VARIOUS

GRAHAM'S MAGAZINE VOL XXXIII NO. 2 AUGUST 1848

Various

Graham's Magazine Vol XXXIII No. 2 August 1848

Various

Graham's Magazine Vol XXXIII No. 2 August 1848 / Various — «Public Domain»,

Содержание

Various
Graham's Magazine Vol XXXIII No. 2 August 1848

THE LATE MARIA BROOKS

BY RUFUS WILMOT GRISWOLD

[WITH A PORTRAIT.]

This remarkable woman was not only one of the first writers of her country, but she deserves to be ranked with the most celebrated persons of her sex who have lived in any nation or age. Within the last century woman has done more than ever before in investigation, reflection and literary art. On the continent of Europe an Agnesi, a Dacier and a Chastelet have commanded respect by their learning, and a De Stael, a Dudevant and a Bremer have been admired for their genius; in Great Britain the names of More, Burney, Barbauld, Baillie, Somerville, Farrar, Hemans, Edgeworth, Austen, Landon, Norman and Barrett, are familiar in the histories of literature and science; and in our own country we turn with pride to Sedgwick, Child, Beecher, Kirkland, Parkes Smith, Fuller, and others, who in various departments have written so as to deserve as well as receive the general applause; but it may be doubted whether in the long catalogue of those whose works demonstrate and vindicate the intellectual character and position of the sex, there are many names that will shine with a clearer, steadier, and more enduring lustre than that of Maria del Occidente.

Maria Gowen, afterward Mrs. Brooks, upon whom this title was conferred originally I believe by the poet Southey, was descended from a Welsh family that settled in Charlestown, near Boston, sometime before the Revolution. A considerable portion of the liberal fortune of her grandfather was lost by the burning of that city in 1775, and he soon afterward removed to Medford, across the Mystic river, where Maria Gowen was born about the year 1795. Her father was a man of education, and among his intimate friends were several of the professors of Harvard College, whose occasional visits varied the pleasures of a rural life. From this society she derived at an early period a taste for letters and learning. Before the completion of her ninth year she had committed to memory many passages from the best poets; and her conversation excited special wonder by its elegance, variety and wisdom. She grew in beauty, too, as she grew in years, and when her father died, a bankrupt, before she had attained the age of fourteen, she was betrothed to a merchant of Boston, who undertook the completion of her education, and as soon as she quitted the school was married to her. Her early womanhood was passed in commercial affluence; but the loss of several vessels at sea in which her husband was interested was followed by other losses on land, and years were spent in comparitive indigence. In that remarkable book, "Idomen, or the Vale of Yumuri," she says, referring to this period: "Our table had been hospitable, our doors open to many; but to part with our well-garnished dwelling had now become inevitable. We retired, with one servant, to a remote house of meaner dimensions, and were sought no longer by those who had come in our wealth. I looked earnestly around me; the present was cheerless, the future dark and fearful. My parents were dead, my few relatives in distant countries, where they thought perhaps but little of my happiness. Burleigh I had never loved other than as a father and protector; but he had been the benefactor of my fallen family,

and to him I owed comfort, education, and every ray of pleasure that had glanced before me in this world. But the sun of his energies was setting, and the faults which had balanced his virtues increased as his fortune declined. He might live through many years of misery, and to be devoted to him was my duty while a spark of his life endured. I strove to nerve my heart for the worst. Still there were moments when fortitude became faint with endurance, and visions of happiness that might have been mine came smiling to my imagination. I wept and prayed in agony."

In this period poetry was resorted to for amusement and consolation. At nineteen she wrote a metrical romance, in seven cantos, but it was never published. It was followed by many shorter lyrical pieces which were printed anonymously; and in 1820, after favorable judgments of it had been expressed by some literary friends, she gave to the public a small volume entitled "Judith, Esther, and other Poems, by a Lover of the Fine Arts." It contained many fine passages, and gave promise of the powers of which the maturity is illustrated by "Zophiël," very much in the style of which is this stanza:

With even step, in mourning garb arrayed,
Fair Judith walked, and grandeur marked her air;
Though humble dust, in pious sprinklings laid.
Soiled the dark tresses of her copious hair.

And this picture of a boy:

Softly supine his rosy limbs reposed,
His locks curled high, leaving the forehead bare:
And o'er his eyes the light lids gently closed,
As they had feared to hide the brilliance there.

And this description of the preparations of Esther to appear before Ahasuerus:

"Take ye, my maids, this mournful garb away;
Bring all my glowing gems and garments fair;
A nation's fate impending hangs to-day,
But on my beauty and your duteous care."

Prompt to obey, her ivory form they lave;
Some comb and braid her hair of wavy gold;
Some softly wipe away the limpid wave
That o'er her dimply limbs in drops of fragrance rolled.

Refreshed and faultless from their hands she came,
Like form celestial clad in raiment bright;
O'er all her garb rich India's treasures flame,
In mingling beams of rainbow-colored light.

Graceful she entered the forbidden court,
Her bosom throbbing with her purpose high;
Slow were her steps, and unassured her port,
While hope just trembled in her azure eye.

Light on the marble fell her ermine tread.
And when the king, reclined in musing mood,

Lifts, at the gentle sound, his stately head,
Low at his feet the sweet intruder stood.

Among the shorter poems are several that are marked by fancy and feeling, and a graceful versification, of one of which, an elegy, these are the opening verses:

Lone in the desert, drear and deep,
Beneath the forest's whispering shade,
Where brambles twine and mosses creep,
The lovely Charlotte's grave is made.

But though no breathing marble there
Shall gleam in beauty through the gloom,
The turf that hides her golden hair
With sweetest desert flowers shall bloom.

And while the moon her tender light
Upon the hallowed scene shall fling,
The mocking-bird shall sit all night
Among the dewy leaves, and sing.

In 1823 Mr. Brooks died, and a paternal uncle soon after invited the poetess to the Island of Cuba, where, two years afterward, she completed the first canto of "Zophiël, or the Bride of Seven," which was published in Boston in 1825. The second canto was finished in Cuba in the opening of 1827; the third, fourth and fifth in 1828; and the sixth in the beginning of 1829. The relative of Mrs. Brooks was now dead, and he had left to her his coffee plantation and other property, which afforded her a liberal income. She returned again to the United States, and resided more than a year in the vicinity of Dartmouth College, where her son was pursuing his studies; and in the autumn of 1830, she went to Paris, where she passed the following winter. The curious and learned notes to "Zophiël," were written in various places, some in Cuba, some in Hanover, some in Canada, (which she visited during her residence at Hanover,) some at Paris, and the rest at Keswick, in England, the home of Robert Southey, where she passed the spring of 1831. When she quitted the hospitable home of this much honored and much attached friend, she left with him the completed work, which he subsequently saw through the press, correcting the proof sheets himself, previous to its appearance in London in 1833.

The materials of this poem are universal; that is, such as may be appropriated by every polished nation. In all the most beautiful oriental systems of religion, including our own, may be found such beings as its characters. The early fathers of Christianity not only believed in them, but wrote cumbrous folios upon their nature and attributes. It is a curious fact that they never doubted the existence and the power of the Grecian and Roman gods, but supposed them to be fallen angels, who had caused themselves to be worshiped under particular forms, and for particular characteristics. To what an extent, and to how very late a period this belief has prevailed, may be learned from a remarkable little work of Fontenelle,[1] in which that pleasing writer endeavors seriously to disprove that any preternatural power was evinced in the responses of the ancient oracles. The Christian belief in good and evil angels is too beautiful to be laid aside. Their actual and present existence can be disproved neither by analogy, philosophy, or theology, nor can it be questioned without casting a doubt also upon the whole system of our religion. This religion, by many a fanciful skeptic, has been

[1] Historie des Oracles.

called barren and gloomy; but setting aside all the legends of the Jews, and confining ourselves entirely to the generally received Scriptures, there will be found sufficient food for an imagination warm as that of Homer, Apelles, Phidias, or Praxiteles. It is astonishing that such rich materials for poetry should for so many centuries have been so little regarded, appropriated, or even perceived.

The story of Zophiël, though accompanied by many notes, is simple and easily followed. Reduced to prose, and a child, or a common novel reader, would peruse it with satisfaction. It is in six cantos, and is supposed to occupy the time of nine months: from the blooming of roses at Ecbatana to the coming in of spices at Babylon. Of this time the greater part is supposed to elapse between the second and third canto, where Zophiël thus speaks to Egla of Phraërion:

> Yet still she bloomed – uninjured, innocent —
> Though now for seven sweet moons by Zophiël watched and wooed.

The king of Medea, introduced in the second canto, is an ideal personage; but the history of that country, near the time of the second captivity, is very confused, and more than one young prince resembling Sardius, might have reigned and died without a record. So much of the main story however as relates to human life is based upon sacred or profane history; and we have sufficient authority for the legend of an angel's passion for one of the fair daughters of our own world. It was a custom in the early ages to style heroes, to raise to the rank of demigods, men who were distinguished for great abilities, qualities or actions. Above such men the angels who are supposed to have visited the earth were but one grade exalted, and they were capable of participating in human pains and pleasures. Zophiël is described as one of those who fell with Lucifer, not from ambition or turbulence, but from friendship and excessive admiration of the chief disturber of the tranquillity of heaven: as he declares, when thwarted by his betrayer, in the fourth canto:

> Though the first seraph formed, how could I tell
> The ways of guile? What marvels I believed
> When cold ambition mimicked love so well
> That half the sons of heaven looked on deceived!

During the whole interview in which this stanza occurs, the deceiver of men and angels exhibits his alledged power of inflicting pain. He says to Zophiël, after arresting his course:

> "Sublime Intelligence,
> Once chosen for my friend and worthy me:
> Not so wouldst thou have labored to be hence,
> Had my emprise been crowned with victory.
> When I was bright in heaven, thy seraph eyes
> Sought only mine. But he who every power
> Beside, while hope allured him, could despise,
> Changed and forsook me, in misfortune's hour."

To which Zophiël replies:

> "Changed, and forsook thee? this from thee to me?
> Once noble spirit! Oh! had not too much
> My o'er fond heart adored thy fallacy,
> I had not, now, been here to bear thy keen reproach;
> Forsook thee in misfortune? at thy side
> I closer fought as peril thickened round,

Watched o'er thee fallen: the light of heaven denied,
But proved my love more fervent and profound.
Prone as thou wert, had I been mortal-born,
And owned as many lives as leaves there be,
From all Hyrcania by his tempest torn
I had lost, one by one, and given the last for thee.
Oh! had thy plighted pact of faith been kept,
Still unaccomplished were the curse of sin;
'Mid all the woes thy ruined followers wept,
Had friendship lingered, hell could not have been."

Phraërion, another fallen angel, but of a nature gentler than that of Zophiël, is thus introduced:

Harmless Phraërion, formed to dwell on high,
Retained the looks that had been his above;
And his harmonious lip, and sweet, blue eye,
Soothed the fallen seraph's heart, and changed his scorn to love;
No soul-creative in this being born,
Its restless, daring, fond aspirings hid:
Within the vortex of rebellion drawn,
He joined the shining ranks *as others did*.
Success but little had advanced; defeat
He thought so little, scarce to him were worse;
And, as he held in heaven inferior seat,
Less was his bliss, and lighter was his curse.
He formed no plans for happiness: content
To curl the tendril, fold the bud; his pain
So light, he scarcely felt his banishment.
Zophiël, perchance, had held him in disdain;
But, formed for friendship, from his o'erfraught soul
'Twas such relief his burning thoughts to pour
In other ears, that oft the strong control
Of pride he felt them burst, and could restrain no more.
Zophiël was soft, but yet all flame; by turns
Love, grief, remorse, shame, pity, jealousy,
Each boundless in his breast, impels or burns:
His joy was bliss, his pain was agony.

Such are the principal preter-human characters in the poem. Egla, the heroine, is a Hebress of perfect beauty, who lives with her parents not far from the city of Ecbatana, and has been saved, by stratagem, from a general massacre of captives, under a former king of Medea. Being brought before the reigning monarch to answer for the supposed murder of Meles, she exclaims,

Sad from my birth, nay, born upon that day
When perished all my race, my infant ears
Were opened first with groans; and the first ray
I saw, came dimly through my mother's tears.

Zophiël is described throughout the poem as burning with the admiration of virtue, yet frequently betrayed into crime by the pursuit of pleasure. Straying accidentally to the grove of Egla, he is struck with her beauty, and finds consolation in her presence. He appears, however, at an unfortunate moment, for the fair Judean has just yielded to the entreaties of her mother and assented to proposals offered by Meles, a noble of the country; but Zophiël causes his rival to expire suddenly on entering the bridal apartment, and his previous life at Babylon, as revealed in the fifth canto, shows that he was not undeserving of his doom. Despite her extreme sensibility, Egla is highly endowed with "conscience and caution;" and she regards the advances of Zophiël with distrust and apprehension. Meles being missed, she is brought to court to answer for his murder. Her sole fear is for her parents, who are the only Hebrews in the kingdom, and are suffered to live but through the clemency of Sardius, a young prince who has lately come to the throne, and who, like many oriental monarchs, reserves to himself the privilege of decreeing death. The king is convinced of her innocence, and, struck with her extraordinary beauty and character, resolves suddenly to make her his queen. We know of nothing in its way finer than the description which follows, of her introduction, in the simple costume of her country, to a gorgeous banqueting hall in which he sits with his assembled chiefs:

With unassured yet graceful step advancing,
The light vermilion of her cheek more warm
For doubtful modesty; while all were glancing
Over the strange attire that well became such form
To lend her space the admiring band gave way;
The sandals on her silvery feet were blue;
Of saffron tint her robe, as when young day
Spreads softly o'er the heavens, and tints the trembling dew.
Light was that robe as mist; and not a gem
Or ornament impedes its wavy fold,
Long and profuse; save that, above its hem,
'Twas broidered with pomegranate-wreath, in gold.
And, by a silken cincture, broad and blue,
In shapely guise about the waste confined,
Blent with the curls that, of a lighter hue,
Half floated, waving in their length behind;
The other half, in braided tresses twined,
Was decked with rose of pearls, and sapphires azure too,
Arranged with curious skill to imitate
The sweet acacia's blossoms; just as live
And droop those tender flowers in natural state;
And so the trembling gems seemed sensitive,
And pendent, sometimes touch her neck; and there
Seemed shrinking from its softness as alive.
And round her arms, flour-white and round and fair,
Slight bandelets were twined of colors five,
Like little rainbows seemly on those arms;
None of that court had seen the like before,
Soft, fragrant, bright – so much like heaven her charms,
It scarce could seem idolatry to adore.
He who beheld her hand forgot her face;
Yet in that face was all beside forgot;
And he who, as she went, beheld her pace,

And locks profuse, had said, "nay, turn thee not."

Idaspes, the Medean vizier, or prime minister, has reflected on the maiden's story, and is alarmed for the safety of his youthful sovereign, who consents to some delay and experiment, but will not be dissuaded from his design until five inmates of his palace have fallen dead in the captive's apartment. The last of these is Altheëtor, a favorite of the king, (whose Greek name is intended to express his qualities,) and the circumstances of his death, and the consequent grief of Egla and despair of Zophiël, are painted with a beauty, power and passion scarcely surpassed.

Touching his golden harp to prelude sweet,
Entered the youth, so pensive, pale, and fair;
Advanced respectful to the virgin's feet,
And, lowly bending down, made tuneful parlance there.
Like perfume, soft his gentle accents rose,
And sweetly thrilled the gilded roof along;
His warm, devoted soul no terror knows,
And truth and love lend fervor to his song.
She hides her face upon her couch, that there
She may not see him die. No groan – she springs
Frantic between a hope-beam and despair,
And twines her long hair round him as he sings.
Then thus: "O! being, who unseen but near,
Art hovering now, behold and pity me!
For love, hope, beauty, music – all that's dear,
Look, look on me, and spare my agony!
Spirit! in mercy make not me the cause,
The hateful cause, of this kind being's death!
In pity kill me first! He lives – he draws —
Thou wilt not blast? – he draws his harmless breath!"

Still lives Altheëtor; still unguarded strays
One hand o'er his fallen lyre; but all his soul
Is lost – given up. He fain would turn to gaze,
But cannot turn, so twined. Now all that stole
Through every vein, and thrilled each separate nerve,
Himself could not have told – all wound and clasped
In her white arms and hair. Ah! can they serve
To save him? "What a sea of sweets!" he gasped,
But 'twas delight: sound, fragrance, all were breathing.
Still swelled the transport: "Let me look and thank:"
He sighed (celestial smiles his lips enwreathing,)
"I die – but ask no more," he said, and sank;
Still by her arms supported – lower – lower —
As by soft sleep oppressed; so calm, so fair,
He rested on the purple tapestried floor,
It seemed an angel lay reposing there.

And Zophiël exclaims,

"He died of love, or the o'er-perfect joy
Of being pitied – prayed for – pressed by thee.
O! for the fate of that devoted boy
I'd sell my birthright to eternity.
I'm not the cause of this thy last distress.
Nay! look upon thy spirit ere he flies!
Look on me once, and learn to hate me less!"
He said; and tears fell fast from his immortal eyes.

Beloved and admired at first, Egla becomes an object of hatred and fear; for Zophiël being invisible to others her story is discredited, and she is suspected of murdering by some baleful art all who have died in her presence. She is, however, sent safely to her home, and lives, as usual, in retirement with her parents. The visits of Zophiël are now unimpeded. He instructs the young Jewess in music and poetry; his admiration and affection grow with the hours; and he exerts his immortal energies to preserve her from the least pain or sorrow, but selfishly confines her as much as possible to solitude, and permits for her only such amusements as he himself can minister. Her confidence in him increases, and in her gentle society he almost forgets his fall and banishment.

But the difference in their natures causes him continual anxiety; knowing her mortality, he is always in fear that death or sudden blight will deprive him of her; and he consults with Phraërion on the best means of saving her from the perils of human existence. One evening,

Round Phraërion, nearer drawn,
One beauteous arm he flung: "First to my love!
We'll see her safe; then to our task till dawn."
Well pleased, Phraërion answered that embrace;
All balmy he with thousand breathing sweets,
From thousand dewy flowers. "But to what place,"
He said, "will Zophièl go? who danger greets
As if 'twere peace. The palace of the gnome,
Tahathyam, for our purpose most were meet;
But then, the wave, so cold and fierce, the gloom,
The whirlpools, rocks, that guard that deep retreat!
Yet *there* are fountains, which no sunny ray
E'er danced upon, and drops come there at last,
Which, for whole ages, filtering all the way,
Through all the veins of earth, in winding maze have past.
These take from mortal beauty every stain,
And smooth the unseemly lines of age and pain,
With every wondrous efficacy rife;
Nay, once a spirit whispered of a draught,
Of which a drop, by any mortal quaffed,
Would save, for terms of years, his feeble, flickering life."

Tahathyam is the son of a fallen angel, and lives concealed in the bosom of the earth, guarding in his possession a vase of the elixir of life, bequeathed to him by a father whom he is not permitted to see. The visit of Zophiël and Phraërion to this beautiful but unhappy creature will remind the reader of the splendid creations of Dante.

The soft flower-spirit shuddered, looked on high,

And from his bolder brother would have fled;
But then the anger kindling in that eye
He could not bear. So to fair Egla's bed
Followed and looked; then shuddering all with dread,
To wondrous realms, unknown to men, he led;
Continuing long in sunset course his flight,
Until for flowery Sicily he bent;
Then, where Italia smiled upon the night,
Between their nearest shores chose midway his descent.
The sea was calm, and the reflected moon
Still trembled on its surface; not a breath
Curled the broad mirror. Night had passed her noon;
How soft the air! how cold the depths beneath!
The spirits hover o'er that surface smooth,
Zophiël's white arm around Phraërion's twined,
In fond caresses, his tender cares to soothe,
While either's nearer wing the other's crossed behind.
Well pleased, Phraërion half forgot his dread,
And first, with foot as white as lotus leaf,
The sleepy surface of the waves essayed;
But then his smile of love gave place to drops of grief.
How could he for that fluid, dense and chill,
Change the sweet floods of air they floated on?
E'en at the touch his shrinking fibres thrill;
But ardent Zophiël, panting, hurries on,
And (catching his mild brother's tears, with lip
That whispered courage 'twixt each glowing kiss,)
Persuades to plunge: limbs, wings, and locks they dip;
Whate'er the other's pains, the lover felt but bliss.
Quickly he draws Phraërion on, his toil
Even lighter than he hoped: some power benign
Seems to restrain the surges, while they boil
'Mid crags and caverns, as of his design
Respectful. That black, bitter element,
As if obedient to his wish, gave way;
So, comforting Phraërion, on he went,
And a high, craggy arch they reach at dawn of day,
Upon the upper world; and forced them through
That arch, the thick, cold floods, with such a roar,
That the bold sprite receded, and would view
The cave before he ventured to explore.
Then, fearful lest his frighted guide might part
And not be missed amid such strife and din,
He strained him closer to his burning heart,
And, trusting to his strength, rushed fiercely in.

On, on, for many a weary mile they fare;
Till thinner grew the floods, long, dark and dense,
From nearness to earth's core; and now, a glare

Of grateful light relieved their piercing sense;
As when, above, the sun his genial streams
Of warmth and light darts mingling with the waves,
Whole fathoms down; while, amorous of his beams,
Each scaly, monstrous thing leaps from its slimy caves.
And now, Phraërion, with a tender cry,
Far sweeter than the land-bird's note, afar
Heard through the azure arches of the sky,
By the long-baffled, storm-worn mariner:
"Hold, Zophiël! rest thee now – our task is done,
Tahathyam's realms alone can give this light!
O! though it is not the life-awakening sun,
How sweet to see it break upon such fearful night!"

Clear grew the wave, and thin; a substance white,
The wide-expanding cavern floors and flanks;
Could one have looked from high how fair the sight!
Like these, the dolphin, on Bahaman banks,
Cleaves the warm fluid, in his rainbow tints,
While even his shadow on the sands below
Is seen; as through the wave he glides, and glints,
Where lies the polished shell, and branching corals grow.
No massive gate impedes; the wave, in vain,
Might strive against the air to break or fall;
And, at the portal of that strange domain,
A clear, bright curtain seemed, or crystal wall.
The spirits pass its bounds, but would not far
Tread its slant pavement, like unbidden guest;
The while, on either side, a bower of spar
Gave invitation for a moment's rest.
And, deep in either bower, a little throne
Looked so fantastic, it were hard to know
If busy nature fashioned it alone,
Or found some curious artist here below.

Soon spoke Phraërion: "Come, Tahathyam, come,
Thou know'st me well! I saw thee once to love;
And bring a guest to view thy sparkling dome
Who comes full fraught with tidings from above."
Those gentle tones, angelically clear,
Past from his lips, in mazy depths retreating,
(As if that bower had been the cavern's ear,)
Full many a stadia far; and kept repeating,
As through the perforated rock they pass,
Echo to echo guiding them; their tone
(As just from the sweet spirit's lip) at last
Tahathyam heard: where, on a glittering throne he solitary sat.

Sending through the rock an answering strain, to give the spirits welcome, the gnome prepares to meet them at his palace-door:

He sat upon a car, (and the large pearl,
Once cradled in it, glimmered now without,)
Bound midway on two serpents' backs, that curl
In silent swiftness as he glides about.
A shell, 'twas first in liquid amber wet,
Then ere the fragrant cement hardened round,
All o'er with large and precious stones 'twas set
By skillful Tsavaven, or made or found.
The reins seemed pliant crystal (but their strength
Had matched his earthly mother's silken band)
And, flecked with rubies, flowed in ample length,
Like sparkles o'er Tahathyam's beauteous hand.
The reptiles, in their fearful beauty, drew,
As if from love, like steeds of Araby;
Like blood of lady's lip their scarlet hue;
Their scales so bright and sleek, 'twas pleasure but to see,
With open mouths, as proud to show the bit,
They raise their heads, and arch their necks – (with eye
As bright as if with meteor fire 'twere lit;)
And dart their barbed tongues, 'twixt fangs of ivory.
These, when the quick advancing sprites they saw
Furl their swift wings, and tread with angel grace
The smooth, fair pavement, checked their speed in awe,
And glided far aside as if to give them space.

The errand of the angels is made known to the sovereign of this interior and resplendent world, and upon conditions the precious elixir is promised; but first Zophiël and Phraërion are ushered through sparry portals to a banquet.

High towered the palace and its massive pile,
Made dubious if of nature or of art,
So wild and so uncouth; yet, all the while,
Shaped to strange grace in every varying part.
And groves adorned it, green in hue, and bright,
As icicles about a laurel-tree;
And danced about their twigs a wonderous light;
Whence came that light so far beneath the sea?
Zophiël looked up to know, and to his view
The vault scarce seemed less vast than that of day;
No rocky roof was seen; a tender blue
Appeared, as of the sky, and clouds about it play:
And, in the midst, an orb looked as 'twere meant
To shame the sun, it mimicked him so well.
But ah! no quickening, grateful warmth it sent;
Cold as the rock beneath, the paly radiance fell.
Within, from thousand lamps the lustre strays.

Reflected back from gems about the wall;
And from twelve dolphin shapes a fountain plays,
Just in the centre of a spacious hall;
But whether in the sunbeam formed to sport,
These shapes once lived in supleness and pride,
And then, to decorate this wonderous court,
Were stolen from the waves and petrified;
Or, moulded by some imitative gnome,
And scaled all o'er with gems, they were but stone,
Casting their showers and rainbows 'neath the dome.
To man or angel's eye might not be known.
No snowy fleece in these sad realms was found,
Nor silken ball by maiden loved so well;
But ranged in lightest garniture around,
In seemly folds, a shining tapestry fell.
And fibres of asbestos, bleached in fire,
And all with pearls and sparkling gems o'erflecked,
Of that strange court composed the rich attire,
And such the cold, fair form of sad Tahathyam decked.

Gifted with every pleasing endowment, in possession of an elixir of which a drop perpetuates life and youth, surrounded by friends of his own choice, who are all anxious to please and amuse him, the gnome feels himself inferior in happiness to the lowest of mortals. His sphere is confined, his high powers useless, for he is without the "last, best gift of God to man," and there is no object on which he can exercise his benevolence. The feast is described with the terse beauty which marks all the canto, and at its close —

The banquet-cups, of many a hue and shape,
Bossed o'er with gems, were beautiful to view;
But, for the madness of the vaunted grape,
Their only draught was a pure limpid dew,
The spirits while they sat in social guise,
Pledging each goblet with an answering kiss,
Marked many a gnome conceal his bursting sighs;
And thought death happier than a life like this.
But they had music; at one ample side
Of the vast arena of that sparkling hall,
Fringed round with gems, that all the rest outvied.
In form of canopy, was seen to fall
The stony tapestry, over what, at first,
An altar to some deity appeared;
But it had cost full many a year to adjust
The limpid crystal tubes that 'neath upreared
Their different lucid lengths; and so complete
Their wondrous 'rangement, that a tuneful gnome
Drew from them sounds more varied, clear, and sweet,
Than ever yet had rung in any earthly dome.
Loud, shrilly, liquid, soft; at that quick touch
Such modulation wooed his angel ears

That Zophiël wondered, started from his couch
And thought upon the music of the spheres.

But Zophiël lingers with ill-dissembled impatience and Tahathyam leads the way to where the elixir of life is to be surrendered.

Soon through the rock they wind; the draught divine
Was hidden by a veil the king alone might lift.
Cephroniel's son, with half-averted face
And faltering hand, that curtain drew, and showed,
Of solid diamond formed, a lucid vase;
And warm within the pure elixir glowed;
Bright red, like flame and blood, (could they so meet,)
Ascending, sparkling, dancing, whirling, ever
In quick perpetual movement; and of heat
So high, the rock was warm beneath their feet,
(Yet heat in its intenseness hurtful never,)
Even to the entrance of the long arcade
Which led to that deep shrine, in the rock's breast
As far as if the half-angel were afraid
To know the secret he himself possessed.
Tahathyam filled a slip of spar, with dread,
As if stood by and frowned some power divine;
Then trembling, as he turned to Zophiël, said,
"But for one service shall thou call it thine:
Bring me a wife; as I have named the way;
(I will not risk destruction save for love!)
Fair-haired and beauteous like my mother; say —
Plight me this pact; so shalt thou bear above,
For thine own purpose, what has here been kept
Since bloomed the second age, to angels dear.
Bursting from earth's dark womb, the fierce wave swept
Off every form that lived and loved, while here,
Deep hidden here, I still lived on and wept."

Great pains have evidently been taken to have every thing throughout the work in keeping. Most of the names have been selected for their particular meaning. Tahathyam and his retinue appear to have been settled in their submarine dominion before the great deluge that changed the face of the earth, as is intimated in the lines last quoted; and as the accounts of that judgment, and of the visits and communications of angels connected with it, are chiefly in Hebrew, they have names from that language. It would have been better perhaps not to have called the persons of the third canto "gnomes," as at this word one is reminded of all the varieties of the Rosicrucian system, of which Pope has so well availed himself in the Rape of the Lock, which sprightly production has been said to be derived, though remotely, from Jewish legends of fallen angels. Tahathyam can be called gnome only on account of the retreat to which his erring father has consigned him.

The spirits leave the cavern, and Zophiël exults a moment, as if restored to perfect happiness. But there is no way of bearing his prize to the earth except through the most dangerous depths of the sea.

Zophiël, with toil severe,
But bliss in view, through the thrice murky night,
Sped swiftly on. A treasure now more dear
He had to guard, than boldest hope had dared
To breathe for years; but rougher grew the way;
And soft Phraërion, shrinking back and scared
At every whirling depth, wept for his flowers and day.
Shivered, and pained, and shrieking, as the waves
Wildly impel them 'gainst the jutting rocks;
Not all the care and strength of Zophiël saves
His tender guide from half the wildering shocks
He bore. The calm, which favored their descent,
And bade them look upon their task as o'er,
Was past; and now the inmost earth seemed rent
With such fierce storms as never raged before.
Of a long mortal life had the whole pain
Essenced in one consummate pang, been borne,
Known, and survived, its still would be in vain
To try to paint the pains felt by these sprites forlorn.
The precious drop closed in its hollow spar,
Between his lips Zophiël in triumph bore.
Now, earth and sea seem shaken! Dashed afar
He feels it part; – 'tis dropt; – the waters roar,
He sees it in a sable vortex whirling,
Formed by a cavern vast, that 'neath the sea,
Sucks the fierce torrent in.

The furious storm has been raised by the power of his betrayer and persecutor, and in gloomy desperation Zophiël rises with the frail Phraërion to the upper air:

Black clouds, in mass deform,
Were frowning; yet a moment's calm was there,
As it had stopped to breathe awhile the storm.
Their white feet pressed the desert sod; they shook
From their bright locks the briny drops; nor stayed
Zophiël on ills, present or past, to look.

But his flight toward Medea is stayed by a renewal of the tempest —

Loud and more loud the blast; in mingled gyre,
Flew leaves and stones; and with a deafening crash
Fell the uprooted trees; heaven seemed on fire —
Not, as 'tis wont, with intermitting flash,
But, like an ocean all of liquid flame,
The whole broad arch gave one continuous glare,
While through the red light from their prowling came
The frighted beasts, and ran, but could not find a lair.

At length comes a shock, as if the earth crashed against some other planet, and they are thrown amazed and prostrate upon the heath. Zophiël,

> Too fierce for fear, uprose; yet ere for flight in a mood
> Served his torn wings, a form before him stood
> In gloomy majesty. Like starless night,
> A sable mantle fell in cloudy fold
> From its stupendous breast; and as it trod
> The pale and lurid light at distance rolled
> Before its princely feet, receding on the sod.

The interview between the bland spirit and the prime cause of his guilt is full of the energy of passion, and the rhetoric of the conversation has a masculine beauty of which Mrs. Brooks alone of all the poets of her sex is capable.

Zophiël returns to Medea and the drama draws to a close, which is painted with consummate art. Egla wanders alone at twilight in the shadowy vistas of a grove, wondering and sighing at the continued absence of the enamored angel, who approaches unseen while she sings a strain that he had taught her.

> His wings were folded o'er his eyes; severe
> As was the pain he'd borne from wave and wind,
> The dubious warning of that being drear,
> Who met him in the lightning, to his mind
> Was torture worse; a dark presentiment
> Came o'er his soul with paralyzing chill,
> As when Fate vaguely whispers her intent
> To poison mortal joy with sense of coming ill.
> He searched about the grove with all the care
> Of trembling jealousy, as if to trace
> By track or wounded flower some rival there;
> And scarcely dared to look upon the face
> Of her he loved, lest it some tale might tell
> To make the only hope that soothed him vain:
> He hears her notes in numbers die and swell,
> But almost fears to listen to the strain
> Himself had taught her, lest some hated name
> Had been with that dear gentle air enwreathed.
> While he was far; she sighed – he nearer came,
> Oh, transport! Zophiël was the name she breathed.

He saw her – but

> Paused, ere he would advance, for very bliss.
> The joy of a whole mortal life he felt
> In that one moment. Now, too long unseen,
> He fain had shown his beauteous form, and knelt
> But while he still delayed, a mortal rushed between.

This scene is in the sixth canto. In the fifth, which is occupied almost entirely by mortals, and bears a closer relation than the others to the chief works in narrative and dramatic poetry, are related the adventures of Zameia, which, with the story of her death, following the last extract, would make a fine tragedy. Her misfortunes are simply told by an aged attendant who had fled with her in pursuit of Meles, whom she had seen and loved in Babylon. At the feast of Venus Mylitta,

> Full in the midst, and taller than the rest,
> Zameia stood distinct, and not a sigh
> Disturbed the gem that sparkled on her breast;
> Her oval cheek was heightened to a dye
> That shamed the mellow vermeil of the wreath
> Which in her jetty locks became her well,
> And mingled fragrance with her sweeter breath,
> The while her haughty lips more beautifully swell
> With consciousness of every charm's excess;
> While with becoming scorn she turned her face
> From every eye that darted its caress,
> As if some god alone might hope for her embrace.

Again she is discovered, sleeping, by the rocky margin of a river:

> Pallid and worn, but beautiful and young,
> Though marked her charms by wildest passion's trace;
> Her long round arms, over a fragment flung,
> From pillow all too rude protect a face,
> Whose dark and high arched brows gave to the thought
> To deem what radiance once they towered above;
> But all its proudly beauteous outline taught
> That anger there had shared the throne of love.

It was Zameia that rushed between Zophiël and Egla, and that now with quivering lip, disordered hair, and eye gleaming with frenzy, seized her arm, reproached her with the murder of Meles, and attempted to kill her. But as her dagger touches the white robe of the maiden her arm is arrested by some unseen power, and she falls dead at Egla's feet. Reproached by her own handmaid and by the aged attendant of the princess, Egla feels all the horrors of despair, and, beset with evil influences, she seeks to end her own life, but is prevented by the timely appearance of Raphael, in the character of a traveler's guide, leading Helon, a young man of her own nation and kindred who has been living unknown at Babylon, protected by the same angel, and destined to be her husband; and to the mere idea of whose existence, imparted to her in a mysterious and vague manner by Raphael, she has remained faithful from her childhood.

Zophiël, who by the power of Lucifer has been detained struggling in the grove, is suffered once more to enter the presence of the object of his affection. He sees her supported in the arms of Helon, whom he makes one futile effort to destroy, and then is banished forever. The emissaries of his immortal enemy pursue the baffled seraph to his place of exile, and by their derision endeavor to augment his misery,

> And when they fled he hid him in a cave
> Strewn with the bones of some sad wretch who there,
> Apart from men, had sought a desert grave,

And yielded to the demon of despair.
There beauteous Zophiël, shrinking from the day,
Envying the wretch that so his life had ended,
Wailed his eternity;

But, at last, is visited by Raphael, who gives him hopes of restoration to his original rank in heaven.

The concluding canto is entitled "The Bridal of Helon," and in the following lines it contains much of the author's philosophy of life:

The bard has sung, God never formed a soul
Without its own peculiar mate, to meet
Its wandering half, when ripe to crown the whole
Bright plan of bliss, most heavenly, most complete!
But thousand evil things there are that hate
To look on happiness; these hurt, impede,
And, leagued with time, space, circumstance, and fate,
Keep kindred heart from heart, to pine and pant and bleed.
And as the dove to far Palmyra flying,
From where her native founts of Antioch beam,
Weary, exhausted, longing, panting, sighing,
Lights sadly at the desert's bitter stream;
So many a soul, o'er life's drear desert faring,
Love's pure, congenial spring unfound, unquaffed,
Suffers, recoils, then, thirsty and despairing
Of what it would, descends and sips the nearest draught.

On consulting "Zophiël," it will readily be seen that the passages here extracted have not been chosen for their superior poetical merit. It has simply been attempted by quotations and a running commentary to convey a just impression of the scope and character of the work. There is not perhaps in the English language a poem containing a greater variety of thought, description and incident, and though the author did not possess in an eminent degree the constructive faculty, there are few narratives that are conducted with more regard to unities, or with more simplicity and perspicuity.

Though characterized by force and even freedom of expression, it does not contain an impure or irreligious sentiment. Every page is full of passion, but passion subdued and chastened by refinement and delicacy. Several of the characters are original and splendid creations. Zophiël seems to us the finest fallen angel that has come from the hand of a poet. Milton's outcasts from heaven are utterly depraved and abraded of their glory; but Zophiël has traces of his original virtue and beauty, and a lingering hope of restoration to the presence of the Divinity. Deceived by the specious fallacies of an immortal like himself, and his superior in rank, he encounters the blackest perfidy in him for whom so much had been forfeited, and the blight of every prospect that had lured his fancy or ambition. Egla, though one of the most important characters in the poem, is much less interesting. She is represented as heroically consistent, except when given over for a moment to the malice of infernal emissaries. In her immediate reception of Helon as a husband, she is constant to a long cherished idea, and fulfills the design of her guardian spirit, or it would excite some wonder that Zophiël was worsted in such competition. It will be perceived upon a careful examination that the work is in admirable keeping, and that the entire conduct of its several persons bears a just relation to their characters and position.

Mrs. Brooks returned to the United States, and her son being now a student in the military academy, she took up her residence in the vicinity of West Point, where, with occasional intermissions

in which she visited her plantation in Cuba or traveled in the United States, she remained until 1839. Her marked individuality, the variety, beauty and occasional splendor of her conversation, made her house a favorite resort of the officers of the academy, and of the most accomplished persons who frequented that romantic neighborhood, by many of whom she will long be remembered with mingled affection and admiration.

In 1834 she caused to be published in Boston an edition of "Zophiël," for the benefit of the Polish exiles who were thronging to this country after their then recent struggle for freedom. There were at that time too few readers among us of sufficiently cultivated and independent taste to appreciate a work of art which time or accident had not commended to the popular applause, and "Zophiël" scarcely anywhere excited any interest or attracted any attention. At the end of a month but about twenty copies had been sold, and, in a moment of disappointment, Mrs. Brooks caused the remainder of the impression to be withdrawn from the market. The poem has therefore been little read in this country, and even the title of it would have remained unknown to the common reader of elegant literature but for occasional allusions to it by Southey and other foreign critics. [2]

In the summer of 1843, while Mrs. Brooks was residing at Fort Columbus, in the bay of New York, – a military post at which her son, Captain Horace Brooks, was stationed several years – she had printed for private circulation the remarkable little work to which allusion has already been made, entitled "Idomen, or the Vale of the Yumuri." It is in the style of a romance, but contains little that is fictitious except the names of the characters. The account which Idomen gives of her own history is literally true, except in relation to an excursion to Niagara, which occurred in a different period of the author's life. It is impossible to read these interesting "confessions" without feeling a profound interest in the character which they illustrate; a character of singular strength, dignity and delicacy, subjected to the severest tests, and exposed to the most curious and easy analysis. "To see the inmost soul of one who bore all the impulse and torture of self-murder without perishing, is what can seldom be done: very few have memories strong enough to retain a distinct impression of past suffering, and few, though possessed of such memories, have the power of so describing their sensations as to make them apparent to another." "Idomen" will possess an interest and value as a psychological study, independent of that which belongs to it as a record of the experience of so eminent a poet.

Mrs. Brooks was anxious to have published an edition of all her writings, including "Idomen," before leaving New York, and she authorized me to offer gratuitously her copyrights to an eminent publishing house for that purpose. In the existing condition of the copyright laws, which should have been entitled acts for the discouragement of a native literature, she was not surprised that the offer was declined, though indignant that the reason assigned should have been that they were "of too elevated a character to sell." Writing to me soon afterward she observed, "I do not think any thing from my humble imagination can be 'too elevated,' or elevated enough, for the public as it really is in these North American States… In the words of poor Spurzheim, (uttered to me a short time before his death, in Boston,) I solace myself by saying, 'Stupidity! stupidity! the knowledge of that alone has saved me from misanthropy.'"

In December, 1843, Mrs. Brooks sailed the last time from her native country for the Island of Cuba. There, on her coffee estate, Hermita, she renewed for a while her literary labors. The small stone building, smoothly plastered, with a flight of steps leading to its entrance, in which she wrote some of the cantos of "Zophiël," is described by a recent traveler [3] as surrounded by alleys of "palms, cocoas, and oranges, interspersed with the tamarind, the pomegranate, the mangoe, and the rose-apple, with a back ground of coffee and plantains covering every portion of the soil with their luxuriant

---

[2] Maria del Occidente – otherwise, we believe, Mrs. Brooks – is styled in "The Doctor," &c. "the most impassioned and most imaginative of all poetesses." And without taking into account *quædam ardentiora* scattered here and there throughout her singular poem, there is undoubtedly ground for the first clause, and, with the more accurate substitution of "fanciful" for "imaginative" for the whole of the eulogy. It is altogether an extraordinary performance. —*London Quarterly Review.*

[3] The author of "Notes on Cuba." Boston, 1844.

verdure. I have often passed it," he observes, "in the still night, when the moon was shining brightly, and the leaves of the cocoa and palm threw fringe-like shadows on the walls and the floor, and the elfin lamps of the cocullos swept through the windows and door, casting their lurid, mysterious light on every object, while the air was laden with mingled perfume from the coffee and orange, and the tube-rose and night-blooming ceres, and have thought that no fitter birth-place could be found for the images she has created."

Her habits of composition were peculiar. With an almost unconquerable aversion to the use of the pen, especially in her later years, it was her custom to finish her shorter pieces, and entire cantos of longer poems, before committing a word of them to paper. She had long meditated, and had partly composed, an epic under the title of "Beatriz, the Beloved of Columbus," and when transmitting to me the MS. of "The Departed," in August, 1844, she remarked: "When I have written out my 'Vistas del Infierno' and one other short poem, I hope to begin the penning of the epic I have so often spoken to you of; but when or whether it will ever be finished, Heaven alone can tell." I have not learned whether this poem was written, but when I heard her repeat passages of it, I thought it would be a nobler work than "Zophiël."

Mrs. Brooks died at Patricio, in Cuba, near the close of December, 1844.

I have no room for particular criticism of her minor poems. They will soon I trust be given to the public in a suitable edition, when it will be discovered that they are heart-voices, distinguished for the same fearlessness of thought and expression which is illustrated by the work which has been considered in this brief reviewal.

The accompanying portrait is from a picture by Mr. Alexander, of Boston, and though the engraver has very well preserved the details and general effect of the painting, it does little justice to the fine intellectual expression of the subject. It was a fancy of Mr. Southey's that induced her to wear in her hair the passion-flower, which that poet deemed the fittest emblem of her nature.

THE CRUISE OF THE RAKER

A TALE OF THE WAR OF 1812-15

BY HENRY A. CLARK

CHAPTER I

The Departure of the Privateer

It was a dark and cloudy afternoon near the close of the war of 1812-15. A little vessel was scudding seaward before a strong sou'wester, which lashed the bright waters of the Delaware till its breast seemed a mimic ocean, heaving and swelling with tiny waves. As the sky and sea grew darker and darker in the gathering shades of twilight, the little bark rose upon the heavy swell of the ocean, and meeting Cape May on its lee-beam, shot out upon the broad waste of waters, alone in its daring course, seeming like the fearless bird which spreads its long wings amid the fury of the storm and the darkness of the cloud.

Upon the deck, near the helm, stood the captain, whom we introduce to our readers as George Greene, captain of the American privater, Raker. He was a weather-bronzed, red-cheeked, sturdy-built personage, with a dark-blue eye, the same in color as the great sea over which it was roving with an earnest and careful glance, rather as if in search of a strange sail, than in apprehension of the approaching storm. His countenance denoted firmness and resolution, which he truly possessed in an extraordinary degree, and his whole appearance was that of a hardy sailor accustomed to buffet with the storm and laugh at the fiercest wave.

It was evident that a bad night was before them, and there were some on board the little privateer who thought they had better have remained inside the light-house of Cape May, than ventured out upon the sea. The heavy masses of black clouds which were piled on the edge of the distant horizon seemed gradually gathering nearer and nearer, as if to surround and ingulf the gallant vessel, which sped onward fearlessly and proudly, as if conscious of its power to survive the tempest, and bide the storm.

Captain Greene's eye was at length attracted by the threatening aspect of the sky, and seizing his speaking-trumpet he gave the orders of preparation, which were the more promptly executed inasmuch as they had been anxiously awaited.

"Lay aloft there, lads, and in with the fore to'gallant-sail and royal – down with the main gaff top-sail! – bear a hand, lads, a norther on the Banks is no plaything! Clear away both cables, and see them bent to the anchors – let's have all snug – lower the flag from the gaff-peak, and send up the storm-pennant, there – now we are ready."

A thunder-storm at sea is perhaps the sublimest sight in nature, especially when attended with the darkness and mystery of night. The struggling vessel plunges onward into the deep blackness, like a blind and unbridled war-horse. All is dark – fearfully dark. Stand with me, dear reader, here in the bow of the ship! make fast to that halliard, and share with me in the glorious feelings engendered by the storm which is now rioting over the waters and rending the sky. We hear the fierce roar of the contending surges, yet we see them not. We hear the quivering sails and strained sheets, creaking and fluttering like imprisoned spirits, above and around us, but all is solemnly invisible; now, see in the distant horizon the faint premonitory flush of light, preceding the vivid lightning flash – now, for a moment, every thing – sky – water – sheet – shroud and spar are glowing with a brilliancy that exceedeth the brightness of day – the sky is a broad canopy of golden radiance, and the waves are crested with a red and fiery surge, that reminds you of your conception of the "lake of burning fire and brimstone." We feel the dread – the vast sublimity of the breathless moment, and while the mighty thoughts and tumultuous conceptions are striving for form and order of utterance within our throbbing breasts – again all is dark – sadly, solemnly dark. Is not the scene – is not the hour, truly sublime?

There was one at least on board the little Raker, who felt as we should have felt, dear reader – a sense of exultation, mingled with awe. It is upon the ocean that man learns his own weakness, and his own strength – he feels the light vessel trembling beneath him, as if it feared dissolution – he hears the strained sheets moaning in almost conscious agony – he sees the great waves dashing from stem to stern in relentless glee, and he feels that he is a sport and a plaything in the grasp of a mightier power; he learns his own insignificance. Yet the firm deck remains – the taut sheets and twisted halliards give not away; and he learns a proud reliance on his own skill and might, when he finds that with but a narrow hold between him and death, he can outride the storm, and o'ermaster the wave.

Such were the thoughts which filled the mind of Henry Morris, as he stood by the side of Captain Greene on the quarter-deck of the Raker; as he stood with his left arm resting on the main-boom, and his gracefully turned little tarpaulin thrown back from a broad, high forehead, surrounded by dark and clustering curls, and with his black, brilliant eyes lighted up with the enthusiasm of thought, he presented a splendid specimen of an American sailor. The epaulette upon his shoulder denoted that he was an officer; he was indeed second in command in the privateer. He was a native of New Jersey, and his father had been in Revolutionary days one of the "Jarsey Blues," as brave and gallant men as fought in that glorious struggle.

"Well, Harry," said Captain Greene, "it's a dirty night, but I'll turn in a spell, and leave you in command."

"Ay, ay, sir."

Captain Greene threw out a huge quid of tobacco which had rested for some time in his mouth, walked the deck a few times fore and aft, gaped as if his jaws were about to separate forever, and then disappeared through the cabin-door.

Henry Morris, though an universal favorite with the crew and officers under his command, was yet a strict disciplinarian, and being left in command of the deck at once went the rounds of the watch, to see that all were on the look out. The night had far advanced before he saw any remissness; at length, however, he discovered a brawny tar stowed away in a coil of rope, snoring in melodious unison with the noise of the wind and wave; his mouth was open, developing an amazing circumference. Morris looked at him for some time, when, with a smile, he addressed a sailor near him.

"I say, Jack Marlinspike!"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Jack, get some oakum."

Jack speedily brought a fist-full.

"Now, Jack, some *slush*."

Jack dipped the oakum in the slush-bucket which hung against the main-mast.

"Now, Jack, a little tar."

The mixture was immediately dropped into the tar-bucket.

"Now, Jack, stow it away in Pratt's mouth – don't wake him up – 'tis a delicate undertaking, but he sleeps soundly."

"Lord! a stroke of lightning wouldn't wake him – ha! ha! ha! he'll dream he is eating his breakfast!"

With a broad grin upon his weather-beaten face, Marlinspike proceeded to obey orders. He placed the execrable compound carefully in Pratt's mouth, and plugged it down, as he called it, with the end of his jack-knife, then surveying his work with a complacent laugh, he touched his hat, and withdrew a few paces to bide the event.

Pratt breathed hard, but slept on, though the melody of his snoring was sadly impaired in the clearness of its utterance.

Morris gazed at him quietly, and then sung out,

"Pratt – Pratt – what are you lying there wheezing like a porpoise for? Get up, man, your watch is not out."

The sailor opened his eyes with a ludicrous expression of fright, as he became immediately conscious of a peculiar feeling of difficulty in breathing – thrusting his huge hand into his mouth, he hauled away upon its contents, and at length found room for utterance.

"By heaven, just tell me who did that 'ar nasty trick – that's all."

At this moment he caught sight of Marlinspike, who was looking at him with a grin extending from ear to ear. Without further remark, Pratt let the substance which he had held in his hand fly at Marlinspike's head; that individual, however, dodged very successfully, and it disappeared to leeward.

Pratt was about to follow up his first discharge with an assault from a pair of giant fists, but the voice of his commander restrained him.

"Ah, Pratt! somebody has been fooling you – you must look out for the future."

Pratt immediately knew from the peculiar tone of the voice which accompanied this remark who was the real author of the joke, and turned to his duty with the usual philosophy of a sailor, at the same time filling his mouth with nearly a whole hand of tobacco, to take the taste out, as he said. He did not soon sleep upon his watch again.

As the reader will perceive, Lieut. Morris was decidedly fond of a joke, as, indeed, is every sailor.

The storm still raged onward as day broke over the waters; the little Raker was surrounded by immense waves which heaved their foaming spray over the vessel from stem to stern.

Yet all on board were in good spirits; all had confidence in the well-tried strength of their bark, and the joke and jest went round as gayly and carelessly as if the wind were only blowing a good stiff way.

"Here, you snow-ball," cried Jack Marlinspike, to the black cook, who had just emptied his washings overboard, and was tumbling back to his galley as well as the uneasy motion of the vessel would allow; "here, snow-ball."

"Well, massa – what want?"

"Haint we all told you that you mustn't empty nothing over to windward but hot water and ashes – all else must go to leeward?"

"Yes, Massa."

"Well, recollect it now; go and empty your ash-pot, so you'll learn how."

"Yes, massa."

Cuffy soon appeared with his pot, which he capsized as directed, and got his eyes full of the dust.

"O, Lord! O, Lord! I see um now; I guess you wont catch dis child that way agin."

"Well, well, Cuffy! we must all learn by experience."

"Gorry, massa, guess I wont try de hot water!"

"Well, I wouldn't, Cuff. Now hurry up the pork – you've learnt something this morning."

Such was the spirit of the Raker's crew, as they once more stretched out upon the broad ocean. It was their third privateering trip, and they felt confident of success, as they had been unusually fortunate in their previous trips. The crew consisted of but twenty men, but all were brave and powerful fellows, and all actuated by a true love of country, as well as prompted by a desire for gain. A long thirty-two lay amidships, carefully covered with canvas, which also concealed a formidable pile of balls. Altogether, the Raker, though evidently built entirely for speed, seemed also a vessel well able to enter into an engagement with any vessel of its size and complement.

As the middle day approached the clouds arose and scudded away to leeward like great flocks of wild geese, and the bright sun once more shone upon the waters, seeming to hang a string of pearls about the dark crest of each subsiding wave. All sail was set aboard the Raker, which stretched out toward mid ocean, with the stars and stripes flying at her peak, the free ocean beneath, and her band of gallant hearts upon her decks, ready for the battle or the breeze.

CHAPTER II

The Merchant Brig

Two weeks later than the period at which we left the Raker, a handsome merchant vessel, with all sail set, was gliding down the English channel, bound for the East Indies. The gentle breeze of a lovely autumnal morning scarcely sufficed to fill the sails, and the vessel made but little progress till outside the Lizard, when a freer wind struck it, and it swept oceanward with a gallant pace, dashing aside the waters, and careering gracefully as a swan upon the wave. Its armament was of little weight, and it seemed evident that its voyage, as far as any design of the owners was concerned, was to be a peaceful one. England at that time had become the undisputed mistress of the ocean; and even the few splendid victories obtained by the gallant little American navy, had failed as yet to inspire in the bosoms of her sailors, any feeling like that of fear or of caution; and Captain Horton, of the merchantman Betsy Allen, smoked his pipe, and drank his glass as unconcernedly as if there were no such thing as an American privateer upon the ocean.

The passengers in the vessel, which was a small brig of not more than a hundred and forty tons, were an honest merchant of London, Thomas Williams by name, and his daughter, a lovely girl of seventeen. Mr. Williams had failed in business, but through the influence of friends had obtained an appointment from the East India Company, and was now on his way to take his station. He was a blunt and somewhat unpolished man, but kind in heart as he was frank in speech.

Julia Williams was a fair specimen of English beauty; she was tall, yet so well developed, that she did not appear slight or angular, and withal so gracefully rounded was every limb, that any less degree of fullness would have detracted from her beauty. She was full of ardor and enterprise, not easily appalled by danger, and properly confident in her own resources, yet there was no unfeminine expression of boldness in her countenance, for nothing could be softer, purer, or more delicate, than the outlines of her charming features. There were times when, roused by intense emotion, she seemed queen-like in her haughty step and majestic beauty, yet in her calmer mind, her retiring and modest demeanor partook more of a womanly dependence than of the severity of command.

Julia was seated on the deck beside her father, in the grateful shade of the main-mast, gazing upon the green shores which they had just passed, now fast fading in the distance, while the chalky cliffs which circle the whole coast of England, began to stand out in bold relief upon the shore.

"Good-bye to dear England, father!" said the beautiful girl; "shall we ever see it again?"

"*You* may, dear Julia, probably *I* never shall."

"Well, let us hope that we may."

"Yes, we will hope, it will be a proud day for me, if it ever come, when I go back to London and pay my creditors every cent I owe them, when no man shall have reason to curse me for the injury I have done him, however unintentional."

"No man will do so now, dear father, no one but knows you did all you could to avert the calamity, and when it came, surrendered all your property to meet the demands of your creditors. You did all that an honest man should do, father; and you can have no reason to reproach yourself."

"True, girl, true! I do not; yet I hate to think that I, whose name was once as good as the bank, should now owe, when I cannot pay – that's all; a bad feeling, but a few years in India may make all right again."

"O, yes! but, father, it is time for you to take your morning glass. You know you wont feel well if you forget it."

"Never fear my forgetting that; my stomach always tell me, and I know by that when it is 11 o'clock, A.M., as well as by my time-piece."

"Well, John, bring Mr. Williams his morning glass."

Julia spoke to their servant, a worthy, clever fellow, who had long lived in their family, and would not leave it now. He had never been upon the ocean before, and already began to be sea-sick. He however managed to reach the cabin-door, and after a long time returned with the glass, which he got to his master's hand, spilling half its contents on the way.

"There, master, I haint been drinking none on't, but this plaguey ship is so dommed uneasy, I can't walk steady, and I feels very sick, I does; I think I be's going to die."

"You are only a little sea-sick, John."

"Not so dommed little, either."

"You are not yet used to your new situation, John; in a few days you'll be quite a sailor."

"Will I though? Well, the way I feels now, I'd just as lief die as not – oh! – ugh" – and John rushed to the gunwale.

"Heave yo!" sung out a jolly tar; "pitch your cargo overboard. You'll sail better if you lighten ship."

"Dom this ere sailing – ugh – I will die."

Thus resolving, John laid himself down by the galley, and closed his eyes with a heroic determination.

Such an event, as might be expected, was a great joke to the crew – a land-lubber at sea being with sailors always a fair butt, and poor John's misery was aggravated by their, as it seemed to him, unfeeling remarks, yet he was so far gone that he could only faintly "dom them." His master, who knew that he would soon be well, made no attempt to relieve him; and John was for some time unmolested in his vigorous attempt to die.

He was aroused at length by the same tar who had first noticed his sickness,

"I say, lubber, are you sick?"

"Yes, dom sick."

"Well, I expect you've got to die, there's only one thing that'll save you – get up and follow me to the cock-pit."

John attempted to rise, but now really unwell, he was not able to stir. His kind physician calling a brother tar to his aid, they assisted John below.

"There, now, you lubber, I'm going to cure you, if you'll only foller directions."

John merely grunted.

"Here's some raw pork, and some grog, though it's a pity to waste grog on such a lubber – now, you must eat as if you'd never ate before, if you don't, you are a goner."

John very faintly uttered, that he couldn't "eat a dom bit."

"Then you'll die, and the fishes will eat YOU."

John shuddered, "Well, I'll try."

So saying, he downed one of the pieces of pork, which as speedily came up again.

"Now drink, and be quick about it, or I shall drink it for you."

With much exertion they made John eat and drink heartily, after which they left him to sleep awhile.

The following morning John appeared on deck again, exceedingly pale to be sure, but entirely recovered from his sea-sickness, and with a feeling of fervent gratitude toward the sailor, who, as he fancied, had saved his valuable life.

Nothing occurred to interrupt the peaceful monotony of life aboard the little craft for the following ten days: before a good breeze they had made much way in their voyage, and all on board were pleased with prosperous wind and calm sea and sky.

On the morning of the following day, however, the cry from the mast-head of "sail ho!" aroused all on board to a feeling of interest.

"Where away?"

"Right over the lee-bow."

"What do you make of her?"

"Square to'sails, queer rig – flag, can't see it."

"O! captain," said Julia, "can't you go near enough to speak it?"

"Of course I *could*, 'cause it's right on the lee, but whether I'd better or not is quite another thing."

"The captain knows best, my dear," said the merchant.

"Certainly, but I should so like to see some other faces besides those which are about us every day."

"If you are tired already, my pretty lady," said Captain Horton, "I wonder what you'll be before we get to the Indies."

"Heigh-ho," sighed the fair lady.

"Mast-head there," shouted Captain Horton.

"Ay, ay, sir."

"What do you make of her *now*?"

"Nothing yet, sir; we are overhauling her fast though."

In a short time the top-sails of the strange vessel became visible from the deck.

"Ah! she's hove in sight, has she?" said Captain Horton. "I'll see what I can make of her," and seizing his glass he ascended the fore-ratlins, nearly to the cross-trees, and after a long and steady survey of the approaching vessel, in which survey he also included the whole horizon, he descended with a thoughtful countenance, muttering to himself, "I was a little afraid of it."

"Well captain," inquired Julia, "is it an English vessel?"

"May be 't is – can't tell where 't was built."

"Can't you see the flag?"

"Can't make it out yet."

"Captain Horton," exclaimed the merchant, who had been watching his countenance from the moment he had descended the ratlins, "you *do* know something about that vessel, I am sure."

Captain Horton interrupted him by an earnest glance toward Julia, which the fair girl herself noticed.

"O! be not afraid to say any thing before me, captain. I am not easily frightened, and if you have to fight I will help you."

The bright eyes of the girl as she spoke grew brighter, and her little hand was clenched as if it held a sword.

Casting a glance of admiration toward the beautiful girl, Captain Horton leisurely filled his pipe from his waistcoat pocket, and replied as he lit it —

"Well, I'm inclined to think it's what we call a pirate, my fair lady."

"A pirate," sung out John, "a pirate, boo-hoo! oh dear! we shall all be ravaged and cooked, and eaten. O dear! why didn't I marry Susan Thompson, and go to keeping an inn – boo-hoo!"

"John," said his master, "be still, or if you must cry, go below."

The servant made a manly effort, and managed to repress his ejaculations, but could not keep back the large tears which followed each other down his cheeks in rapid succession.

"Can't you run from her, captain?" asked the merchant.

"Have you no guns aboard?" inquired Julia.

"I see you are for fighting the rascals, Miss Julia, and I own that would be the pleasantest course for me; but you see, we can't do it. The company don't allow their vessels enough fire-arms to beat off a brig half their own size – there's no way but to run for it, and these rascals always have a swift craft – generally a Baltimore clipper, which is just the fastest and prettiest vessel in the world, if those pesky Yankees do build them – but the Betsy Allen aint a slow craft, and we'll do the best we can to show 'em a clean pair of heels."

"You are to windward of them, captain," said Julia.

"Yes, that's true; but these clippers sail right in the teeth of the wind; see, now, how they've neared us – ahoy! – all hands ahoy!"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"'Bout ship, my boys – let go the jibs – lively, boys; now the fore peak-halyards. There she is – that throws the strange sail right astern; and a stern chase is a long chase."

Three or four hours of painful anxiety succeeded, when it became evident even to the unpracticed eyes of Julia and her father, that the strange vessel was slowly but surely overhauling them. Yet the brave girl showed none of the usual weakness of her sex, and even encouraged her father, who, though himself a brave man, yet trembled as he thought of the probable fate of his daughter. As for poor John, that unfortunate individual was so completely beside himself, that he wandered from one part of the vessel to the other, asking each sailor successively what his opinion of the chances of escape might be, and what treatment they might expect from the pirates after they were taken. As may be imagined, he received little consolation from the hardy tars, who, although themselves well aware of their probable fate, yet had been too long schooled in danger to show fear before the peril was immediately around them, and were each pursuing the duties of their several stations, very much as if only threatened with the usual dangers of the voyage. The unmanly fears of John even induced them to play upon his anxiety, and magnify his terror.

"Why, John," said his old friend, who had so scientifically cured him of his sea-sickness, and toward whom John evinced a kind of filial reverence, placing peculiar reliance upon every thing said by the worthy tar, "why, John, they will make us all walk the plank."

"Will they – O, dear me! and what is that, does it hurt a fellow?"

"O, no! he dies easy."

"Dies! oh, lud!"

"Why, yes! you know what walking the plank is, don't yer?"

"No I don't. O, dear!"

"Well, they run a plank over the side of the ship, and ask you very politely to walk out to the end of it."

"O, lud! and don't they let a body hold on?"

"And then when you get to the end of it, why, John, it naturally follers that it tips up, and lets you into the sea."

"And don't they help you out?"

"No, no, John! I aint joking now, by my honor; that's the end of a man, and that's where we shall go to if they get hold of us."

"O, dear me! what did I come to sea for? Well, but s'posin you wont go out on the plank, wouldn't it do just to tell 'em you'd rather not, perlitely, you know – perliteness goes a great way."

"They just blow your brains out with a pistol, that's all."

"O, lud!"

"Yes, John, that's the way they use folks."

"The bloody villains! and have we all got to walk the plank? Oh! dear Miss Julia, and all?"

"No, no, John, not her; poor girl, it would be better if she had" – and the kind-hearted tar brushed away a tear with his tawny hand.

"What! don't they kill the women, then?"

"No, no, John, they lets them live."

A sudden light shone in the eyes of John; it was the first happy expression that had flitted across his countenance since the strange sail had been discovered, and the fearful word, pirate, had fallen upon his ears.

"I have it – I have it!"

"What, John?"

But John danced off, leaving the sailor to wonder at the sudden metamorphosis in the feelings of the cockney.

"Well, that's a queer son of a lubber; I wonder what he's after now."

John, in the meantime, approached Julia, and in a very mysterious manner desired a few moments private conversation with her.

"Why, John, what can you want?" She had been no woman, if, however, her curiosity to learn the motive of so strange a request from her servant had not induced her to listen to him.

"Miss Julia," commenced John, "I've discovered a way in which we can all be saved alive by these bloody pirates, after they catch us; by all, I mean you and your father, and I, and the captain, if he's a mind to."

"Well, what is it, John?"

"I'll tell you, Miss Julia. Dick Halyard says they only kill the men – they makes all them walk the plank, which is – "

"I know what it is," said Julia, with a slight shudder.

"Well, they saves all the women, out o' respect for the weaker sex. Now, Miss Julia."

"Why, John!"

"But I know it's so, 'cause Dick Halyard told me all about it; now you see if you'll only let me take one of your dresses – I wont hurt it none; and then your father can take another, and we'll get clear of the bloody villains – wont it be great?"

Julia could not repress a laugh even in the midst of the melancholy thoughts which involuntarily arose in her mind during the elucidation of John's plan of escape; she could not, however, explain the difficulties in the way of its successful issue to the self-satisfied expounder, and finding no other more convenient way of closing the conversation, she told him he should have a woman's dress, with all the necessary accompaniments.

John was delighted.

"You'll tell your father, Miss Julia, wont you? O, Lud! we'll cheat the bloody fellows yet; I'll go and curl my hair."

Julia returned to her father's side, and silently watched the strange sail, which was evidently drawing nearer, as her dark hull had shown itself above the waters.

"We have but one chance of escape left," exclaimed Captain Horton; "if we can elude them during the night, all will be well; if to-morrow's sun find us in sight, we shall inevitably fall into their hands."

Night gradually settled over the deep, and when the twilight had passed, and all was dark, the lights of the pirate brig were some five miles to leeward. Her blood-red flag had been run up to the fore-peak, as if in mockery of the prey the pirates felt sure could not escape them – and the booming noise of a heavy gun had reached the ears of the fugitives, as if to signal their predestined doom. Yet the calm, round moon looked down upon the gloomy waters with the same serene countenance that had gazed into their bosom for thousands of years, and trod upward on her starry pathway with the same queenly pace; yet, perchance, in her own domains contention and strife, animosity and bloodshed were rife; perchance the sound of tumultuous war, even then, was echoing among her mountains, and staining her streams with gore.

[To be continued.

THE SOUL'S DREAM

BY GEORGE H. BOKER

Like an army with its banners, onward marched the mighty sun,
To his home in triumph hastening, when the hard-fought field was won;
While the thronging clouds hung proudly o'er the victor's bright array,
Gold and red and purple pennons, welcoming the host of day.

Gazing on the glowing pageant, slowly fading from the air,
Closed my mind its heavy eyelids, nodding o'er the world of care;
And the soaring thoughts came fluttering downward to their tranquil nest,
Folded up their wearied pinions, sinking one by one to rest.

Till a deep, o'ermastering slumber seemed to wrap my very soul,
And a gracious dream from Heaven, treading lightly, to me stole:
Downward from its plumes ethereal, on my thirsting bosom flowed
Dews which to the land of spirits all their mystic virtue owed.

And when touched that potent essence, Time divided as a cloud,
From the Past, the Present, Future rolled aside oblivion's shroud;
And Life's hills and vales far-stretching full before my vision lay,
Seeming but an isle of shadow in Eternity's broad day.

On the Past I bent my glances, saw the gentle, guileless child
Face to face with God conversing, and the awful Presence smiled —
Smiled a glory on the forehead of the simple-hearted one,
And the radiance, back reflected, cast a splendor round the throne.

Saw the boy, by Heaven instructed through earth's mute, symbolic forms,
Drinking wisdom with his senses, which the higher nature warms;
Saw that purer knowledge mingled with the worldling's base alloy,
And the passions' foul impression stamped upon his face of joy.

O, I cried to God in anguish, is this boasted wisdom vain,
For which I, by night and sunshine, tax my overwearied brain;
Till, alas! grown too familiar with the thoughts that knock at Heaven,
I would further pierce the mystery than to mortal eye is given?

Is the learning of our childhood, is the pure and easy lore
Speaking in a heart unsullied, better than the vaunted store
Heaped, like ice, to chill and harden every faculty save mind,

By the hand of haughty Science, sometimes wandering, sometimes blind?

But no answer reached my senses; for my feeble voice was lost,
When the Future came in darkness, like a rushing arméd host;
Shouting cries of fear and danger, shouting words of hope and cheer,
Racking me with threat and promise, ever coming, never here.

Then my spirit stretched its vision, prying in the doubtful gloom,
Half a glimpse to me was given o'er Time's boundary-stone – the tomb.
With a shriek, like that which rises from a sinking, night-wrecked bark,
Burst my soul the bounds of slumber, and the world and I were dark!

While the dull and leaden Present on my palsied spirit pressed,
Till the soaring thoughts rose upward, bounding from their earthly rest;
Shaking down the golden dew-drops from their pinions proud and strong,
And the cares of life fell from me, fading in the realm of Song.

THE MAID OF BOGOTA

A TALE FROM COLOMBIAN HISTORY

BY W. GILMORE SIMMS

Whenever the several nations of the earth which have achieved their deliverance from misrule and tyranny shall point, as they each may, to the fair women who have taken active part in the cause of liberty, and by their smiles and services have contributed in no measured degree to the great objects of national defence and deliverance, it will be with a becoming and just pride only that the Colombians shall point to their virgin martyr, commonly known among them as La Pola, the Maid of Bogota. With the history of their struggle for freedom her story will always be intimately associated; her tragical fate, due solely to the cause of her country, being linked with all the touching interest of the most romantic adventure. Her spirit seemed to be woven of the finest materials. She was gentle, exquisitively sensitive, and capable of the most true and tender attachments. Her mind was one of rarest endowments, touched to the finest issues of eloquence, and gifted with all the powers of the improvisatrice, while her courage and patriotism seem to have been cast in those heroic moulds of antiquity from which came the Cornelias and Deborahs of famous memory. Well had it been for her country had the glorious model which she bestowed upon her people been held in becoming homage by the race with which her destiny was cast – a race masculine only in exterior, and wanting wholly in that necessary strength of soul which, rising to the due appreciation of the blessings of national freedom, is equally prepared to make, for its attainment, every necessary sacrifice of self; and yet our heroine was but a child in years – a lovely, tender, feeble creature, scarcely fifteen years of age. But the soul grows rapidly to maturity in some countries, and in the case of women, it is always great in its youth, if greatness is ever destined to be its possession.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.