup! You are unsatisfied. Shakspeare has indeed vividly portrayed one curiously-featured species, and M. De la Villemarqué another, of the air-made inscrutable beings evoked by your question; but your question, from the beginning, struck at the Generic notion in its purified logical shape—at the definition, then—of the thing, a fairy.

Sir *Walter Scott*,[5] writing—the first in time of all men who have written—at large and scientifically upon the fairies of Western Europe, steps into disquisition by a description, duly loose for leaving his own foot unentangled. "The general idea of Spirits, of a limited power and subordinate nature, dwelling among the woods and mountains, is perhaps common to all nations."

A little *too* loose, peradventure!

Dr James Grimm, heroically bent upon rescuing from the throat of oblivion and from the tooth of scepticism, to his own Teutons—yet heathen—a faith outreaching and outsoaring the gross definite cognisances of this fleshly eye and hand, sets apart one—profoundly read and thought—chapter, to Wights and Elves.[6]

These terms, Wight and Elf, are presented by Dr Grimm as being, after a rough way, synonymous; and you have above seen another Germanic writer—a native of Warwickshire—take Elf for equivalent, or nearly so, with Fairy.

Of his many-natured Teutonic *wights and elves*, then, but with glances darted around, northwards and westwards, and southwards and eastwards, Dr Grimm begins with speaking thus:—

"From the *deified* and *half-divine* natures [investigated by this author in several of his antecedent chapters] *a whole order of other beings* is especially herein distinguished, that whilst the former either proceed of mankind, or seek human intercourse, these form a segregated society —one might say, a peculiar kingdom of their own—and are only, by accident or the pressure of circumstances, moved to converse with men. Something superhuman, approximating them to the gods, is mingled up in them: they possess power to help and to hurt man. They are however, at the same time, afraid of him, because they are not his bodily match. They appear either far below the human stature, or misshapen. Almost all of them enjoy the faculty of rendering themselves invisible."

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[3] Weirds. The French has—Lots. "*Elles jettent des sorts.*" For justifying the translation, see the fine old Scottish ballad of Kempion; or Kemp Owayne, at the beginning:—"Come here, come here, ye freely fede, (i. e. nobly born,)And lay your head low on my knee,A heavier weird I shall ye readThan ever was read to gay ladye."I weird ye to a fiery beast:And released shall ye never be,Till Kempion the kinges sonCome to the crag and thrice kiss thee!"

[4] From the preface to the exceedingly interesting collection by M. Th. de la Villemarqué, of the transmitted songs that are current amongst his Bas Breton countrymen.

[5] Essay on *The Fairies of Popular Superstition*, in "The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border."

[6] Deutsche Mythologie, von Jacob Grimm. Chap. xiii. Ed. 1. 1835, and xvii. Ed. 2. 1843.

You turn away your head, exclaiming that the weighty words of our puissant teacher are, for your proficiency, somewhat bewildering, and for your exigency by much too—Teutonic.

Have a care!

However, "Westward Hoe!" Put the old Rhine between the master of living mythologists and yourself, and listen to Baron Walckenaer unlocking the fountains of the fairy belief, and showing how it streams, primarily through France, and secondarily through all remaining Western Europe. "If there is a specifically characterized superstition, it is that which regards *the fairies*: those *female genii*,[7] most frequently *without name*, without descent, without kin, who are incessantly busied subverting the order of nature, for the weal or the woe of mortals whom they love and favour *without a motive*, or, as causelessly, hate and persecute."[8]

What, *female* only? Where are Oberon and Puck? *Without a name?* Where Titania?—Mab? *Without a motive?* Where the godmother of the sweet-faced and sweet-hearted Cinderella? Partial, and without a distinct type in your own recollections, you guessingly pronounce the characterization of the perpetual secretary too–*French*. Driven back, disappointed on all sides, you turn round upon your difficulties, and manfully project beating out *a definition of your own*; to which end, glancing your eye back affectionately, and now, needle-like, northwards across the Channel, you "at one slight bound" once more find yourself at your own fireside, and on your table *The Midsummer Night's Dream*, open at the second scene of the first act.

Inquirer whosoever! A problem lies large before us—complicated, abstruse even, yet—suitably to the subject—a delicate one! To hunt down an elusive word, and a more elusive notion! It is to find a set of determinings which, laid together, shall form a circle fitted to confine that inconfinable spirit —a Fairy; or, if you better like plain English, to find the terms needed for signifying, describing, expounding the Thought which, lurking as at the bottom of your mind, under a crowd of thoughts, rises up, in all circumstances, to meet and answer the name–a fairy; the Thought, which when all accidental and unessential attributes liable to be attracted to the fairy essence have been stripped away, remains; the *substrate*, absolute, essential, *generic* notion, therefore—a fairy; that Thought, which whencesoever acquired, and held howsoever, enables you to deal to your satisfaction with proposed fairies, acknowledging this one frankly;—this, but for a half-sister; shutting the door upon another. You may distinguish these terms at your pleasure, by sundry denominations: for example, you may call them Elements of the notion—a fairy—or circumscriptive Lines of such a notion, or indispensable Fairy-marks, or elfin Criteria, or by any other name which you may happen to like as well or better; but when found, call them as you will, they must reveal in essence, the thing which we look for—the answer to the question with which we first started, and to which we have as yet found no satisfactory solution.

As for the process of the finding. This notion is to be tracked after widely, and in intimate recesses; more hopefully, therefore, according to a planned campaign than a merely wild chance expatiation. The chase ranges over a material and an intellectual ground. Of either—a word.

I. The *material*—is a *geographical*—region, and may be called, summarily—*The western half of Europe*. Let us regard it as laid out by languages at this day spoken. Here is a map, roughly sketched: —

A.—Aboriginal

1. North-Western CELTS.—Ireland, Highlands of Scotland, and the interjacent Isle of Man.
2. South-Western CELTS.—Wales, Britanny, and the, till lately, Celtic-speaking Cornwall.

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[7] "*Ces génies femelles.*"

[8] From Walckenaer's Dissertation on the Origin of the Fairy Belief; last printed, in an abridged form, by Jacob, in his edition of the *Contes des Fées, par Perrault*, (Paris, 1842.)

3. Northern GERMANS, or Germans beyond the Eider, or Scandinavians.—Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Iceland.

4. Southern GERMANS, or Germans below the Eider, or Teutons.—Netherlands, the German empire, Switzerland.

B.—Latin speaking

1. Italy.—Sicily.
2. Spain.
3. Portugal.
4. Latin-speaking France, distinguishing Normandy.

C.—German and Latin mixed

1. England.
2. Scottish Lowlands.

II. From all this tangible territory, we are to sweep up—what? An overlying *intellectual* kingdom, *videlicet*—The Kinds of the Fairies, rudely marked out, perhaps, as follows:—

1. The *community* of the Fairies, monarchal or republican:—The Fairy folk; Fairies proper.
2. The *solitary* domestic serviceable Fairy.
3. In the mines, under the water; a Fairy folk.
4. The solitary water Fairy.
5. The Fairy-ancestress.
6. The Fairy, tutelary or persecuting, of the chivalrous metrical romance.
7. The Fairy, tutelary or persecuting, now giving and now turning destinies, of the fairy tale proper.

We have then to ask what are the terms, marks, common traits, or by whatsoever name they are to be called, which are yielded by a comparison of such seven kinds. Something like the following eight will possibly arise:—

First, A Fairy is a subordinate spirit.

Secondly, Is attracted to the surface of our planet.

Thirdly, At once seeks and shuns mankind.

Fourthly, Has a body.

Fifthly, Is attenuate.

Sixthly, Is without proper station and function in the general economy of the universe; or is mythologically displaced.

Seventhly, Is endowed with powers of intelligence and of agency excelling human.

Eighthly, Stands under a doom.

To these eight criteria, taken *in the nature of the thing enquired*, the reflective inquirer will perchance find himself led on to add two furnished from within himself, as that—

First, Acknowledging, as in these latter days our more delicate psychologists have called upon us to do, the names fancy and imagination as designating two faculties, the fairies belong rather to the fancy.

Secondly, Accepting for a legitimate thought, legitimately and cogently signified, the High Marriage which one of these finer Metaphysicians[9]—instructed no doubt by his personal experience

[9] “Paradise and grovesElysian, fortunate fields—like those of oldSought in the Atlantic main, why should they beA history only of departed things,Or a mere fiction of what never was?For the discerning Intellect of man,When wedded to this goodly UniverseIn love and holy passion, shall find theseA simple produce of the common day.I long before the blissful hour arrivesWould chant, in lonely

—prophesies to his kind, between the "intellect of man" and "this goodly universe," we may say that, regularly, this marriage must have its antecedent possessing and agitating Love; that this love must, like all possessing agitated love, have its attendant Reverie. Now, might one venture to surmise that *this* reverie breathes into the creating of a fairy?

Does the jealous reader perchance miss in the above proposed eight several elements the unity of notion, which he has all along seemed to feel in his own spirit and understanding? Let him at once conceive, as intensely joined, the two permanent characters of *tenuity* and *mythological displacement*, and take this compound for the nucleus of the unity he seeks. About these two every other element will easily place itself. For a *soul*, he shall infuse into the whole, after in like manner inseparably blending them—fancy, and that love-inspired reverie which won its way to us from Grassmere.

And so take, reader, our answer to your question, "*What is a fairy?*" THIS is a Fairy. Are you still unsatisfied? Good. The field of investigation lies open before you, free and inviting. On, in your own strength, and Heaven speed you!

The eight or nine tales of sundry length, and exceedingly diversified matter, contained in the two little volumes of Herr Ernst Willkomm,[10] which have put us a-journeying to Fairy-land, have begun to produce before the literary world the living popular superstitions of a small and hidden mountainous district, by which *Cis Eidoran* Germany leans upon Sclavonia: hidden, it would seem, for any thing like interesting knowledge, until this author began to write, from the visiting eye of even learned curiosity. Nor this without a sufficient reason; since the mountains do, of themselves, shut in their inhabitants, and, for a stranger, the temper of the rugged mountaineer, at once shy and mailing himself in defiance, is, like the soil, inaccessible. To Ernst Willkomm this hinderance was none. He discloses to us the heart of the country, and that of the people which have born him, which have bred him up; and he will, if he is encouraged, write on. Three of these tales, or of these traditions—for the titles, with this writer, appear to us exchangeable—regard the fairies properly so called. They are, "*The Priest's Well*," "*The Fairies' Sabbath*," here given, and "*The Fairy Tutor*," being the first, the third, and the seventh, of the entire present series. Upon these three tales the foregoing attempt at fixing the generic notion of a fairy was intended to bear. Should pretty Maud, the stone-mason's daughter, our heroine for to-day, find the favour in English eyes which her personal merit may well claim, the remaining two are not likely to be long withheld.

The illustrations which shall now follow, drawn from distinguished authorities, aim at showing the consonancy of Herr Willkomm's pictures with authentic representations of Elfin superstition already known to the world. If, however, the criteria which have been proposed, have been rightfully deduced, the illustrations should as materially serve us in justifying these by proof.

Amongst the numerous points of analogy which strikingly connect our tale with popular tales and traditions innumerable, *three* are main to the structure of the tale itself. They may be very briefly described as—

I. The Heathenism of the Fairies.

II. Their need, thence arising.

III. Maud's ability to help them.

I. The opinion, which sets the fairies in opposition to the established faith of all Christendom, is widely diffused. To the *Breton* peasant, as M. de la Villemarqué has above informed us, his Korrigan is a heathen princess, doomed to a long sorrow for obstinately refusing the message of salvation.

The brothers Grimm, speaking of the fairies in *Ireland*, say that "they are angels cast out from heaven, who have not fallen as low as hell; but in great fear and uncertainty about their future state, doubt, themselves, whether they shall obtain mercy at the last day."[11]

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peace, the spousal verseOf this great consummation."Wordsworth. Preface to the Excursion.

[10] *Sagen und Mahrchen aus der Oberlausitz*. Nacherzahlt von *Ernst Willkomm*, Hanover, 1843.

[11] Irische Elfenmarchen: Uebersetzt von den Brüdern Grimm. Leipzig, 1826. *Introduction.*

Of the fairies in *Scotland*, it is averred by the same learned and exact writers, that "they were originally angels dwelling in bliss, but who, because they suffered themselves to be seduced by the archfiend, were hurled down from heaven in innumerable multitudes. They shall wander till the last day over mountains and lakes. They know not how their sentence will run—whether they shall be saved or damned; but dread the worst."

Tales, in many parts of Europe, which represent the fairies as exceedingly solicitous about their salvation, and as *inquiring of priests* and others concerning their own spiritual prospects, for the most part with an unfavourable answer, tend to fix upon them a reproachful affinity with the spirits of darkness.

II. That the powerful fairies, who have appeared to us, from childhood upwards, as irresistible dispensers of good and evil to our kind, should *need aid* of any sort from us, is an unexpected feature of the fairy lore, which breaks by degrees upon the zealous and advancing inquirer.

The two excellent brothers Grimm, in the most elaborate and comprehensive collection,[12] probably, of national traditions that Europe possesses, have furnished us with various instances. We select a very few. In the following graceful Alpine pastoral, the need of human help attaches to an exigency of life or death:—

GERMAN TRADITIONS

No. CCXX. *The Queen of the Snakes*

"A herd maiden found upon the fell a sick snake lying and almost famished. Compassionately she held down to it her pitcher of milk. The snake licked greedily, and was visibly revived. The girl went on her way; and it presently happened that her lover sued for her, but was too poor for the proud wealthy father, who tauntingly dismissed him till the day when he too should be master of as large herds as the old herdsman. From this time forwards had the old herdsman no luck more, but sheer misfortune. Report ran that a fiery dragon was seen passing o' nights over his grounds; and his substance decayed. The poor swain was now as rich, and again sued for his beloved, whom he obtained. Upon the wedding-day a snake came gliding into the room, upon whose coiled tail there sat a beautiful damsel, who said that it was she to whom formerly the kind herd maid had, in strait of hunger, given her milk, and, out of gratitude, she took her brilliant crown from her head, and cast it into the bride's lap. Thereupon she vanished; but the young couple throve in their housekeeping greatly, and were soon well at ease in the world."

Since fairies, like ourselves, are mortal, two lives may be understood as at stake in the following:—

No. LXVIII. *The Lady of Alvensleben*

"Some hundred years ago, there lived at Calb, in the Werder, an aged lady of the house of Alvensleben, who feared God, was gracious to the people, and willingly disposed to render any one a service: especially she did assist the burgesses' wives in difficult travail of childbirth, and was, in such cases, of all desired and highly esteemed. Now, therefore, there did happen in wise following:—

"In the night season there came a damsel to the castle gate, who knocked and distressfully called, beseeching that it should not mislike her, if possible, forthwith to arise, and to accompany her from the town, where there lay a good woman in travail of child, because the last hour and uttermost

[12] Deutsche Sagen: Herausgegeben von den Brüdern Grimm. Berlin, 1816 and 1818.

peril was already upon her, and her mistress wist no help for her life. The noblewoman said, 'It is very midnight; all the town gates be shut and well barred: how shall we make us forth?' The damsel rejoined that the gate was ready open, she should come forth only, (but beware, as do some add, in the place whither she should be conducted, to eat or to drink any thing, or to touch that should be proffered her.) Thereupon did the lady rise from her bed, dressed her, came down, and went along with the damsel which had knocked. The town gate she found open, and as they came further into a field was there a fair way which led right into a hillside. The hill stood open, and although she did well perceive that the thing was darksome, she resolved to go still on, unalarmed, until she arrived at last where was a *little wifikin* that lay on the bed, in great pains of travail. But the noble lady gave her succour, (by the report of some, *she needed no more than lay her hand upon her body*,) and a little baby was born to the light of day.

"When she had yielded her aid, desire took her to return from out the hill, home; she took leave of the sick woman, (without having any thing touched of the meats and liquors that were offered her,) and the former damsel anew joined her, and brought her back unharmed to the castle. At the gateway the damsel stood still, thanked her highly in her mistress's name, and drew off from her finger a golden ring, which she presented to the noblewoman with these words, 'Have this dear pledge in right heedful keeping, and let it not part from you and from your house. They of Alvensleben will flourish so long as they possess this ring. Should it ever leave them, the whole race must become extinct.' Herewith vanished the damsel.

"It is said that the ring, at this day, is rightly and properly kept in the lineage, and for good assurance deposited at Lubeck. But others, that it was, at the dividing of the house into two branches, diligently parted in two. Others yet, that the one half has been melted, since when it goes ill with that branch: the other half stays with the other branch at Zichtow. The story moreover goes, that the benevolent lady was a married woman. When she upon the morrow told her husband the tale of that had betid her in the night, he would not believe her, until she said, 'Forsooth, then, an' ye will not trow me, take only the key of yon room from the table: there lieth, I dare warrant, the ring.' Which was exactly so. It is marvellous the gifts that men have received of the fairies."

The most touching by far of the traditions at our disposal for illustrating at once the dependence of the fairies upon man, and their anxiety concerning their souls' welfare, is one in which the all-important hope which we have said that they sometimes solicit from the grave and authorized lips of priests, appears as floating on the lightest breath of children. Our immediate author is James Grimm, speaking in his German *Mythology* of the water spirit. The tradition itself is from Sweden, where this mythological being, the solitary water fairy, bears the name of "The *Neck*."

"Two lads were at play by the river side. The *Neck* sate and touched his harp. The children called to him—

"'Why sittest thou here, *Neck*, and playest? Thou wilt not go to heaven.' Then the *Neck* began bitterly weeping, flung his harp away, and sank in the deep water. When the boys came home they told their father, who was a priest, what had happened. The father said—

"'Ye have sinned towards the *Neck*. Go ye back, and give him promise of salvation.'

"When they returned to the river, the *Neck* sate upon the shore, mourning and weeping. The children said—

"'Weep not so, thou *Neck*. Our father hath said, that thy Redeemer too liveth.'

"Then the *Neck* took joyfully his harp, and played sweetly until long after sundown."

"I do not know," tenderly and profoundly suggests Dr Grimm, "that any where else in our traditions is as significantly expressed how needy of the Christian belief the Heathen are, and how mildly it should approach them."

III. A few words shall here satisfy the claims of a widely-stretching subject. Is there *one* order of spirits which, as the Baron Walckenaer has assured us, lavishes on chosen human heads love unattracted, and hate unprovoked? We must look well about us ere fixing the imputation. Spirits,

upon the other hand, undoubtedly there are, and those of not a few orders, fairies of one or another description being amongst them, who exert, in the choice of their human favourites, a discrimination challenging no light regard.

A host of traditions, liberally scattered over a field, of which, perhaps, Ireland is one extremity and China the other, now plainly and emphatically declare, and now, after a venturous interpretation, may be understood to point out, *simplicity of will* and *kindness of heart* as titles in the human being to the favour of the spirits. At times a brighter beam irradiates such titles, to which holiness, purity, and innocence, are seen to set their seal. We cull a few instances, warning the reader, that, although of our best, he will possibly find them a mere working upwards to the most perfect which we have it in our power to bring before him in the beautiful tale of Maud.

Amongst the searchers who seem to have been roused into activity by the German traditions of the brothers Grimm, Ludwig Bechstein takes distinguished place for the diligence with which he has collected different districts of Germany. Our inquiry shall owe him the two following

TRADITIONS OF THE GRABFELD

No. LVII. *The little Cherry-Tree upon Castle Raueneck*

"There prevails, concerning the ruins of the old hill-castle Raueneck, a quite similar tradition to that which holds of the like named ruined strength near Baden, in Austria. There lies yet buried here a vast treasure, over which a spirit, debarred from repose, keeps watch, anxiously awaiting deliverance. But who is he that can and shall actually lift this treasure and free the spirit? Upon the wall there grows a cherry seedling that shall one day become a tree; and the tree shall be cut down, and out of it a cradle made. He that, being a Sunday's child, is rocked in this cradle, will grow up, but only provided that he have kept himself virginally pure and chaste, *at some noontide hour* set free the spirit, lift the treasure, and become immeasurably rich; so as he shall be able to rebuild Castle Raueneck and all the demolished castles in the neighbourhood round. If the plant wither, or if a storm break it, then must the spirit again wait until once more a cherry stone, brought by a bird to the top of the lofty wall, shoot and put forth leaves, and haply grow to a tree."

No. LXII. *The Hollow Stone*

"In the wood near Altenstein there stands a high rock. The inhabitants of the neighbourhood say that this rock is hollow within, and filled with treasure in great store from the olden time. At certain seasons and hours, it is given *to Sunday children* to find the rock doors open, or to open them with *the lucky flower*."

The singular superstition of spiritual favour fixing itself upon the human child, consecrated, as it were, by the hallowed light upon which the eyes first open, will shortly return upon us in *The Fairies' Sabbath*.

Lo! where, from the bountiful hand of the Brothers Grimm, fall two bright dewdrop of tradition upon the pure opening flower of childhood.

GERMAN TRADITIONS

NO. CLIX. *The Treasure at Soest*

"In the time of the Thirty Years' war, there was to be seen standing not far from the town of Soest, in Westphalia, an old ruin, of which the tradition ran that there was an iron trunk there, full of money, kept by a black dog and a bewitched maiden. The grandfathers and grandmothers Who are gone, used to tell that a strange nobleman shall one day arrive in the country, deliver the maiden, and open the chest with a fiery key. They said that divers itinerant scholars and exorcists had, within the memory of man, betaken themselves thither to dig, but been in so strange sort received and dismissed, that no one since further had list to the adventure, especially after their publishing that the treasure might be lifted of none who had once taken woman's milk. It was not long since a little girl from their village had led her few goats to feed about the very spot; one of which straying amongst the ruins, she had followed it. Within, in the castle court, was a damsel who questioned her what she did there: and when she was informed, pointing to a little basket of cherries, further said, 'It is good; therefore take of that thou see'st before thee, with thy goat and all, and go; and come not again, neither look behind, that a harm befall thee not.' Upon this the frightened child caught up seven cherries, and made her way in alarm out of the ruins. The cherries turned, in her hand, to money."

NO. CLX. *The Welling Silver*

"In February of the year 1605, in the reign of Henry Julius, Duke of Brunswick, at a mile's distance from Quedlinburg, where it is called *at the Dale*, it happened that a poor peasant sent his daughter into the next shaw to pick up sticks for fuel. The girl took for this use a larger basket upon her head, and a smaller in her hand; and when she had filled them both and was going home, a mannikin clad all in white came towards her, and asked:—

"'What art carrying there?'

"'Gathered sticks,' the girl made answer, 'for heating and cooking.'

"'Empty the wood out,' said further the little manling, 'take thy basket and follow me. I shall show thee something that is better and more profitable than thy sticks.'

"He then took her by the hand, and led her back again to a knoll, and showed her a place which might be of two ordinary tables' breadth of a fair pure silver, being smaller and larger coins of a moderate thickness, with a image stamped like a Virgin Mary, and all round an impress of exceedingly old writing. As the silver *welled up*, as it were, abundantly out of the ground, the little girl was terrified and drew back, neither would she empty out the sticks from her small hand-basket. Accordingly, the little man in white himself did so, filled the basket with the money, and gave it back to the little damsel with saying, 'That shall be better for thee than thy sticks.' She was confounded and took it; but upon the mannikin's requiring that she should likewise empty out her larger basket and take silver therein, she refused and said—'That she must carry fuel home too; for there were little children at home who must have a warm room, and there must be wood ready likewise for cooking.' This contented the manling, who said, 'Well, then, go; take it all home,' and thereupon disappeared.

"The girl carried the basket of silver home, and told what had happened to her. The boors now ran flocking with pickaxes and other tools, and would have their share of the treasure, but none of them was able to find the spot where the silver had welled out.

"The Prince of Brunswick had a pound of the coined silver brought him, as did moreover a burgess of Halberstadt, N. Everkan, purchase the like."

The quick-sighted reader will not easily have missed detecting the sudden effect produced upon the two spirits by the truthful right-mindedness of the two little girls.

Correspondingly, James Grimm, from surveying collectively the Teutonic traditions of bewitched or mysteriously hidden treasure, says—

"To the lifting of the treasure is required *silence* and *innocence*. * * * Innocent children's hands are able to lay hold upon it, as to draw the lot. * * * Who has viciously stained himself cannot approach it."[13]

Two short instances more from the copious fraternal collection, and we have done. With a temper of pure childlike antiquity, they express in the persons of the dwarfs—*Teutonic approximative, fairies*—the sympathy of the spirits with unstained and innocent human manners; and may, if the traditions which exhibit the fairies under a cloud of sin and sorrow should have been felt by the reader as at all grating upon his old love of them, help to soothe and reconcile him by a soft gleam of illumination, here lingering as in a newly revealed Golden Age of his own.

GERMAN TRADITIONS

No. CXLVII. *The Dwarfs upon the Tree*

"In the summer, the dwarfs often came trooping from the cliffs down into the valley, and joined either with help, or as lookers-on at least, the human inhabitants at their work, especially the mowers, in hay-harvest. They, then and there, seated themselves at their ease and pleasantly, upon the long and thick arm of a maple in the embowering shade. But once there came certain evil-disposed persons, who, in the night, sawed the bough through, so that it held but weakly on to the trunk; and when the unsuspecting creatures, upon the morrow, settled themselves down upon it, the bough cracked in two, the dwarfs tumbled to the ground, were heartily laughed at, fell into violent anger, and cried aloud—

'O, how is the heaven high and long!
And falsehood waxen on earth so strong!
Here to-day, and for ever away!'

They kept their word, and never again made their appearance in the country."

No. CXLVIII. *The Dwarfs upon the Crag Stone*

"It was the wont of the dwarflings to seat themselves upon a great crag stone, and from thence to watch the haymakers; but a few mischievous fellows kindled a fire upon the stone, made it red-hot, and swept away embers and ashes. Morning came, and with it the tiny folk, who burned themselves pitiably. They exclaimed in high anger—

'O wicked world! O wicked world!'

cried vengeance, and vanished for evermore!"

We have shown,—1. The Anti-christian character imputed by tradition to the fairies. 2. The occasional dependence of the more powerful spirits upon the less powerful human beings; and, 3. The strong affectionate leaning in the will of the spirits towards moral human excellence. Of the *ability*

[13] Grimm's German Mythology, p. 544.

which, in virtue of this excellence, the human creature possesses *to help*, Maud must, for the present, be permitted to stand for the sole, as she is beyond all comparison our best, example.

The book of Ernst Willkomm takes a position in strong contrast to the corresponding works due to the Brothers Grimm, and other great gatherers of legendary lore. He has a personal poetic interest in the tales which they have not. He presents himself as the expositor, not only of his native superstitions, but also, zealously, of the Upper Lusatian manners. Himself cradled amongst the mountains, he has drawn with infinite pains, and by slow degrees, as he best could, from the deep interior life of the people, their jealously withheld credences, and the traditions which are sacredly associated with every nook of their craggy district.

"The tract of country," says Willkomm in his Preface, "the true Highlands of Upper Lusatia, called by the inhabitants themselves the Upper Country, to which the tales are native, is one very narrowly circumscribed. It amounts to scarcely ten square (German) miles. I have, however, selected it for my undertaking," he continues, "because it is intimately familiar to me; because the innermost character of the small population who inhabit it is confidentially known to me; because there is hardly a road or a path in the country which, on the darkest night, I could not find. Interesting, romantic, magnificent is the piece of earth which, at the confines of Bohemia, runs over hilly heights and lofty hill, tops on to the high mountain-chain. But still more interesting, I maintain with confidence, is the race of people."

It may seem strange at first, that the wise and profound explorers whom we have so often had occasion to cite, the brothers Grimm, should have failed to present us with any traditions from a corner of ground around which they have so successfully laboured. We have hinted already at the sufficient reason of the blank. Willkomm tells us, that the rest of the world, which "the cabin'd cribb'd" Lusatian has himself learned to call "*o' th' outside*," has taken no cognisance of his beautiful hill country. Lusatia has a literature of her own, and no one is acquainted with it. "She had, and partly still has, her own, similar to the Imperial cities, exceeding free and energetic municipal constitution." But no one cares about it. Celebrated and learned historians, questioned by Willkomm on the subject, have acknowledged their ignorance in regard to the character and laws of its small people. A more cogent reason, however, lies nearer home, in the impenetrable reserve and self-insulation of the mountaineers themselves. Willkomm confesses that their coldness towards strangers is unparalleled; they have no confidence whatever in foreigners; "and let a Lusatian but suspect," he says, "that you come a-fishing to him, and to listen out his privacies; then may you," as we may render the Lusatian proverb, "'Lose yourself before you find his mushroom.'" He will communicate to strangers little of his manners and customs; of his superstitious practices, his sacredly guarded traditions, absolutely nothing. "He is unpliant, self-sequestered, coarse-grained; beyond all conception easy and phlegmatic."

Every genuine people, however, is rough-handed; and Willkomm proceeds, after an ingenuous description of their defects, to vindicate the natural heart of his brother highlanders. "Let him amongst the gentle," he proudly exclaims, "who desire to hear for once something novel, something right vigorous, sit down beside me. He need not fear that morals and decency will be cast out of doors. No, no! The people are thoroughly moral and chaste at heart, if they are somewhat coarse in expression; —ay, and tender withal. Their imagination glides as delighted along fragrant threads of gold, as it eagerly descends amongst the powers of darkness, amidst the dance of will-o'-the-wisps and horrible ghost-reels. They are, at once, a blunt, good-hearted, aboriginal stamp of men, with all the advantages and deficiencies appurtenant."

The Lusatian traditions, brought to light in Germany by Ernst Willkomm, and now first made known to Englishmen in these pages, were collected by our author, as we have already observed, with difficulty and labour. A native only of the mountain district could obtain from the lips of the people their sacred and well-preserved lore, and even he not easily. The tales were narrated from time to time in the spinning-room, or in the so-called "*Hell*" of the boor or weaver, without any determinate connexion. The listener gathered mere fragments, and these not fully, when, thrown off

his guard, he ventured to interrupt the speaker. Each narrator conceives his tale differently, and one individual is apt to garnish the experience of many, or what he has heard from others, with a little spice of his own invention. Further, the details of ten or twelve occurrences are associated with one single spot; all of which appear externally different, and yet internally are connected closely, "so that when comprehended in one whole picture, and not till then, they form what, in a strict and literary sense, we are accustomed to call a Tradition or Tale. I, at least," adds Ernst Willkomm, "in such an upgathering of these disjointed tones of tradition, could only accomplish something that satisfied me by searching out the profound hidden meaning of the people's poesy: and I have at last gone no further than attempting to compose these detached fragments of tradition, Lusatianwise and popularwise, from the people's own telling, into a whole. Upon this scheme only could alike the poetical worth of the tales, and the portraiture of the race, be rescued and rightly secured."

That the traditions have been rescued and maintained in their purity and truth; coloured, no doubt, in the telling, and that unavoidably, under the pencil of their educated renderer—we have every reason to believe from internal evidences. Maintaining their own originality, they correspond in the main to the traditions which come to us from almost every known country on the globe, concurring to attest the intimate and necessary relation of the human soul with what would seem to be the remnants of an ancient and universal mythology. They bear upon their front the minute impress of reality, not to be mistaken, and beyond the mere invention of the poet. They are a valuable addition to the common stock. The style of Willkomm is clear, and to the point; almost always, as he says, in characterizing the speech of his own Upper Lusatians, "hitting the nail upon the head." It breathes of his own mountain air, and possesses a charm, a vigour, and freshness, which we fear that we shall endeavour in vain to transfer to the following version:—

THE FAIRIES' SABBATH

"Children born of a Sunday, and bastards, inherit the gift, denied to other human beings, of beholding spirits, of talking with them, and, if opportunity befriend, of right intimately communing with them. This was a truth experienced by pretty Maud, the stone-mason's only daughter, who, a hundred years ago or so, led, at the foot of the mountain-ridge yonder, a quiet home-loving life. Maud was born, of all days in the year, upon Easter Sunday, which is said to be a truly lucky day for a mortal not otherwise heavily burdened with earthly blessings. In this last respect, Maud had no reasonable cause of complaint; for her father, by the labour of his hands, painfully earned just as much as went to a frugal housekeeping, and the mother kept the little family in order; so that things looked always neat and clean enough in the abode of the stone-mason.

"All Sunday's children are very wise, and, if they are maidens, always uncommonly beautiful. Maud was, as a child, admired by every body; nay, it once went so far, as that a rich and beautiful, but very sickly-looking, lady of quality, who was travelling over the mountain in a fine carriage, tried hard to coax the poor mother out of her pretty Maud with a large sum of gold. When the maiden had fairly stepped out of child's shoes, and was obliged to seek employment away from home, there was a mighty ado. It was for all the world as if a fairy was going through the place, when Maud, early in the morning, strolled along the banks of the murmuring stream on her road to a wealthy weaver's. The young fellows saluted the fair one as they greeted no other. No one ventured, however, to accost her with unseemly speeches—a kind of thing, by the way, that young men at all times are very prone to. Maud was treated by every one like a saint. Maidens even, her equals in years, prized her highly; and in no way envied her the general admiration. This might be founded in the behaviour itself of Maud. More forward to oblige, to do good offices, more sweetly behaved, was no one. And then she had such a grace with it all, so innocent an eye, that when you looked into it, heaven itself seemed to shine out upon you. In short, whoever spoke with Maud, or might walk a few steps with her, that man was for the whole day another and a happier creature, and whatever he undertook prospered with him.

"It would have been strange indeed had such a maiden lacked suitors, or not very early found a sympathizing heart. Now, as for the suitors, there was no dearth of them, Heaven knows! for there were youngsters of the queerest fashion. Many without manners, though right well to look at; others wealthy, but without heart or soul; and others again ready to burst with rage, if any one but touched his hat to the beautiful Matilda. To all such, the innocent child had not a word to say; for she knew well enough, that scant blessing waits on marriages of such a make. There was but one young fellow who could be said to please her thoroughly, and he was neither rich nor singularly handsome. She had become acquainted with him at the weaver's, where he, like herself, went daily to work. Albert was industrious, well-behaved, and spoke so sensibly and right-heartedly, that Maud ever listened to him with delight. Truth to tell, he simply put her own feelings into words. A very little time passed, before she engaged herself secretly to Albert; and all would have gone on happily and well with them, had the two lovers but possessed just money enough to scrape a few matters together, and to set up housekeeping. But both were poor—poor as church mice; and, just for that reason, the father of Maud did not look very favourably upon the settled love-affair of his daughter. He would have been better satisfied if the silly thing, as he called her, had given her hand to one of the rich suitors, who would have given their ears to please her. Since, however, once for all, the mischief was done, he, like a good man, determined to cause his only child no heartache, and let matters get on as they might. One condition only he insisted upon—which was, that Maud should for the future work under her father's roof; Albert, meanwhile, having leave every evening to pay his visits there. In this arrangement the two lovers cordially acquiesced; for, young as they were, they could well afford a little waiting. Meantime, it must be their endeavour, by incessant labour and careful economy, to save up as much as they needed for setting themselves up in their humble dwelling. So they lived on from day to day in quiet content. And so, no doubt, many days, and many, would have glided by, had not a singular occurrence disturbed the profound tranquillity. This was the way of it:—

"Maud's father, the stone-mason, found it too much for him, with his heavy work and all, when, at noon, he had the long journey to make between the stone quarry and his own home. Besides, the fine stone-dust had brought on an inflammation of the eyes, so that he was obliged to avoid the glare of the sun: no easy thing for him to do, since his road homeward lay over a green high hill, upon which the sun beat scorchingly: wherefore, also, the people have given it the name of the Sun's hill. It was made, in consequence, Maud's duty to take daily her father's homely dinner to the stone quarry —a road which, although toilsome, was by no means disagreeable to her; inasmuch as Albert often found means to get leave of absence, and then always escorted her a part of the way.

"Over the Sun's hill nobody went willingly alone, either by day or by night; for the tale ran, that to many persons wondrous things had happened. Some had even caught, they said, their death-sickness there. True it is, any more definite report was not easily obtained. Only so much had Maud heard from her mother, that the Good People were said, a very, very long time ago, to have vanished into the green hill; just when, in all the places around, so many churches had sprung up, and the sound of bells rang over mountain and wood. These reports notwithstanding, Maud, unconscious of evil, took her daily walk over the Sun's hill, where indeed no one ever encountered her; so that the splendid landscape looked often desolate and awful in the hot midday's glow.[14] For this reason it was always a great relief to her, when, from the top of the steep hill, she saw Albert ascending towards her. She then felt herself more secure, and went with better spirits forward. It was near Whitsuntide —the father sickly and more peevish than ever, and work bringing in no supply; for provisions had risen fearfully in price in consequence of the previous unusually hard winter. Now, as often as Maud brought the dinner to her father, he complained bitterly, and reproached her harshly for her folly; so that the poor child was almost heartbroken, pined, and led a melancholy life.

[14] "–his lookDrew audience and attention, still as nightOr Summer's noontide air."—Paradise Lost. Book II.

"She most deeply felt her trouble, when at noon she took her lonely journey along the desolate path that led to the quarry. Then she often shed the bitterest tears, and prayed to God to show her an outlet, and to have pity on their poverty.

"One day—it was just a week to Whitsun-eve—it happened that as she went upon her way, silently and in sorrow, and in vain looked for the beloved figure of Albert, she suddenly heard such a marvellously clear sound of a bell that she stood still to hearken. It was upon the mid summit of the Sun's hill; the air perfectly calm, and around, far and near, not a creature to be seen. From the distant hamlet in the valley clinked only the sharp tones of the whetting scythe. Maud believed that she had had a ringing in her ears, and walked on. The singular sound was repeated, resembling the tone exactly of a small silver bell.

"'How strange it is!' said the maiden to herself, casting her eyes upon the ground; and in the soft moss, right at her feet, she perceived something glistening like a fragment of blue glass. She stooped and picked up what in colour and shape resembled a blue harebell, or, as it is called, *Fairy's hat*; only, where the stalk should have been, there was a so small and elegantly-wrought little silver bell, that Maud could not help laughing outright.

"'Bless me!' she exclaimed, 'who can have made that comical thing?' and thereupon she shook the flower, and the wee little bell began to sound so prodigiously clear, that the poor damsel let it fall, affrighted.

"'What are thy commands?' asked immediately a slender bright voice. Before her stood a delicate creature, not higher than her hand; but of a symmetry of person that was perfectly astonishing. His small expressive head, round which a grove of curls, like crisped sunbeams, played, was just of a size, that the flower with the wondrous bell served it for a covering. For Maud saw how he put on the sparkling hat with much gravity, and at the same time, very knowingly, giving himself a right bold and dandy appearance.

"'What are you then?' asked Maud trembling.

"The little fellow made a smart bow, 'Thy servant, with thy good leave,' replied the strange being. 'I and my people have known thee a long time. We have heard thy complainings; and because thou hast a kind heart, and lovest the flowers, and dost not wantonly pull them to pieces, am I charged to do thee a pleasure, provided thou wilt do the like for me and my people.'

"'Indeed! you pretty little original!' answered Maud, 'who are thy people? I'–

"'Hush!' interrupted the little one, with a repelling gesture of the hand and a very impressive contraction of the brow. 'These are questions which I cannot answer, and, what is more, cannot suffer. It is not civil to put questions of the whence and the what. If thou wilt trust me, and I should think that I have the air of a proper gentleman, then resolve without delay whether thou wilt do me a pleasure for a reasonable compensation.'

"'Dear little sir!' replied Maud, overcome, 'I am not mistrustful, but so beset and afflicted that I really do not know how I am to understand this strange business. Do not make sport of me, good child; or, if thou art a spirit, I beseech thee have compassion on me, and let me go my way in peace. My father is waiting for me. His little bit of dinner is drying in the heat of the sun.'

"'Silly prattle!' interrupted the little one. 'Thy old father lies under the rock side, and snores till the fern leaves waggle over him. The good man's dinner will not take much harm. However, that thou mayest see how good and honourable my intentions are, take thou my little cap. Be it the pledge which I shall redeem from thee with a compensation. Only resolve quickly now whether thou wilt trust me. My time is short.'

"Maud hesitated still. She held the miraculous cap with its silver bell in her hand. The desire to get rid of the *uncanny* creature the sooner the better, and also, perhaps, a particle of female curiosity wrung from her her consent.

"'Good!' said the little one in great glee. 'Now, hear me! This day week, upon Whitsun-eve, as ye call it, do thou come here in the evening, as soon as the moon has mounted this green hill. Be not

afraid; for only good will befall thee. As soon as thou hast reached this spot, ring with the little bell which I have given thee; and thou wilt not repent having been serviceable to the good people.'

"Scarcely had the little man given Maud her direction, when the astonished maiden remarked that the ground before her feet flashed like molten gold, sunk deeper and deeper, and in this glowing gulf the extraordinary being vanished, like a silver star. The whole phenomenon lasted only a few seconds, then every thing was again at rest as before. The little bell-flower only assured Matilda that she did not dream, and that something unusual had really taken place.

"Possessed with her feelings, she took her father his meal; and found him, in sooth, fast asleep under the wall of rock. Of her adventure she said nothing, but carried the pledge of the little man well secured in her bosom. And yet how was it possible for her to persevere in her silence? It is true, Maud knew not if the communication of the incident was permitted her. She put her trust, however, in the pledge; and, since she had not been commanded to silence, she hoped to be justified in making Albert acquainted with what had happened.

"She did it with fear and trembling, and produced to her astonished lover, as witness, the flower which had withered in the warmth of her bosom. Singularly enough, let her shake it as often as she would, the little bell could not be made to ring.

"'And you really mean to go?' asked Albert, when he had a little recovered from his surprise. 'I should like to see you! To get flirting with ghosts and hobgoblins, or whatever else the devils may be. No! go you don't. You will throw that stupid thing into the running stream. *There* it won't hurt you; and upon that confounded Sun's hill you will please never to set foot more.'

"'I have given my word, Albert; and I must keep my word let what will happen.'

"'Very well,' said the youngster, 'that's enough! Then every thing's at an end between us—clean at an end!'

"'How you take on now! For whom else, but for you, have I accepted this pledge? For whom else have I so long endured—so long borne my father's upbraidings? Dost thou think that, had I wished it, I could not long since have wedded? And is it my fault that I am a Sunday's child? Is it not said that all Sunday's children are born to good-luck? If you hinder me from keeping my word with this miraculous being—and the luck that is decreed me is meanwhile scattered to all the four winds—you may settle it with the spirit and face his anger; for I wash my hands in innocency.'

"Maud began to cry, kissed the shrunken leaf, and hid it again in her bosom. Albert was not at ease. He was annoyed at the untoward encounter, a touch of jealousy disquieted and distressed his soul, and yet he could not say that the girl was in the wrong. At length he said, dispiritedly—

"'Go through with your folly then. I will, however, be near you, and if the moon-spun rascal takes improper liberties, I will snap his neck, though mine too should crack for it.'

"For the first time in his life, Albert parted with Maud in an ill-humour, and the poor girl herself passed a bad and restless night.

"'Mother,' said Maud a few days afterwards, whilst she was getting the father's dinner ready for her, 'did you ever see a fairy?'

"'God forbid, girl!' cried the worthy and somewhat timid woman, crossing herself. 'How came that into thy head? What hast thou to do with fairies and elves, dwarfs and wights? A good Christian has no business with such things of nothing, or worse.'

"'Why, aunt Nelly was telling the other day such surprising stories of the people!' Matilda replied; 'but she did not drop a hint of our having reason to fear any harm from them. She even called them the good people.'

"'Daughter!' the mother seriously rejoined, 'we call them so that they may do us no mischief. It is safer for us to leave them quite alone.'

"'Can it be true, mother, that they have buried themselves under the Sun's hill, and keep house and home there? Aunt Nelly would have it that in the still of the night, by bright moonlight, you may hear them singing wonderful tunes.'

"The mother fixed her eyes upon Maud, set the old man's morsel of food upon the hearth stone, and, taking her daughter by the hand, led her to the stove, and seated her upon the family bench.

"'Listen!' she said, 'and take thou heed to my words. The good people, or the fairies, which is their proper name, although they do not like to be called so, do indeed live, though few have the gift of beholding them, in all the mountains and valleys round about. Very, very seldom, and only upon the most extraordinary occasions, do they ever show themselves. When they do, it betokens luck to him that sees them, and brings it, if he quietly fulfill their wishes. These are certainly often out of the way, just like the people, who are strange and incomprehensible enough. Thank Goodness, they never crossed my path! but your godmother Helen, she had many, many years ago, a curious adventure with the fairies.'

"'Really, mother! Aunt Nelly spoken to the fairies! O pray, dear mother, tell me quickly and fully the whole story!'

"'First run to the quarry, and take your father his dinner,' said the mother. 'I will try in the meanwhile to remember all about it; and if you will promise me to say not a word to any one—not even to your godmother, you shall hear what your aunt told me at that time.'

"Maud very naturally promised every thing, took herself off, and was back again as quickly as possible. She did not loiter for a moment upon the road, did not even notice the signals which her Albert made as he came towards her from the distance. She could think only of her mother's story.

"'Here I am again, mother!' she said breathless. 'I call that running! I should say that the king's trained runners could do no better. But now begin, dear mother. I will listen to you as if you were saying mass.'

"'As well as I can remember,' proceeded the mother, 'the case of the fairies is a very singular one. Your godmother Helen disclosed to me, it is true, just the chief particulars only; but they were quite enough to let you understand something of the good people. They told her that, once in every fifty or a hundred years, they have a kind of church meeting, which from old time they call a Sabbath. For you must know, child, that the fairies are properly Jews,[15] right down old chaffering Jews, from *Olim's* time.'[16]

"'O bless me! Jews!' cried Maud, frightened out of her wits.

"'Yes, yes, Jews and nothing else,' repeated the mother warmly; 'and that's the very reason why, up to this day, they are so given to trafficking in precious stones, pearls, gold, silver, and artful jewellery. And when they give themselves a holiday, they go running about above-ground, making presents to new-born babies if they are very lovely, and playing all kinds of odd pranks. According to your godmother Helen, the history of the fairies runs thus:—The whole people, and their name is legion, were formerly in heaven.'

"'In heaven!' cried Maud, interrupting her mother, 'then why didn't the silly creatures stay there? Where else do they hope to be more snug and comfortable than in heaven! seated under the fur-cap of father Abraham!'

"'How you prate!' said the mother, checking her. 'If you do not instantly tie up your tongue, and think more respectfully of the good people, I shall not tell you another syllable.'

"'O pray! I will be quite quiet!'

"'Very well. Then the fairies were a long while ago in heaven,' continued the mother. 'At that time they were part of the angelic host, were fine handsome people, went about in glittering robes, and sat at God's right hand. Now, it befell that the chief angel of all got dissatisfied with the old management of affairs in heaven, stirred up discontent, tampered with the half of all the angels, and

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[15] The fairies themselves hardly can have imparted to godmother Helen the two irreconcilable derivations of their order: that they were Jews, and that they were fallen angels. But the poet dramatically joins, upon the mother's lip, the two current traditions. With her, fallen angel and Jew are synonymous, as being both opposed to the faith of the cross.

[16] Who is this unknown Olim? Our old friend perchance, the Latin adverb, "*Olim*," *of yore*—gradually slipped from the mouths of scholars into the people's, and risen in dignity as it descended.

tried, with their help, to thrust out the old rightful Master of heaven and earth from his bright throne. But it fared with him as it does with most rebels, and rightly should with all. Our Father, in his glory, got the better of Satan, took him by the hair of his head, and pitched him head-foremost out of heaven into the pit of darkness, and his whole sharkish band of retainers after him. Amongst these, however, a good many had given ear to his fine tales, and had followed him thoughtlessly, although they were not properly wicked at heart. They repented their hasty work, even whilst they were falling deeper and deeper into gloom. They put up a prayer of repentance to their Lord, and implored his forgiveness; and because God saw that they were not rotten at the core, he hearkened to their petition, and rescued them out of the claws of Satan. But since they were not worthy to be received into heaven again, the Lord banished them back to the earth, with leave given them to dwell either within it, or in upper air, upon the hills and rocks. You must know that, during their fall, a surprising change had gone on in the transgressors. They had kept their forms of light—dwindled in size, however, immensely. And since they could not now become men,[17] and had fooled away their celestial bliss, the Lord granted them a clear field, with power, until the last day, to make themselves worthy by good deeds of being re-admitted into heaven. And thus they have their abodes all about the open hills and the meadow flats; and only once in every fifty or a hundred years, upon Whitsun-eve, are they permitted, in their own way, to keep the Sabbath. And then they can only do it by loading a truly good human being with the blessings of fortune. For thus only can they hope to expiate their great offence in the sight of Heaven.'

"'And did godmother Helen hear this from the good people themselves?' asked Maud, as her mother ceased. 'Was she, then, lucky?'

"'No,' said the mother, 'Nelly was not lucky, because she did not observe the commandment of the fairies.'

"'Well, if one of the creatures came to me, and should lay a command upon me, I would keep a quiet tongue within my head, and do readily what he wished.'

"'Foolish chatter!' said the mother chidingly. 'Thou dost offend the quiet people with thy empty babbling for they can hear every thing that human lips utter.'

"Maud went singing to her work, and long mused upon her timid mother's narrative. What she had heard filled her with so eager a curiosity that she could scarcely wait for Whitsun-eve, although she took care to let no one observe it. From time to time she stole a glance at her bell-flower, tried to make it ring with shaking, but failed to bring, by any means, one sound from the delicate little bell.

"With a longing dread, Maud saw the promised Whitsun-eve draw near. It was not easy to leave the parental roof at nightfall. The enamoured maiden, however, found a becoming excuse which placed a few hours at her disposal. She went her way with the fairy cap in her bosom, ascended the green summit of the Sun's hill, now glimmering in the moonlight, and drew from its hiding-place the pledge that had been entrusted to her. As if by a miracle, the little flower, touched by the moon's silvery glow, expanded in an instant. Almost spontaneously it began to oscillate in her hand, and shrill and clear the little bell rang, so that it resounded into the adjacent wood, whence a soft echo melodiously responded.

"The voice of Albert, who with vigorous strides was ascending the hill to look close after the adventure of his beloved, reached her ear. But the senses of Matilda were engrossed by the fairies, and to his repeated calls she gave no answer. And she had good reason. For scarcely had the little bell rung, when a flash, like a sparkling snake, darted here and there upon the grass, and out of the quivering light there arose a small and exceedingly beautiful creature, whom Maud immediately recognised for the lord of the bell-flower. The little fellow was in Spanish costume. He wore a doublet of sky-blue butterflies' wings, over which dropped a magnificent lace collar woven of the gossamer. The delicate feet were covered with transparent shoes, made of dew-drops.

[17] *Sic.*

"Maud stood mute with astonishment, as well at the tiny smallness of the fairy, as at his truly classical beauty. The little creature was, in his way, a perfect Adonis.

"'Now, my trembler, art thou resolute to follow me?' whispered the fairy in a note that came to her like a note of the harmonicon. 'Restore me the pledge, for we have no time to lose.'

"Maud gave back the bell-flower; the elf seized it in his little diaphanous alabaster floral hands, waved it three times round his dazzling head, so that the little bell sent a peal round the hills, and then threw it upon the ground. It dilated immediately, took the shape of a galley with masts and yards, although no larger than the moon's disk as we see it from the earth. In the same instant the elf sat in the little vessel, which trembled at every step, drew a rush from his girdle, and steered with it in the air.

"'Now, come, step in!' he called to Maud.

"'In that!' exclaimed the maiden astounded. 'Heaven love you, there's hardly room for my two feet! Besides, it will tear under me like a poppy-leaf, for I verily believe it is made of mere air.'

"'Spare your remarks, Miss Pert!' returned the fairy, 'and step in. I pledge my honour, and will give up my hope of salvation, if this bark of our master's do not carry thee safely over half the earth ball in less than no time.'

"It might be that Maud now stood under the mysterious power of a spell, or that she was urged by an invincible curiosity. Enough: she placed her feet in the quaking gondola, which swelled aloft like an air-balloon until it reached the maiden's shoulders. Now the ground sank away, and Matilda's senses failed her in the dizzy speed with which she was hurried down into the bowels of the earth. At this precise moment Albert reached the top of the hill. He had only the pleasure of looking after them, and hardly that; for it appeared to him as if every thing about him was immersed in a sea of azure so resplendently clear, that he was for several minutes robbed of his sight.

"From the magical slumber into which the child had fallen during her descent into the kingdom of the fairies, she was awakened by a witching harmony of sounds. She opened her eyes, and observed, with not a little wonder, that she was lying upon a bed or mat, or whatsoever else it might be called, of costly emerald. Over her head nodded marvellous flowers of the most glowing colours; butterflies, of unseen splendour, flitted on cooling pinions around her couch, and fanned her with an air so sweet, so invigorating, that the maiden had never breathed before with such delight. But with all the magnificence, all the spirit and splendour, every thing was quite other than upon the sunny earth above. The flowers and herbs glittered indeed; but they seemed to be juiceless, and looked as if formed of crystal. Even the butterflies had a peculiar motion, like that of an involuntary sleepwalker. Only the harmonious strains, which now rang louder and louder, more and more ravishing, were so ecstatic, so inviting to joyous devotion, that Maud would fain have shouted aloud for joy; but she felt that she could not speak, could not cry out, and sight, touch, and hearing, were more alive than ever.

"Thus she lay for some time motionless, pleasingly intent upon the nodding flowers, the swarming butterflies. At length the winged multitude dispersed, and two slender fairy-forms approached her bed and beckoned her to arise and follow them.

"Maud arose; and the fairies, who hardly reached up to her knee, taking her between them, conducted her through a gate of mother-of-pearl into an illimitable space, through which throng of countless millions of elves confusedly moved. The converse of these semi-spirits sounded in the distance harmonious, like perfect music. Notwithstanding the immense multitude, there was nothing of tumult, nothing of uproar. They stood all in the finest concord, and bent, waving their flower-caps gracefully, towards the abashed, astonished maiden. It bewildered Maud to see that not only overhead arched a star-bespangled sky, but likewise underneath her feet the same solemn starry splendour was revealed, as if the slight fairy people walked, between two heavens, upon the milkwhite vapour which rolled on under them like clouds. Every fairy had on glass or crystal shoes, if that which they wore on their feet might be so called. It is, however, possible that the exquisitely made limbs of these perplexing beings only deluded the eyes of the poor girl with such an appearance.

"Nearly in the middle of the immeasurable arena rose a temple of gold, silver, and precious stones, which, with its lofty pillars reaching to the sky, was emblazoned in so wondrous a light, that, notwithstanding the extreme refulgence, it did not dazzle. Within this, upon a ceaselessly revolving sun-orb, stood the most beautiful and tallest of the fairies. In her golden hair gleamed stars. Joy and ecstasy radiated like a glory from her lovely pale face, and vapoury raiment concealed, but as with a breath, her incomparable figure. Towards her pressed the innumerable host; for the sublime creature might be the priestess of the united elfin race. Maud was carried forwards with them, that she might be a witness of the singular worship that was here solemnized. Not a word was spoken, no hymn was sung; there was but a looking-up of supplication, of trustfulness, in which all the fairies, turning round upon their sparkling little feet, took part. After a few minutes a joyful expression in the countenance of the worshippers proclaimed the happy issue of the Sabbath. The stars of the upper sky shot down like silver spangles, and hung suspended in the luminous hair of the fairies, giving them the appearance of carrying dancing lights on their heads. A loud, melodious, strain of rejoicing thrilled through the vast room. The radiant structure heaved and sank. Overhead a verdurous canopy of leaves vaulted itself; the elves, entwining arms and legs, flew in a lightning whirl around the high priestess and the dazzled Maud, who, unawares, had come close upon the lovely fairy.

"In a little while the slender body-chain of elves gave way; they grouped themselves into numberless rows; every one took off the star from his head, and, tripping up, deposited it at the feet of the priestess, where they at length all united in composing themselves into a great gold-bright sphere, exactly resembling that upon which the high, officiating fairy had been borne round in the temple.

"The elfin now extended her hand to Maud and said—

"'We thank thee for the readiness with which thou hast followed my messenger into this our hidden kingdom. Thou hast, by thy presence, prospered our Sabbath festival. Receive, for thy reward, the gratitude of all the fairies; and bear with thee this gift in remembrance of this day.'

"So speaking, she plucked the coronal of stars from her hair, stretched it out with both her hands, and hung it upon the head and neck of Matilda.

"'Whenever thou art in trouble,' she continued, 'think of the good people; pull one of these stars, throw it in the air by the light of the moon, and whatsoever thou wishest, provided it be lawful, shall be granted thee.'

"Maud would have stammered forth her thanks, but she felt herself still powerless to speak. A kiss of the fairy upon her forehead was the signal for breaking up. The good people once more waved their caps. The gondola floated by, Maud mounted it, and, as quickly as she had descended, was lifted up upon the earth again.

"'There!' said the little pilot fairy, tying the supple rudder about the wrist of Maud, 'that is my wedding gift to you and Albert. Give him the half of it if he pouts; and—have a care—no blabbing!'

"With that the gondola dissolved like a cloud in the air. The fairy vanished; and Maud lay alone upon the fragrant dewy grass of the Sun's hill.

"Still all-amazed at what had happened, and not yet come rightly to herself, she slowly rose, intending to go home. It was then she perceived Albert, who, with folded arms, was staring wildly and savagely into the wood below. Matilda coughed.

"'Why where, in the name of all that is holy, have you been dancing to?' was the not very tender greeting of her lover. 'I saw you standing there as I came up the hill; and then lightning and streams of fire were all about me, and here I have been full five minutes, running about in all directions, without being able to find a trace of you.'

"'Only five minutes!' exclaimed Maud; 'that is extraordinary!'

"'Yes; and, no offence to you, not altogether right,' answered Albert. 'Did I not beg of you to wait for me?'

"'That you might wring the fairy's neck for him?' said the maiden, laughing. 'Set yourself at ease, Albert; it is much better as it is.'

"'What is?' screamed the youngster.

"'Never mind! It is all done now; and indeed, dear boy, we shall neither of us repent it. Come, let us go home.'

"'O ho!—*dear boy!*—Mighty wise and patronizing truly!'

"'Well, then, good Albert,' said Matilda coaxingly; 'only come away, and don't be angry. In four weeks we shall be married.'

"'In fo—ur wee—eeks!' stuttered Albert.

"'Yes, and in three, if you like it better,' prated the overjoyed Maud. 'The good people,' she added, almost inaudibly, 'have enabled us to marry. Therefore behave pretty, be quiet, and don't quarrel—or else—'*every thing is at an end between us—clean at an end!*' Don't you know that I am a Sunday's child, and am under the especial protection of these kind, little, powerful creatures?'

"The jealous youth followed the maiden with reluctance. Whilst he walked, murmuring in an under-tone at her side, he noticed by the light of the full moon something flickering in Matilda's hair. He examined it more closely, and then stood still.

"'What new fashion do you call that?' he asked in a voice of chagrin. 'The idea of hanging dried mushrooms in one's hair! If you will only walk with that finery by daylight down to the brook, the children will run after you, and point at you with their finger.'

"'Mushrooms!' replied Maud. 'Why, where are your eyes again?'

"'Well, I suppose you don't mean to call them silver crowns? Thank Heaven, my eyes are good enough yet to see the difference between dried funguses and coined money!'

"'They are glittering stars, sir,' said Maud, short and decided.

"'O indeed!' returned Albert. 'Well, then, the next time I would recommend you to select some that shine rather brighter.'

"The lovers had, in the meanwhile, reached the hut of the stone-mason. Albert entered with Matilda. The father lay asleep by the stove. The mother turned her spinning-wheel.

"'Good-evening, mother!" said Albert. 'Have the goodness to tell that conceited girl there, that her headgear is the most miserable that ever was seen.'

"'What!' said the old lady wondering, and with a shake of the head. 'Maud has no other gear that I see, but her own beautiful hair, which may God long preserve to her!'

"Instead of giving any answer, Albert would have set the daughter before her mother's eyes. But Maud had already, in the doorway, pulled off the fairy's gift, and turned pale as she saw that she had actually worn dried mushrooms on a string, twisted of withered rushes. Albert observed her perplexity, and laughed. He bantered her, and snatched two or three mushrooms from the chain, to hoard up for future sport. This was the token of their reconciliation. Maud, although very calmly, assured her lover, over and over again, that within a month their nuptials should take place. That the tired old man might not be disturbed, Albert went home early; and Maud hastened to put carefully away, for a while, the very meagre-looking fairy gifts.

"On the following morning, Albert was off betimes to his work. Putting on his jacket, he heard something chinking within. His surprise was naturally great, knowing that he had no money there. He dived at once into his pocket, and drew out two large old gold pieces. Then he suddenly remembered, that the evening before he had pocketed the mushrooms which he had snatched away from Maud, and the most extravagant joy possessed him. He forgot his work and every thing else; started off, and ran, as fast as his legs could carry him, to the house of the stone-mason.

"Maud stood at the brook, before the door, washing her small white hands in the clear stream.

"'Good-morrow, dear Maud, and a thousand blessings on thy sweet head!' cried Albert to her, as he came running. 'Look, look, how thy mushrooms have changed! If the others turn out as well, I am afraid that, after all, I must forgive that little shrimp that was so killingly polite to you!'

"'Delightful! delightful!' exclaimed Matilda, gazing at the gold pieces. 'Mine have not changed yet—but that doesn't matter; for in the night, a little rush band, with which the fairy steered me into

his kingdom of wonders, has bloomed into precious pearls and brilliants, and two sparkling wreaths are now lying upstairs in my drawer.'

"Joyful surprise choked Albert's words in his throat; but Maud drew him on, and displayed to him her glories from the fairy world.

"'Let us leave nothing undone that may help our luck. Do you take the little wreath for the present. Such is the wish of the mysterious being, who required my attendance at the Fairies' Sabbath.'

"Albert received the gift with a softened heart. He begged Maud's forgiveness of his fault; she granted it willingly, and before four weeks had passed by, the lovers were man and wife.

"Of her adventure on Whitsun-eve, Maud never spoke. So much the more had her godmother Helen to say about it; for it was not difficult to guess that the fairies had had their prospering hand in the marriage of her godchild. The stone-mason now gave up his laborious calling. Albert became the master of a moderate property, which he diligently cultivated with his beloved Maud; and, as fair child after child was born to them, the happy mother laid upon the breast of each a shriveled leaf from the elfin chain, for so had her little guide counseled her, when she once, in a doubtful hour, had summoned him to her aid. Albert and Matilda reached a good old age; their children throve, and carefully preserved, like their parents, the gifts received from the subterranean folk, who continued their favour to them and to all their posterity."

COLUMBUS

(A Print after a Picture by Parmeggiano.)

BY B. Simmons

I

Rise, Victor, from the festive board
Flush'd with triumphal wine,
And lifting high thy beaming sword,
Fired by the flattering Harper's chord,
Who hymns thee half divine.
Vow at the glutted shrine of Fate
That dark-red brand to consecrate!
Long, dread, and doubtful was the fray
That gives the stars thy name to-day.
But all is over; round thee now
Fame shouts, spoil pours, and captives bow,
No stormier joy can Earth impart,
Than thrills in lightning through thy heart.

II

Gay Lover, with the soft guitar,
Hie to the olive-woods afar,
And to thy friend, the listening brook,
Alone reveal that raptured look;
The maid so long in secret loved—
A parent's angry will removed—
This morning saw betrothèd thine,
That Sire the pledge, consenting, blest,
Life bright as motes in golden wine,
Is dancing in thy breast.

III

Statesman astute, the final hour

Arrives of long-contested Power;
Each crafty wile thine ends to aid,
Party and principle betray'd;
The subtle speech, the plan profound,
Pursued for years, success has crown'd;
To-night the Vote upon whose tongue,
The nicely-poised Division hung,
Was thine—beneath that placid brow
What feelings throb exulting now!
Thy rival falls;—on grandeur's base
Go shake the nations in his place!

IV

Fame, Love, Ambition! what are Ye,
With all your wasting passions' war,
To the great Strife that, like a sea,
O'erswept His soul tumultuously,
Whose face gleams on me like a star—
A star that gleams through murky clouds—
As here begirt by struggling crowds
A spell-bound Loiterer I stand,
Before a print-shop in the Strand?
What are your eager hopes and fears
Whose minutes wither men like years—
Your schemes defeated or fulfill'd,
To the emotions dread that thrill'd
His frame on that October night,
When, watching by the lonely mast,
He saw on shore the moving light,
And felt, though darkness veil'd the sight,
The long-sought World was his at last?[18]

V

[18] October 11, 1492.—"As the evening darkened, Columbus took his station on the top of the castle or cabin, on the high poop of his vessel. However he might carry a cheerful and confident countenance during the day, it was to him a time of the most painful anxiety; and now, when he was wrapped from observation by the shades of night, he maintained an intense and unremitting watch, ranging his eye along the dusky horizon in search of the most vague indications of land. Suddenly, about ten o'clock, *he thought he beheld a light glimmering at a distance*. Fearing that his eager hopes might deceive him, he called to Pedro Gutierrez, gentleman of the king's bedchamber, and enquired whether he saw a light in that direction; the latter replied in the affirmative. Columbus, yet doubtful whether it might not be some delusion of the fancy, called Rodrigo Sanchez of Segovia, and made the same enquiry. By the time the latter had ascended the roundhouse, the light had disappeared. They saw it once or twice afterwards in sudden and passing gleams, as if it were a torch in the bark of a fisherman rising and sinking with the waves, or in the hand of some person on shore, borne up and down as he walked from house to house. So transient and uncertain were these gleams, that few attached any importance to them; Columbus, however, considered them as certain signs of land, and, moreover, that the land was inhabited."—Irving's *Columbus*, vol. i.

How Fancy's boldest glances fail,
Contemplating each hurrying mood
Of thought that to that aspect pale
Sent up the heart's o'erboiling flood
Through that vast vigil, while his eyes
Watch'd till the slow reluctant skies
Should kindle, and the vision dread,
Of all his livelong years be read!
In youth, his faith-led spirit doom'd
Still to be baffled and betray'd,
His manhood's vigorous noon consumed
Ere Power bestow'd its niggard aid;
That morn of summer, dawning grey,[19]
When, from Huelva's humble bay,
He full of hope, before the gale
Turn'd on the hopeless World his sail,
And steer'd for seas untrack'd, unknown,
And westward still sail'd on—sail'd on—
Sail'd on till Ocean seem'd to be
All shoreless as Eternity,
Till, from its long-loved Star estranged,
At last the constant Needle changed,[20]

And fierce amid his murmuring crew
Prone terror into treason grew;
While on his tortured spirit rose,
More dire than portents, toils, or foes,
The awaiting World's loud jeers and scorn
Yell'd o'er his profitless Return;
No—none through that dark watch may trace
The feelings wild beneath whose swell,
As heaves the bark the billows' race,
His Being rose and fell!
Yet over doubt, and pride, and pain,
O'er all that flash'd through breast and brain,
As with those grand, immortal eyes
He stood—his heart on fire to know
When morning next illumed the skies,
What wonders in its light should glow—
O'er all one thought must, in that hour,
Have sway'd supreme—Power, conscious Power—
The lofty sense that Truths conceived,

[19] "It was on Friday, the 3d of August 1492, early in the morning, that Columbus set sail on his first voyage of discovery. He departed from the bar of Saltes, a small island in front of the town of Huelva, steering in a south-westerly direction," &c.—Irving. He was about fifty-seven years old the year of the Discovery.

[20] "On the 13th September, in the evening, being about two hundred leagues from the island of Ferro, he, for the first time, noticed the variation of the needle, a phenomenon which had never before been remarked. Struck with the circumstance, he observed it attentively for three days, and found that the variation increased as he advanced. It soon attracted the attention of the pilots, and filled them with consternation. It seemed as if the very laws of nature were changing as they advanced, and that they were entering another world subject to unknown influences."—*Ibid.*

And born of his own starry mind,
And foster'd into might, achieved
A new Creation for mankind!
And when from off that ocean calm
The Tropic's dusky curtain clear'd,
All those green shores and banks of balm
And rosy-tinted hills appear'd
Silent and bright as Eden, ere
Earth's breezes shook one blossom there—
Against that hour's proud tumult weigh'd,
Love, Fame, Ambition, how ye fade!

VI

Thou Luther of the darken'd Deep!
Nor less intrepid, too, than He
Whose courage broke Earth's bigot sleep
Whilst thine unbarr'd the Sea—
Like his, 'twas thy predestined fate
Against your grin benighted age,
With all its fiends of Fear and Hate,
War, single-handed war, to wage,
And live a conqueror, too, like him,
Till Time's expiring lights grow dim!
O, Hero of my boyish heart!
Ere from thy pictured looks I part,
My mind's maturer reverence now
In thoughts of thankfulness would bow
To the Omniscient Will that sent
Thee forth, its chosen instrument,
To teach us hope, when sin and care,
And the vile soilings that degrade
Our dust, would bid us most despair—
Hope, from each varied deed display'd
Along thy bold and wondrous story,
That shows how far one steadfast mind,
Serene in suffering as in glory,
May go to deify our kind.

TO SWALLOWS ON THE EVE OF DEPARTURE

BY THE SAME

"The day before V–'s departure for the last time from the country—it was the 4th of August, one of the hottest days of the season—as evening fell, he strolled with an old school-fellow through the cool green avenues and leafy arcades of the neighbouring park, where his friend amused him by pointing out to his attention vast multitudes of Swallows that came swarming from all directions to settle on the roofs and gables of the manor-house. This they do for several days preparatory to their departing, in one collected body, to more genial climates."—*MS. Memoir.*

I

Joyous Birds! preparing
In the clear evening light
To leave our dwindled summer day
For latitudes more bright!
How gay must be your greeting,
By southern fountains meeting,
To miss no faithful wing of all that started in your flight!

II

Every clime and season
Fresh gladness brings to you,
Howe'er remote your social throngs
Their varied path pursue;
No winds nor waves dissever—
No dusky veil'd for ever,
Frowneth across your fearless way in the empyrean blue.[21]

III

Mates and merry brothers

[21] "They all quit together; and fly for a time east or west, possibly in wait for stragglers not yet arrived from the interior—they then take directly to the south, and are soon lost sight of altogether for the allotted period of their absence. Their rapidity of flight is well known, and the 'murder-aiming eye' of the most experienced sportsman will seldom avail against the swallow; hence they themselves seldom fall a prey to the raptorial birds."—Cuvier, *edited by Griffiths*. Swallows are long-lived; they have been known to live a number of years in cages.

Were ye in Arctic hours,
Mottling the evening beam that sloped
Adown old Gothic towers!
As blythe that sunlight dancing
Will see your pinions' glancing
Scattering afar through Tropic groves the spicy bloom in showers!

IV

Haunters of palaced wastes![22]
From king-forlorn Versailles
To where, round gateless Thebes, the winds
Like monarch voices wail,
Your tribe capricious ranges,
Reckless of glory's changes;
Love makes for ye a merry home amid the ruins pale.

V

Another day, and ye
From knosp and turret's brow
Shall, with your fleet of crowding wings,
Air's viewless billows plough,
With no keen-fang'd regretting
Our darken'd hill-sides quitting,
—Away in fond companionship as cheerily as now!

VI

Woe for the Soul-endued—
The clay-enthrallèd Mind—
Leaving, unlike you, favour'd birds!
Its all—its all behind.
Woe for the exile mourning,
To banishment returning—
A mateless bird wide torn apart from country and from kind!

[22] In the fanciful language of Chateaubriand, "This daughter of a king (the swallow) still seems attached to grandeur; she passes the summer amid the ruins of Versailles, and the winter among those of Thebes."

VII

This moment blest as ye,
Beneath his own home-trees,
With friends and fellows girt around,
Up springs the western breeze,
Bringing the parting weather—
Shall all depart together?
Ah, no!—he goes a wretch alone upon the lonely seas.

VIII

To him the mouldering tower—
The pillar'd waste, to him
A broken-hearted music make
Until his eyelids swim.
None heeds when he complaineth,
Nor where that brow he leaneth
A mother's lips shall bless no more sinking to slumber dim.

IX

Winter shall wake to spring,
And 'mid the fragrant grass
The daffodil shall watch the rill
Like Beauty by her glass
But woe for him who pineth
Where the clear water shineth,
With no voice near to say—How sweet those April evenings pass!

X

Then while through Nature's heart
Love freshly burns again,
Hither shall ye, plumed travellers,
Come trooping o'er the main;
The selfsame nook disclosing
Its nest for your reposing

That saw you revel years ago as you shall revel then.[23]

XI

—Your human brother's lot!
A few short years are gone—
Back, back like you to early scenes—
Lo! at the threshold-stone,
Where ever in the gloaming
Home's angels watch'd his coming,
A stranger stands, and stares at him who sighing passes on.

XII

Joy to the Travail-worn!
Omnific purpose lies
Even in his bale as in your bliss,
Careerers of the skies!
When sun and earth, that cherish'd
Your tribes, with you have perish'd,
A home is his where partings more shall never dim the eyes.

[23] "However difficult to be credited, it seems to be ascertained beyond doubt, that the same pair which quitted their nest and the limited circle of their residence here, return to the very same nest again, and this for several successive years; in all probability for their whole lives"—*Griffiths'* Cuvier.

THE DILIGENCE

A Leaf from a Journal

A diligence is as familiar to our countrymen as a stage-coach; and, as railroads flourish more amongst us than with our less commercial and enterprising neighbours, it is probable that, to many English travellers, it is even more familiar. There is no need, therefore, to describe the portentous vehicle. Suffice it to say, that, of the three compartments into which it is divided, I found myself lodged—not in the *coupée* which looks out in front, and which has the appearance of a narrow post-chaise that has been flattened and compressed in the effort to incorporate it with the rest of the machine—nor in the *rotunde* behind, where one rides omnibus-fashion—but in the central compartment, the *interieur*, which answers to the veritable old English stage-coach, and carries six. I was one of the central occupants of this central division; for I had not been so fortunate as to secure a corner seat. Now, for the convenience of the luckless person who occupies this position, there depends from the roof of the coach, and hangs just before his face, a broad leathern strap, with a loop through which he can, if so disposed, place his arms; and, when his arms are thus slung up, he can further rest his head upon them or upon the strap, and so seek repose. Whether he finds the repose he seeks, is another matter. One half of the traveller swings like a parrot on his perch, the other half jolts on stationary—jolts over the eternal stones which pave the roads in France. Perhaps there are who can go to roost in this fashion. And if it is recorded of any one that he ever slept in this state of demi-suspension—all swing above, all shake below—I should like very much to know, in the next place, what sort of dreams he had. Did he fancy himself a griffin, or huge dragon, beating the air with his wings, and at the same time trotting furiously upon the ground? Or, in order to picture out his sensations, was he compelled to divide himself into two several creatures, and be at once the captured and half-strangled goose, with all its feathers outstretched in the air, and the wicked fox who is running away with it, at full speed, upon its back? As to myself, in no vain expectation of slumber, but merely for the sake of change of position, I frequently slung my arms in this loop, and leaning my head against the broad leathern strap, I listened to the gossip of my fellow-travellers, if there was any conversation stirring; or, if all was still, gave myself up to meditations upon my own schemes and projects.

And here let me observe, that I have always found that a journey in a stage-coach is remarkably favourable to the production of good resolution and sage designs for the future; which I account for partly on the ground that they cannot, under such circumstances, demand to be carried into immediate execution, and therefore may be indulged in the more freely; and partly on this other ground, that one who has become a traveller has loosened himself from his old customary moorings, and so gives himself, as it were, a new starting-point in life, from which he may, if the spirit of delusion is still happily strong within him, draw a mathematically straight line in the given direction A B, to be the faithful index of his future career.

What a generous sample of humanity it is that a well filled diligence carries out of the gates of Paris! The mountain of luggage upon the roof, consisting of boxes of all shapes and sizes, does not contain in its numerous *strata* of stuffs, and implements, and garments, rags and fine linen, a greater variety of dead material, than does the threefold interior, with its complement of human beings, of living character and sentiment. As to the observation not unfrequently made, that Frenchmen have less variety of character than ourselves, it is one which seems to me to have little or no foundation. Something there doubtless is of national character, which pervades all classes and all classifications of men; and this colouring, seen diffused over the mass, makes us apprehend, at first view, that there

is in the several parts a radical similarity which, in fact, does not exist. We have only to become a little more intimate with the men themselves, and this national colouring fades away; while the strong peculiarities resulting from social position, or individual temperament, stand out in sharp relief. And, in general, I will venture to say of national character—whatever people may be spoken of—that one may compare it to the colour which the sea bears at different times, or which different seas are said to be distinguished by: view the great surface at a distance, it is blue, or green, or grey; but take up a handful of the common element, and it is an undistinguishable portion of brackish water. It is French, or Flemish, or Spanish nature in the mass, and at a distance; looked at closer, and in the individual, there is little else than plain human nature to be seen.

But I did not open my journal to philosophize upon national character; but to record, while it is still fresh in my memory, some part of the conversation to which I was, as I travelled along, of necessity, and whether willingly or unwillingly, a listener. To the left of me the corner seats were occupied by two Englishmen—would it be possible to enter into a diligence without meeting at least two of our dear compatriots? They were both men in the prime of life, in the full flush of health, and apparently of wealth, who, from allusions which they dropt, could evidently boast of being of good family, and what follows of course—of having received an university education; and whom some one of our northern counties probably reckoned amongst its most famous fox-hunters. All which hindered not, but that they proved themselves to belong to that class of English travellers who scamper about the Continent like so many big, boisterous, presumptuous school-boys, much to the annoyance of every one who meets them, and to the especial vexation of their fellow-countrymen, who are not, in general, whatever may be said to the contrary, an offensive or conceited race, and are by no means pleased that the name of Englishmen should be made a by-word and a term of contempt. Opposite to me sat a Frenchman, of rather formal and grave demeanour, and dressed somewhat precisely. He was placed in a similar position in the diligence to myself; he had, however, curled up his leathern strap, and fastened it to the roof. Apparently he did not think the posture to which it invited one of sufficient dignity; for during the whole journey, and even when asleep, I observed that he maintained a certain becomingness of posture. Beside me, to the right, sat a little lively Frenchwoman, not very young, and opposite to her, and consequently in front also of myself, was another lady, a person of extreme interest, who at once riveted the eye, and set the imagination at work. She was so young, so pale, so beautiful, so sad, and withal so exceeding gentle in her demeanour, that an artist who wished to portray Our Lady in her virgin purity and celestial beauty, would have been ravished with the model. She had taken off her bonnet for the convenience of travelling, and her dark brown hair hung curled round her neck in the same simple fashion it must have done when she was a child. She was dressed in mourning, and this enhanced the pallor of her countenance; ill-health and sorrow were also evidently portrayed upon her features; but there was so much of lustre in the complexion, and so much of light and intelligence in the eye, that the sense of beauty predominated over all. You could not have wished her more cheerful than she was. Her face was a melody which you cannot quarrel with for being sad—which you could not desire to be otherwise than sad—whose very charm it is that it has made the tone of sorrow ineffably sweet.

Much I mused and conjectured what her history might be, and frequently I felt tempted to address myself in conversation to her; but still there was a tranquillity and repose in those long eyelashes which I feared to disturb. It was probable that she preferred her own reflections, melancholy as they might be, to any intercourse with others, and out of respect to this wish I remained silent. Not so, however, my fellow-traveller of her own sex, who, far from practising this forbearance, felt that she acted the kind and social part by engaging her in conversation. And so perhaps she did. For certainly, after some time, the beautiful and pensive girl became communicative, and I overheard the brief history of her sufferings, which I had felt so curious to know. It was indeed brief—it is not a three-volumed novel that one overhears in a stage-coach—but it had the charm of truth to recommend it. I had been lately reading Eugene Sue's romance, *The Mysteries of Paris*, and it gave an additional

interest to remark, that the simple tale I was listening to from the lips of the living sufferer bore a resemblance to one of its most striking episodes.

The shades of evening were closing round us, and the rest of the passengers seemed to be preparing themselves for slumber, as, leaning forward on my leathern supporter, I listened to the low sweet voice of the young stranger.

"You are surprised," she said in answer to some remark made by her companion, "that one of our sex, so young and of so delicate health, should travel alone in the diligence; but I have no relative in Paris, and no friend on whose protection I could make a claim. I have lived there alone, or in something worse than solitude."

Her companion, with a woman's quickness of eye, glanced at the rich toilette of the speaker. It was mourning, but mourning of the most costly description.

"You think," she continued, replying to this glance, "that one whose toilette is costly ought not to be without friends; but mine has been for some time a singular condition. Wealth and a complete isolation from the world have been in my fate strangely combined. They married me"–

"What! are you a married woman and so young?" exclaimed the lady who was addressed.

"I have been; I am now a widow. It is for my husband that I wear this mourning. They took me from the convent where I was educated, and married me to a man whom I was permitted to see only once before the alliance was concluded. As I had been brought up with the idea that my father was to choose a husband for me, and as the Count D– was both handsome and of agreeable manners, the only qualities on which I was supposed to have an opinion, there was no room for objection on my part. The marriage was speedily celebrated. My husband was wealthy. Of that my father had taken care to satisfy himself; perhaps it was the only point on which he was very solicitous. For I should tell you that my father, the only parent I have surviving, is one of those restless unquiet men who have no permanent abode, who delight in travelling from place to place, and who regard their children, if they have any, in the light only of cares and encumbrances. There is not a capital in Europe in which he has not resided, and scarcely a spot of any celebrity which he has not visited. It was therefore at the house of a maiden aunt—to whom I am now about to return—that I was married.

"I spent the first years of my marriage, as young brides I believe generally do, in a sort of trouble of felicity. I did not know how to be sufficiently thankful to Heaven for the treasure I found myself the possessor of; such a sweetness of temper and such a tenderness of affection did my husband continually manifest towards me. After a short season of festivity, spent at the house of my aunt, we travelled together without any other companion towards Paris, where the Count had a residence elegantly fitted up to receive us. The journey itself was a new source of delight to one who had been hitherto shut up, with her instructress, in a convent. Never shall I forget the hilarity, the almost insupportable joy, with which the first part of this journey was performed. The sun shone out upon a beautiful landscape, and there was I, travelling alone with the one individual who had suddenly awoke and possessed himself of all my affections—travelling, too, with gay anticipations to the glorious city of Paris, of which I had heard so much, and in which I was to appear with all the envied advantages of wealth.

"As we approached towards Paris, I noticed that my husband became more quiet and reserved. I attributed it to the fatigue of travelling, to which my own spirits began to succumb; and as the day was drawing to a close, I proposed, at the next stage we reached, that we should rest there, and resume our journey the next morning. But in an irritable and impetuous manner, of which I had never seen the least symptom before, he ordered fresh horses, and bade the postilion drive on with all the speed he could. Still as we travelled he grew more sullen, became restless, incommunicative, and muttered occasionally to himself. It was now night. Leaning back in the carriage, and fixing my eye upon the full moon that was shining brightly upon us, I tried to quiet my own spirit, somewhat ruffled by this unexpected behaviour of my husband. I observed, after a short time, that *his* eye also had become riveted on the same bright object; but not with any tranquillizing effect, for his countenance grew

every minute more and more sombre. On a sudden he called aloud to the postilion to stop—threw open the carriage-door, and walked in a rapid pace down towards a river that for some time had accompanied our course. I sprang after him. I overtook, and grasped him as he was in the very act of plunging into the river. O my God! how I prayed, and wept, and struggled to prevent him from rushing into the stream. At length he sat down upon the bank of the river; he turned to me his wild and frenzied eye—he laughed—O Heaven! he was mad!

"They had married me to a madman. Cured, or presumed to be cured, of his disorder, he had been permitted to return to society; and now his malady had broken out again. He who was to be my guide and protector, who was my only support, who took the place of parent, friend, instructor—he was a lunatic!

"For three dreadful hours did I sit beside him on that bank—at night—with none to help me—restraining him by all means I could devise from renewed attempts to precipitate himself into the river. At last I succeeded in bringing him back to the carriage. For the rest of the journey he was quiet; but he was imbecile—his reason had deserted him.

"We arrived at his house in Paris. A domestic assisted me in conducting him to his chamber; and from that time I, the young wife, who the other morning had conceived herself the happiest of beings, was transformed into the keeper of a maniac—of a helpless or a raving lunatic. I wrote to my father. He was on the point of setting out upon one of his rambling expeditions, and contented himself with appealing to the relatives of my husband, who, he maintained, were the proper persons to take charge of the lunatic. They, on the other hand, left him to the care of the new relations he had formed by a marriage, which had interfered with their expectations and claims upon his property. Thus was I left alone—a stranger in this great city of Paris, which was to have welcomed me with all its splendours, and festivities, and its brilliant society—my sole task to soothe and control a maniac husband. It was frightful. Scarcely could I venture to sleep an hour together—night or day—lest he should commit some outrage upon himself or on me. My health is irretrievably ruined. I should have utterly sunk under it; but, by God's good providence, the malady of my husband took a new direction. It appeared to prey less upon the brain, and more upon other vital parts of the constitution. He wasted away and died. I indeed live; but I, too, have wasted away, body and soul, for I have no health and no joy within me."

Just at this time a low murmuring conversation between my two fellow-countrymen, at my left, broke out, much to my annoyance, into sudden exclamation.

"By God! sir," cried one of them, "I thrashed him in the *Grande Place*, right before the hotel there—what's its name?—the first hotel in Petersburg. Yes, I had told the lout of a postilion, who had grazed my britska against the curbstone of every corner we had turned, that if he did it again I would *punish* him; that is, I did not exactly *tell* him—for he understood no language but his miserable Russian, of which I could not speak a word—but I held out my fist in a significant manner, which neither man nor brute could mistake. Well, just as we turned into the *Grande Place*, the lubber grazed my wheel again. I jumped out of the carriage—I pulled him—boots and all—off his horse, and how I cuffed him! My friend Lord L– was standing at the window of the hotel, looking out for my arrival, and was witness to this exploit. He was most dead with laughter when I came up to him."

"I once," said his interlocutor, "thrashed an English postilion after the same fashion; but your Russian, with his enormous boots, must have afforded capital sport. When I travel I always look out for *fun*. What else is the use of travelling? I and young B–, whom you may remember at Oxford, were at a ball together at Brussels, and what do you think we did? We strewed cayenne pepper on the floor, and no sooner did the girls begin to dance than they began incontinently to sneeze. Ladies and gentlemen were curtsying, and bowing, and sneezing to one another in the most ludicrous manner conceivable."

"Ha! ha! ha! Excellent! By the way," rejoined the other, "talking of Brussels, do you know who has the glory of that famous joke practised there upon the statues in the park? They give the

credit of it to the English, but on what ground, except the celebrity they have acquired in such feats, I could never learn."

"I know nothing of it. What was it?"

"Why, you see, amongst the statues in the little park at Brussels are a number of those busts without arms or shoulders. I cannot call to mind their technical name. First you have the head of a man, then a sort of decorated pillar instead of a body, and then again, at the bottom of the pillar, there protrude a couple of naked feet. They look part pillar and part man, with a touch of the mummy. Now, it is impossible to contemplate such a figure without being struck with the idea, how completely at the mercy of every passer-by are both its nose—which has no hand to defend it—and its naked toes, which cannot possibly move from their fixed position. One may tweak the one, and tread upon the other, with such manifest impunity. Some one in whom this idea, no doubt, wrought very powerfully, took hammer and chisel, and shied off the noses and the great toes of several of these mummy-statues. And pitiful enough they looked next morning."

"Well, that was capital!"

"And the best of it is, that even now, when the noses have been put on again, the figures look as odd as if they had none at all. The join is so manifest, and speaks so plainly of past mutilation, that no one can give to these creatures, let them exist as long as they will, the credit of wearing their own noses. The jest is immortal."

The recital of this excellent piece of *fun* was followed by another explosion of laughter. The Frenchman who sat opposite to me—a man, as I have said, of grave but urbane deportment, became curious to know what it was that our neighbours had been conversing about, and which had occasioned so much hilarity. He very politely expressed this wish to me. If it was not an indiscretion, he should like to partake, he said, in the wit that was flowing round him; adding, perhaps superfluously, that he did not understand English.

"Monsieur, I am glad of it," I replied.

Monsieur, who concluded from my answer that I was in a similar predicament with respect to the French language, bowed and remained silent.

Here the conversation to my left ceased to flow, or subsided into its former murmuring channel, and I was again able to listen to my fair neighbours to the right. The lively dame who sat by my side had now the word; she was administering consolations and philosophy to the young widow.

"At your age health," said she, "is not irretrievable, and, sweet madam, your good looks are left you. A touch of rouge upon your cheek, and you are quite an angel. And then you are free—you will one day travel back again to Paris with a better escort than you had before."

And here she gave a sigh which prepared the hearer for the disclosure that was to follow.

"Now I," she continued, "have been married, but, alas! am *not* a widow. I have a husband standing out against me somewhere in the world. In the commercial language of my father, I wish I could cancel him."

"What! he has deserted you?" said her fair companion, in a sympathizing tone.

"You shall hear, my dear madam. My father, you must know, is a plain citizen. He did not charge himself with the task of looking out a husband for his girls; he followed what he called the English plan—let the girls look out for themselves, and contented himself with a *veto* upon the choice, if it should displease him. Now, Monsieur Lemaire was a perfect Adonis; he dressed, and danced, and talked to admiration; no man dressed, danced, or talked better; his mirth was inexhaustible—his good-humour unfailing."

Well, thought I to myself, what is coming now? This lady, at all events, chose with her own eyes, and had her own time to choose in. Is her experience to prove, that the chance of securing a good husband is much the same, let him be chosen how he may?

"No wonder, then," continued the lady, "that I accepted his proposal. The very thought of marrying him as paradise; and I *did* marry him."

"And so were really in paradise?" said the widow, with a gentle smile.

"Yes, yes! it *was* a paradise. It was a constant succession of amusements; theatre, balls, excursions—all enjoyed with the charming Lemaire. And he so happy, too! I thought he would have devoured me. We were verily in paradise for three months. At the end of which time he came one morning into the room swinging an empty purse in the air—'Now, I think,' said he with the same cheerful countenance that he usually wore, 'that I have proved my devotion to you in a remarkable manner. Another man would have thought it much if he had made some sacrifice to gain possession of you for life; I have spent every farthing I had in the world to possess you for three months. Oh, that those three months were to live over again! But every thing has its end.' And he tossed the empty purse in his hand.

"I laughed at what I considered a very pleasant jest; for who did not know that M. Lemaire was a man of ample property? I laughed still more heartily as he went on to say, that a coach stood at the door to take me back to my father, and begged me not to keep the coachman waiting, as in that case the fellow would charge for time, and it had taken his last sou to pay his fare by distance. I clapped my hands in applause of my excellent comedian. But, gracious Heavens! it was all true! There stood the coach at the door, the fare paid to my father's house, and an empty purse was literally all that I now had to participate with the gay, wealthy, accomplished Lemaire."

"What!" I exclaimed with rage and agony, as the truth broke upon me, "do you desert your wife?"

"Desert my charming wife!" he replied. "Ask the hungry pauper, who turns his back upon the fragrant *restaurant*, if he deserts his dinner. You are as beautiful, as bright, as lovely as ever—you cannot think with what a sigh I quit you!"

"But"–and I began a torrent of recrimination.

"'But,' said he, interrupting me, 'I have not a sou. For you,' he continued, 'you are as charming as ever—you will win your way only the better in the world for this little experience. And as for me—I have been in Elysium for three months; and that is more than a host of your excellent prudent men can boast of, who plod on day after day only that they may continue plodding to the end of their lives. Adieu! my adorable—my angel that will now vanish from my sight!' And here, in spite of my struggles, he embraced me with the greatest ardour, and then, tearing himself away as if he only were the sufferer, he rushed out of the room. I have never seen him since."

"And such men really exist!" said the young widow, moved to indignation. "For so short a season of pleasure he could deliberately compromise the whole of your future life."

"Is it not horrible? His father, it seems, had left him a certain sum of money, and this was the scheme he had devised to draw from it the greatest advantage. *Mais, mon Dieu!*" added the lively Frenchwoman, "of what avail to afflict one's-self? Only if he would but die before I am an old woman! And then those three months"–

Here the diligence suddenly stopped, and the conductor opening the door, invited us to step out and take some refreshment, and so put an end for the present to this medley conversation.

WHO WROTE GIL BLAS?

In the year 1783, Joseph Francisco De Isla, one of the most eminent of modern Spanish writers, published a Spanish translation of Gil Blas. In this work some events were suppressed, others altered, the diction was greatly modified, the topographical and chronological errors with which the French version abounded were allowed to remain, and the Spanish origin of that celebrated work was asserted on such slender grounds, and vindicated by such trifling arguments, as to throw considerable doubt on the fact in the opinion of all impartial judges. The French were not slow to seize upon so favourable an occasion to gratify their national vanity; and in 1818, M. le Comte François de Neufchateau, a member of the French Institute and an Ex-minister of the Interior, published a dissertation, in which, after a modest insinuation that the extraordinary merit of Gil Blas was a sufficient proof of its French origin, the feeble arguments of Padre Isla were triumphantly refuted, and the claims of Le Sage to the original conception of Gil Blas were asserted, to the complete satisfaction of all patriotic Frenchmen. Here the matter rested, till, in 1820, Don Juan Antonio Llorente drew up his reasons for holding the opinion of which Isla had been the unsuccessful advocate, and, with even punctilious courtesy, transmitted them before publication to M. Le Montey, by whose judgment in the matter he expressed his determination to abide. M. Le Montey referred the matter to two commissioners—one being M. Raynouard, a well-known and useful writer, the other M. Neufchateau, the author whom Llorente's work was intended to refute.

This literary commission seems to have produced as little benefit to the public as if each of the members had been chosen by a political party, had received a salary varying from £1500 to £2000 a-year, and been sent into Ireland to report upon the condition of the people, or into Canada to discover why French republicans dislike the institutions of a Saxon monarchy. To be sure, the advantage is on the side of the French academicians; for, instead of sending forth a mass of confused, contradictory, and ill-written reports, based upon imperfect evidence, and leading to no definite conclusion, the literary commission, as Llorente informs us, was silent altogether; whereupon Llorente attributing, not unnaturally, this preternatural silence on the part of the three French *savans*, to the impossibility of finding any thing to say, after the lapse of a year and a half publishes his arguments, and appeals to literary Europe as the judge "en dernier ressort" of this important controversy. Llorente, however, was too precipitate; for on the 8th of January 1822, M. de Neufchateau presented to the French Academy an answer to Llorente's observations, on which we shall presently remark.

It is maintained by the ingenious writer, Llorente—whose arguments, with such additions and remarks as have occurred to us upon the subject, we propose to lay before our readers,

1st, That Gil Blas and the Bachiller de Salamanca were originally one and the same romance.

2dly, That the author of this romance was at any rate a Spaniard.

3dly, That his name was Don Antonio de Solis y Ribadeneira, author of *Historia de la Conquista de Méjico*.

4thly, That Le Sage turned the single romance into two; repeating in both the same stories slightly modified, and mixing them up with other translations from Spanish novels.

As the main argument turns upon the originality of Le Sage considered as the author of Gil Blas, we shall first dispose in a very few words of the third proposition; and for this purpose we must beg our readers to take for granted, during a few moments, that Gil Blas was the work of a Spaniard, and to enquire, supposing that truth sufficiently established, who that Spaniard was.

Llorente enumerates thirty-six eminent writers who flourished in 1655, the period when, as we shall presently see, the romance in question was written. Of these Don Louis de Guevarra, author of the Diablo Cojuelo, Francisco de Santos, José Pellicer, and Solis, are among the most distinguished. Llorente, however, puts all aside—and all, except Pellicer perhaps, for very sufficient reasons—determining that Solis alone united all the attributes and circumstances belonging to the

writer of Gil Blas. The writer of Gil Blas was a Castilian—this may be inferred from his panegyric on Castilian wit, which he declares equal to that of Athens; he must have been a dramatic writer, from his repeated criticisms on the drama, and the keenness with which he sifts the merit of contemporary dramatic authors; he must have been a great master of narrative, and thoroughly acquainted with the habits and institutions of his age and country; he must have possessed the art of enlivening his story with caustic allusions, and with repartees; he must have been perfectly conversant with the intrigues of courtiers, and have acquired from his own experience, or the relation of others, an intimate knowledge of the private life of Olivarez, and the details of Philip IV.'s court. All these requisites are united in Solis:—he was born at Alcalá de Henares, a city of Castile; he was one of the best dramatic writers of his day, the day of Calderon de la Barca. That he was a great historical writer, is proved by his *Conquista de Méjico*; his comedies prove his thorough knowledge of Spanish habits; and the retorts and quiddities of his Graciosos flash with as much wit as any that were ever uttered by those brilliant and fantastic denizens of the Spanish stage. He was a courtier; he was secretary to Oropezo, viceroy successively of Navarre and of Valencia, and was afterwards promoted by Philip IV. to be "Oficial de la Secretaria" of the first minister Don Louis de Haro, and was allowed, as an especial mark of royal favour, to dispose of his place in favour of his relation. This happened about the year 1654—corresponding, as we shall see, exactly with the mission of the Marquis de Lionne. Afterwards he was appointed Cronista Mayor de las Indias, and wrote his famous history. These are the arguments in favour of Solis, which cannot be offered in behalf of any of his thirty-six competitors. It is therefore the opinion of Llorente that the honour of being the author of Gil Blas is due to him; and in this opinion, supposing the fact which we now proceed to investigate, that a Spaniard, and not Le Sage, was the author of the work, is made out to their satisfaction, our readers will probably acquiesce.

The steps by which the argument that Gil Blas is taken from a Spanish manuscript proceeds, are few and direct. It abounds in facts and allusions which none but a Spaniard could know: this is the first step. It abounds in errors that no Spaniard could make—(by the way, this is much insisted upon by M. de Neufchateau, who does not seem to perceive that, taken together with the preceding proposition, it is fatal to his argument:) this is the second step, and leads us to the conclusion that the true theory of its origin must reconcile these apparent contradictions.

A Spanish manuscript does account for this inconsistency, as it would furnish the transcriber with the most intimate knowledge of local habits, names, and usages; while at the same time it would not guard him against mistakes which negligence or haste, or the difficulty of deciphering a manuscript in a language with which the transcriber was by no means critically acquainted, must occasion. Still less would it guard him against errors which would almost inevitably arise from the insertion of other Spanish novels, or the endeavour to give the work a false claim to originality, by alluding to topics fashionable in the city and age when the work was copied.

The method we propose to follow, is to place before the reader each division of the argument. We shall show a most intimate knowledge with Spanish life, clearly proving that the writer, whoever he is, is unconscious of any merit in painting scenes with which he was habitually familiar. Let any reader compare the facility of these unstudied allusions with the descriptions of a different age or time, even by the best writers of a different epoch and country, however accurate and dramatic they may be —with *Quentin Durward* or *Ivanhoe*, for instance; or with Barante's *Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne*, and they will see the force of this remark. In spite of art, and ability, and antiquarian knowledge, it is evident that a resemblance is industriously sought in one case, and is spontaneous in the other; that it is looked upon as a matter of course, and not as a title to praise, by the first class of writers, while it is elaborately wrought out, as an artist's pretension to eminence, in the second. If Le Sage had been the original author of Gil Blas, he would have avoided the multiplication of circumstances, names, and dates; or if he had thought it necessary to intersperse his composition with them, he would have contented himself with such as were most general and notorious; the minute, circuitous, and oblique

allusions, which it required patient examination to detect, and vast local knowledge to appreciate, could not have fallen within his plan.

Secondly—We shall point out the mistakes, some of them really surprising even in a foreign writer, with regard to names, dates, and circumstances, oversetting every congruity which it was manifestly Le Sage's object to establish. We shall show that the Spanish novels inserted by him do not mix with the body of the work; and moreover we shall show that in one instance, where Le Sage hazarded an allusion to Parisian gossip, he betrayed the most profound ignorance of those very customs which, in other parts of the work passing under his name, are delineated with such truth of colouring, and Dutch minuteness of observation.

If these two propositions be clearly established, we have a right to infer from them the existence of a Spanish manuscript, as on any other hypothesis the claims of an original writer would be clashing and contradictory.

M. Neufchateau, as we have observed, reiterates the assertion that the errors of Gil Blas are such as no Spaniard could commit, leaving altogether unguarded against the goring horn of the dilemma which can only be parried by an answer to the question—how came it to pass that Le Sage could enumerate the names of upwards of twenty inconsiderable towns and villages, upwards of twenty families not of the first class; and in every page of his work represent, with the most punctilious fidelity, the manners of a country he never saw? Nay, how came it to pass that, instead of avoiding minute details, local circumstances, and the mention of particular facts, as he might easily have done, he accumulates all these opportunities of mistake and contradiction, descends to the most trifling facts, and interweaves them with the web of his narrative (conscious of ignorance, as, according to M. Neufchateau, he must have been) without effort and without design.

Let us begin by laying before the readers the *pièces du procès*. First, we insert the description of Le Sage given by two French writers.

> "Voici ce que disoit Voltaire à l'article de Le Sage, dans la première édition du Siècle de Louis XIV.:—
>
> "'Son roman de Gil Blas est demeuré, parcequ'il y a du naturel.'
>
> "Dans les editions suivantes du Siècle de Louis XIV., Voltaire ajoute un fait qu'il se contente d'énoncer simplement, comme une chose hors de doute; c'est que Gil Blas est pris entièrement d'un livre écrit en Espagnol, et dont il cite ainsi le tître —La vidad de lo Escudero Dom Marco d'Obrego—sans indiquer aucunement la date, l'auteur, ni l'objet de cette vie de l'écuyer Dom Marco d'Obrego."
>
> "Extrait du Nouveau Porte-feuille historique, poetique, et litteraire de Bruzen de La Martinière.
>
> "'Baillet n'entendoit pas l'Espagnol. Au sujet de Louis Velés de Guevarra, auteur Espagnol, dans ses jugements des savants sur les poètes modernes, § 1461, il dit: On a de lui plusieurs comedies qui ont été imprimées en diverses villes d'Espagne, et une pièce facétieuse, sous le tître El Diabolo Cojuelo, novella de la otra vida: sur quoi M. de La Monnoye fait cette note. Comment un homme qui fait tant le modeste et le reservé a-t-il pu écrire un mot tel que celui-la? Cette note n'est pas juste. Il semble que M. de La Monnoye veuille taxer Baillet de n'avoir pas sontenu le caractère de modestie, qu'il affectoit. Baillet ne faisoit pas le modeste, il l'étoit véritablement par état et par principe; et s'il eût entendu le mot immodeste, ce mot lui auroit été suspect; il eut eu recours à l'original, où il auroit trouvé Diablo, et non Diabolo, Cojuelo et non Cojudo, et auroit bien vîte corrigé la faute. Mais comme il n'entendoit ni l'un ni l'autre de ces derniers mots, il lui fut aisé, en copiant ses extraits, de prendre un *el* pour un *d*, et de changer par cette légère différence Cojuelo, qui veut dire boiteux, en Cojudo, qui signifie quelqu'un qui a de gros testicules, et sobrino l'exprime encore plus grossièrement en François. M. de La Monnoye

devoit moins s'arrêter à l'immodestie de l'épithète, qu'à la corruption du vrai tître le Guevarra."

"Au reste, c'est le même ouvrage que M. La Sage nous a fait connoître sous le tître du Diable Boiteux; il l'a tourné, à sa manière, mais avec des différences si grandes que Guevarra ne se reconnoîtroit qu'à peine dans cette pretendue traduction. Par exemple, le chapitre xix de la seconde partie contient une aventure de D. Pablas, qui se trouve en original dans un livre imprimé à Madrid en 1729, (sic.) L'auteur des lectures amusantes, qui ne s'est pas souvenu que M. Le Sage, en avoit inséré une partie dans son Diable Boiteux, l'a traduite de nouveau avec assez de liberté, mais pourtant en s'écartant moins de l'original, et l'a insérée dans sa première partie à peu près telle qu'elle se lit dans l'original Espagnol. Mais M. Le Sage l'a traitée avec de grands changements, c'est sa manière d'embellir extrêmement tout ce qu'il emprunte des Espagnols. C'est ainsi qu'il en a usé envers Gil Blas, dont il a fait un chef-d'œuvre inimitable."—(Pages 336-339, édition de 1757, dans les *Passetemps Politiques, Historiques, et Critiques*, tome 11, in 12.)

As an example of the accuracy with which Le Sage has imitated his originals, we quote the annexed passages from Marcos de Obregon—Page 3.

"En leyendo el villete, dixo al que le traia: Dezilde a vuestro amo, que di goyo, que para cosas, que me inportan mucho gusto no me suelo leuantar hasta las doze del dia: que porque quiere, que pare matarme me leuante tan demañana? y boluiendose del otro lado, se tornô a dormir."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.