VARIOUS

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SICILIAN SCENERY AND ANTIQUITIES

BY THOMAS COLE

A few months only have elapsed since I travelled over the classic land of Sicily; and the impressions left on my mind by its picturesqueness, fertility, and the grandeur of its architectural remains, are more vivid, and fraught with more sublime associations, than any I received during my late sojourn in Europe. The pleasure of travelling, it seems to me, is chiefly experienced after the journey is over; when we can sit down by our own snug fire-side, free from all the fatigues and annoyances

which are its usual concomitants; and, if our untravelled friends are with us, indulge in the comfortable and harmless vanity of describing the wonders and dangers of those distant lands, and like Goldsmith's old soldier, 'Shoulder the crutch and *show* how fields were won.' I was about to remark, that those who travel only in books travel with much less discomfort, and perhaps enjoy as much, as those who travel in reality; but I fancy there are some of my young readers who would rather test the matter by their own experience, than by the inadequate descriptions which I have to offer them.

Sicily, as is well known, is the largest island in the Mediterranean Sea. It was anciently called Trinacria, from its triangular shape, and is about six hundred miles in circumference. Each of its extremities is terminated by a promontory, one of which was called by the ancients Lilybeum, and faces Africa; another called Pachynus, faces the Peloponessus of Greece; and the third, Pelorum, now Capo di Boco, faces Italy. The aspect of the country is very mountainous: some of the mountains are lofty; but towering above all, like an enthroned spirit, rises Ætna. His giant form can be seen from elevated grounds in the most remote parts of the island, and the mariner can discern his snowy crown more than a hundred miles. But Sicily abounds in luxuriant plains and charming valleys, and its soil is proverbially rich: it once bore the appellation of the Granary of Rome; and it is now said that if properly tilled it would produce more grain than any country of its size in the

world. Its beauty and fertility were often celebrated by ancient bards, who described the sacred flocks and herds of Apollo on its delightful slopes. The plain of Enna, where Proserpine and her nymphs gathered flowers, was famous for delicious honey; and according to an ancient writer, hounds lost their scent when hunting, in consequence of the odoriferous flowers which perfumed the air; and this may be no fable; for in Spring, as I myself have seen, the flowers are abundant and fragrant beyond description; and it seemed to me that the gardens of Europe had been supplied with two-thirds of their choicest treasures from the wild stores of Sicily.

The history of Sicily is as varied and interesting as the features of its surface; but of this I must give only such a brief and hurried sketch as, to those who are not conversant with it, will serve to render the scenes I intend to describe more intelligible and interesting than they otherwise would be. Its early history, then, like that of most nations of antiquity, is wrapped in obscurity. Poets feign that its original inhabitants were Cyclops; after them the Sicani, a people supposed to have been from Spain, were the possessors; then came the Siculi, a people of Italy. The enterprising Phœnicians, those early monarchs of the sea, whose ships had even visited the remote and barbarous shores of Britain, formed some settlements upon it; and in the eighth century before Christ various colonies of Greeks were planted on its shores, and became in time the sole possessors of the island. These Grecian founders of Syracuse, Gela, and Agrigentum,

seduced from their own country by the love of enterprise, or driven by necessity or revolution from their homes, brought with them the refinement, religion, and love of the beautiful, that have distinguished their race above all others; and in a short time after their establishment in Sicily, the magnificence of their cities, the grandeur of their temples, equalled if they did not surpass those of their fatherland. About the year 480 before Christ, a fierce enemy landed on the coast of Sicily with two thousand gallies: this was the warlike Carthaginian, whose altars smoked with the sacrifice of human victims. This formidable invader was defeated under the great Gelon of Syracuse, who was called the father of his country; but the Carthaginians, returned again and with better fortune, at length became masters of the island. The Romans next conquered Sicily, and held it for several centuries. The Saracens in the ninth century were in the full tide of successful conquest. They landed first in the bay of Mazara, near Selinuntium, and after various conflicts and fortune, finally subjugated the whole island in the year 878. The crescent continued to glitter over the towers of Sicily for about three centuries, when the Normans, a band of adventurers whom the crusades of the Holy Sepulchre had brought from their northern homes, after a conflict of thirty years under Count Roger, expelled the Saracen in the year 1073, and planted the banner of the cross in every city of the land. Soon after that time it came under Spain and Austria; France and England have severally been its rulers. It is now under the crown of Naples.

Such is a brief outline of the eventful history of Sicily; a land formed by nature in her fairest mould; but which the crimes and ambition of men have desecrated by violence, oppression, and bloodshed; and with the substitution of a word, one might exclaim with the poet:

> 'Sicilia! O Sicilia! thou who hast
> The fatal gift of beauty, which became
> A funeral dower of present woes and past,
> On thy sweet brow is sorrow ploughed by shame,
> And annals graved in characters of flame.
> Oh God! that thou wert in thy nakedness
> Less lovely or more powerful, and couldst claim
> Thy right, and awe the robbers back who press
> To shed thy blood, and drink the tears of thy distress!'

The aspect of Sicily is widely different from that of this country; its beauty is dependent on other forms and associations. *Here*, we have vast forests that stretch their shady folds in melancholy grandeur; the mountain tops themselves are clad in thick umbrage, which, rejoicing in the glory of the autumnal season, array themselves in rainbow dyes. *There*, no wide forests shade the land; but mountains more abrupt than ours, and bearing the scars of volcanic fire and earthquake on their brows, are yet clothed with flowers and odoriferous shrubs. The plains and slopes of the mountains are now but partially under cultivation; vineyards and olive-groves generally clothe the latter, while

over the gentler undulating country, or the plains, fenceless fields stretch far away, a wilderness of waving grain, through which the traveller may ride for hours nor meet a human being, nor see a habitation, save when he lifts his eyes to some craggy steep or mountain pinnacle, where stands the clustered village. The villages and larger towns are generally set among groves of orange, almond, and pomegranate trees, with here and there a dark Carruba, or Leutisk tree, casting its ample shade. Fields of the broad bean, the chief food of the laboring classes, serves at times to vary with vivid green the monotony of the landscape. The traveller rolls along over no Macadamised road in his comfortable carriage, but mounted on his mule, leaves him to choose his own track among the numerous ones that form what is called the *strada-maëstro*, or master-road, between city and city. Here and there he will come to a stone fountain, constructed perhaps centuries ago, which still furnishes a delightful beverage for himself and beast. Oftentimes the road leads through a country entirely waste, and covered with tall bunches of grass or the dwarfish palmetto; sometimes in the cultivated districts the road is bounded by the formidable prickly-pear, which grows to the height of twenty feet, or by rows of the stately aloe, and not unfrequently by wild hedges of myrtle, intertwined with innumerable climbing plants, whose flowers the traveller can pick as he rides along. Generally the road-side is perfectly enamelled with flowers of various hue and fragrance. No majestic river, like the Hudson, spreads before him, with all

its glittering sails and swift steam-boats; but ever and anon the blue and placid Mediterranean bounds his vision, or indents the shore, with here and there a picturesque and lazy barque reflected in the waves.

I have before said that the towns and villages are generally perched like eagles' nests in high places. This is particularly the case with those of the interior: many of them are inaccessible to carriages, except the *Letiga*, a sort of large sedan-chair, gaudily decorated with pictures of saints, and suspended between two mules, one of which trots before and the other behind, to the continual din of numerous bells and the harsh shouts of the muleteers. I never saw one of these vehicles, which are the only travelling carriages of the interior of Sicily, without thinking that there might be a *land-sickness* even worse than a sea-sickness; for the motion of the letiga in clambering up and down the broken steeps must be far more tempestuous than any thing ever experienced at sea. Between village and village you see no snug villa, farm-house, or cottage by the road-side, or nestling among the trees; but here and there a gloomy castellated building, a lonely ruin or stern Martello tower, whose dilapidated walls crown some steep headland, against whose base washes the ever-murmuring waves. Now the traveller descends to the beach, his only road; the mountains are far inland, or dip their broad bases in the sea-foam, or impend in fearful masses over his head. He ascends again, and journeys over wastes which undoubtedly in the time of the Greek and the Roman were covered with fruits

and grain; but which now are treeless and desolate as the deep whose breezes stir the flowers that deck them. At times he must ford streams, which, if swollen with late rains, are perilous in the extreme.

I remember once on my journey descending from one of those treeless wastes upon a spot very different from any thing on this side of the Atlantic. It was called Verdura, from its green and verdant character. A stream which flowed through a plain bounded by lofty mountains here fell into the sea. A large mill, which much resembles an ancient castle, and in all probability had served both purposes in times gone by, stood near. Upon the sandy beach close by, and hauled entirely out of the water, lay several vessels in the style of Homer's ships; and I have no doubt bore a strong resemblance to ships of ancient time, for they were picturesquely formed, and painted fantastically with figures of fishes and eyes. The wild-looking mariners were lounging lazily about in their shaggy capotes, or engaged in loading their vessels with grain, the product of the neighboring plains. Up the steep we had just descended a letiga was slowly winding; and on a green declivity overlooking the sea, a flock of goats were browsing, and their shepherd reclined near in listless idleness. Open and treeless as was this scene, there was such a peaceful character about it, such an air of primitive simplicity, that it made a strong impression on my mind.

It does not come within the scope of this paper to offer any description of the larger cities of Sicily, Palermo, Messina, etc.

Most readers have seen accounts of them more ample and more interesting than I could offer. Of the smaller places I must content myself with giving a very general description, so that I may retain the requisite space, in this division of my article, for some notice of an ascent which I made to the sublime summit of Mount Ætna.

The secondary towns to which I have alluded, such as Calatifini, Sciacca, Caltagerone, etc., are in general picturesquely situated, and are built in a massive and sometimes even in a magnificent style. The churches and houses are all of hewn stone, and exhibit the various styles of architecture of the builders; the Saracenic, the Norman-Gothic, or the later Spanish taste. Sometimes the styles are fantastically intermixed; but the whole, to the architect, is extremely interesting. Flat roofs and projecting stone balconies from the upper windows are perhaps the most characteristic features of the houses. The churches, though large, are seldom beautiful specimens of architecture; and the interior is in general extremely ornate, and decorated with gaudy gilding and pictures, and images of Christ and saints, disgustingly painted. The streets, wide or narrow, would appear to us somewhat gloomy and prison-like; and paint is a thing scarcely known on the exterior or perhaps interior of an ordinary house. The air of the interior of the common houses of the Sicilian towns is as gloomy and comfortless as can be imagined. A few wooden benches, a table firmly fixed in the stone pavement, a fire-place composed of a few blocks of stone placed on the floor, the smoke of which is allowed to make its

escape as it best can at the window, which is always destitute of glass, and is closed by a rude wooden shutter when required; a bed consisting of a mattress of the same hue as the floor, raised a few feet from it by means of boards on a rude frame; some sheep-skins for blankets, and sheets of coarse stuff whose color serves as an effectual check on the curiosity of him who would pry too closely into its texture; are the chief articles of furniture to be found in the habitations of the Sicilian poor. Beside the human inhabitants of these uninviting abodes, there are innumerable lively creatures, whose names it were almost impolite to mention in polished ears; and I might not have alluded to them had they confined themselves to such places; but they rejoice in the palace as well as in the cottage, and to the traveller's sorrow inflict themselves without his consent as travelling companions through the whole Sicilian tour.

The houses of the more wealthy are spacious and airy, but not much superior in point of comfort. They are often of commanding exterior, and are called *palazzi*, or palaces. Of course, there are exceptions to this general character of discomfort; but judging from my own observation, they are few. On approaching a Sicilian village, the eye of the traveller will almost surely be attracted by a capacious and solid building, surmounted by a belfry-tower, and commanding the most charming prospect in the vicinity. It is surrounded with orange groves and cypress-trees, and looks like a place fitted for the enjoyment of a contemplative life. He will not long remain

in doubt as to the purpose of the building whose site is so delightfully chosen; for walking slowly along the shady path, or seated in some pleasant nook, singly or in groups, he will perceive the long-robed monks, the reverend masters of the holy place.

Connoisseurs say that a landscape is imperfect without figures; and as that is the case in a picture, it is most probably so in a magazine article; and the reader might complain if I were to neglect giving some slight outlines of the figures of the Sicilian landscape. In travelling from city to city, although they may not be more than twenty miles apart, the wayfarer meets with very few persons on the road; seldom an individual, and only now and then, at an interval of miles, a group of men mounted on mules, each person carrying a gun; or perhaps a convoy of loaded mules and asses with several muleteers, some mounted and some on foot, who urge by uncouth cries and blows the weary beasts over the rocky or swampy ground, or up some steep acclivity or across some torrent's bed. At times he will see a shepherd or two watching their flocks; these are half-naked, wild looking beings, scarcely raised in the scale of intelligence above their bleating charge. Their dwelling may be hard by, a conical hut of grass or straw, or a ruined tower. On the fertile slopes or plains he will sometimes observe a dozen yokes of oxen ploughing abreast. The laborers probably chose this contiguity for the sake of company across the wide fields. If the grass or grain is to be cut, it is by both men and women armed with a rude sickle only. It is seldom you meet either man or woman on foot upon the roads; men

scarcely ever. Donkeys are about as numerous as men, and their ludicrous bray salutes your ear wherever the human animal is to be seen.

The peasant-women through a great part of Sicily wear a semi-circular piece of woollen cloth over their heads; it is always black or white, and hangs in agreeable folds over the neck and shoulders. There is but little beauty among them; and alas! how should there be? They are in general filthy; the hair of both old and young is allowed to fall in uncombed elf-locks about their heads; and the old women are often hideous and disgustful in the extreme. The heart bleeds for the women: they have more than their share of the labors of the field; they have all the toils of the men, added to the pains and cares of womanhood. They dig, they reap, they carry heavy burthens—burthens almost incredible. In the vicinity of Ætna I met a woman walking down the road knitting: on her head was a large mass of lava weighing at least thirty pounds, and on the top of this lay a small hammer. Being puzzled to know why the woman carried such a piece of lava where lava was so abundant, I inquired 'the wherefore' of Luigi, our guide. He answered that as she wished to knit, and not having pockets, she had taken that plan to carry the little hammer conveniently. That piece of stone, which would break our necks to carry, was evidently to her no more than a heavy hat would be to us. It may be thought that I draw a sorry picture of these poor Islanders; but I would have it understood that on the side of Messina, and some other parts, there is apparently a

little more civilization; but they are an oppressed and degraded peasantry; ignorant, superstitious, filthy, and condemned to live on the coarsest food. They are as the beasts that perish, driven by necessity to sow that which they may not reap. How applicable are the words of Addison:

> 'How has kind Heaven adorn'd the happy land
> And scattered blessings with a wasteful hand!
> But what avails her unexhausted stores,
> Her blooming mountains and her sunny shores,
> With all the gifts that heaven and earth impart,
> The smiles of nature and the charms of art,
> While proud oppression in her valleys reigns,
> And tyranny usurps her happy plains?
> The poor inhabitant beholds in vain
> The reddening orange and the swelling grain:
> Joyless he sees the growing oils and wines,
> And in the myrtle's fragrant shade repines:
> Starves, in the midst of nature's bounty curst,
> And in the loaded vineyard dies of thirst.'

But the Sicilians are *naturally* a gay, light-hearted people, like the Greeks, their forefathers; and if the cloud which now rests upon them were removed, and we have reason to think it is lifting, they would be as bright and sunny as their own skies. The women of the better classes wear the black mantilla when they venture into the streets, which they seldom do, except to attend mass or the confessional. This robe is extremely elegant, as it is worn, but

it requires an adept to adjust it gracefully. It covers the whole person from head to foot; in parts drawn closely to the form, in others falling in free folds. But for its color, I should admire it much: it seems such an incongruity for a young and beautiful female to be habited in what appear to be mourning robes. I was often reminded of those wicked lines of Byron's on the gondola:

> 'For sometimes they contain a deal of fun,
> Like mourning-coaches when the funeral's done.'

But let us turn from the animate to the inanimate, and visit the famous Ætna, called by the Sicilians *Mongibello*. From the silence of Homer on the subject, it is supposed that in his remote age the fires of the mountain were unknown; but geologists have proof that they have a far more ancient date. The Grecian poet Pindar is the first who mentions its eruptions. He died four hundred and thirty-five years before Christ; from that time to this, at irregular intervals, it has vomited forth its destructive lavas. It is computed to be eleven thousand feet high. Its base, more than an hundred miles in circumference, is interspersed with numerous conical hills, each of which is an extinct crater, whose sides, now shaded by the vine, the fig tree, and the habitations of man, once glowed with the fiery torrent. Some of them are yet almost destitute of vegetation; mere heaps of scoriæ and ashes; but the more ancient ones are richly clad with verdure. Let the reader imagine a mountain whose base is as broad as

the whole range of the Catskills, as seen from Catskill village, rising to nearly three times their height; its lower parts are of gentle ascent, but as it rises it becomes more and more steep, until it terminates in a broken summit. Imagine it divided, as the eye ascends, into three regions or belts: the first and lowest is covered with villages, gardens, vineyards, olive-groves, oranges, and fields of grain and flax, and the date-bearing palm. The second region, which commences about four thousand feet above the sea, is called the *Regione Sylvosa*, or woody region. Here chestnuts, hexes, and on the north pines of great size flourish. This belt reaches to the elevation of about seven thousand feet, where the *Regione Scoperta*, or bare region, commences. The lower part of this is intermingled lava, rocks, volcanic sands, and snow; still higher are vast fields of spotless snow, which centuries have seen unwasted, with here and there a ridgy crag of black lava, too steep for the snows to lodge upon; and toward the summit of the cone, dark patches of scoriæ and ashes, which, heated by the slumbering fires, defy the icy blasts of these upper realms of air. It will readily be supposed that, when viewed from a distance, Mount Ætna is an object to make a deep impression on the mind:

> But for yon filmy smoke, that from thy crest
> Continual issues like a morning mist
> The sun disperses, there would be no sign
> That from thy mighty breast bursts forth at times
> The sulphurous storm—the avalanche of fire;

That midnight is made luminous, and day
A ghastly twilight, by thy lurid breath.
By thee tormented, Earth is tossed and riven:
The shuddering mountains reel; temples and towers
The works of man, and man himself, his hopes
His harvests, all a desolation made!
Sublime art thou, O Mount! whether beneath
The moon in silence sleeping with thy woods,
And driving snows, and golden fields of corn;
Or bleat on thy slant breast the gentle flocks,
And shepherds in the mellow glow of eve
Pipe merrily; or when thy scathéd sides
Are laved with fire, answered thine earthquake voice
By screams and clamor of affrighted men.
Sublime thou art!—a resting-place for thought,
Thought reaching far above thy bounds; from thee
To Him who bade the central fires construct
This wondrous fabric; lifted thy dread brow
To meet the sun while yet the earth is dark,
And ocean, with its ever-murmuring waves.

On the ninth of May, myself and travelling companion commenced the ascent of Mount Ætna; and as the season was not the most favorable, the snows extending farther down the sides of the mountain than in summer, we were equipped, under the direction of our guide, with coarse woollen stockings to be drawn over the pantaloons, thick-soled shoes, and woollen caps. Mounting our mules, we left Catania in the morning. The

road was good and of gradual ascent until we reached Nicolosi, about fourteen miles up the mountain. We saw little that was particularly interesting on our route except that the hamlets through which we passed bore fearful evidences of the effects of earthquake. Arrived at Nicolosi, the place where travellers usually procure guides and mules for the mountain, it was our intention to rest for the remainder of the day; but Monte Rosso, an extinguished crater, being in the vicinity, my curiosity got the better of my intention to rest, and I sallied forth to examine it. The road lay through the village, which is built of the lava, and is arid and black, and many of the buildings rent and twisted. Monte Rosso was formed by the eruption of 1669, which threw out a torrent of lava that flowed thirteen miles, destroying a great part of the city of Catania in its resistless course to the sea, where it formed a rugged promontory which at this day appears as black, bare, and herbless as on the day when its fiery course was arrested by the boiling waters. And here I would remark, that the lavas of Ætna are very different from those of Vesuvius. The latter decompose in half a century, and become capable of cultivation; those of Ætna remain unchanged for centuries, as that of Monte Rosso testifies. It has now been exposed to the action of the weather nearly two hundred years, with the exception of the interstices where the dust and sand have collected, it is destitute of vegetation. Broken in cooling into masses of rough but sharp fracture, its aspect is horrid and forbidding, and it is exceedingly difficult to walk over. If two

centuries have produced so little change, how *many* centuries must have served to form the rich soil which covers the greater part of the mountain's sides and base!

Our purpose was to see the sun rise from the summit of Ætna; and at nine in the evening, our mules and guides being ready, we put on our Sicilian capotes, and sallied forth. We had two guides, a muleteer, and as there was no moon, a man with a lantern to light the mules in their passage over the beds of lava. For several miles the way was uninteresting, it being too dark to see any thing except the horrid lava or sand beneath the feet of the mules. At times the road was so steep that we were ordered by our guides to lean forward on the necks of the mules, to keep them and ourselves from being thrown back. At length we entered the woody region. Here the path was less rocky; and as we wound up the mountain's side, beneath the shadows of noble trees, I could not but feel the solemn quietness of a night on Ætna, and contrast it with what has been and what will in all probability be again, the intermitting roar of the neighboring volcano, and the dreadful thunder of the earthquake. At midnight we arrived at the *Casa delle Neve*, or House of Snow. This is a rude building of lava, with bare walls, entirely destitute of furniture. We made a fire on the ground, took some refreshments which we had brought with us, and in about an hour remounted our mules, and proceeded on our journey. We soon left the region of woods; and being now at an elevation of seven thousand feet above the sea, felt somewhat cold, and buttoned our capotes closer about

us. From the ridges of lava along which we rode, by the light of the stars which now became brilliant, we could discern the snow stretching in long lines down the ravines on either hand; and as we advanced, approaching nearer and nearer, until at length it spread in broad fields before us. As the mules could go no farther, we dismounted, and taking an iron-pointed staff in our hands, we commenced the journey over the snows. It was now half-past one, and we had seven miles to traverse before reaching the summit. The first part of the ascent was discouraging, for it was steep, and the snow so slippery that we sometimes fell on our faces; but it became rather less steep as we ascended, and though fatiguing, we got along comfortably. As the atmosphere was becoming rare, and the breathing hurried, we sat on the snow for a few minutes now and then. At such times we could not but be struck with the splendor of the stars, far beyond any thing I had ever seen. The milky way seemed suspended in the deep heavens, like a luminous cloud, with clear and definite outline. We next arrived at the *Casa degli Inglese*; so called, but alas for us! the ridge of the roof and a part of the gable were all that rose above the snow. In the midst of summer, travellers may make use of it; but to us it was unavailing, except the gable, which served in a measure to shield us from the icy wind which now swept over the mountain. We again partook of a little refreshment, by way of preparation for the most arduous part of our undertaking, and were now at the foot of the great cone. The ascent was toilsome in the extreme. Snow, melted beneath in many places by the

heat of the mountain; sharp ridges of lava; loose sand, ashes, and cinders, into which last the foot sank at every step, made the ascent difficult as well as dangerous. The atmosphere was so rare that we had to stop every few yards to breathe. At such times we could hear our hearts beat within us like the strokes of a drum. But it was now light, and we reached the summit of the great cone just as the sun rose.

It was a glorious sight which spread before our eyes! We took a hasty glance into the gloomy crater of the volcano and throwing ourselves on the warm ashes, gazed in wonder and astonishment. It would be vain for me to attempt a description of the scene. I scarcely knew the world in which I had lived. The hills and valleys over which we had been travelling for many days, were comprised within the compass of a momentary glance. Sicily lay at our feet, with all its 'many folded' mountains, its plains, its promontories, and its bays; and round all, the sea stretched far and wide like a lower sky; the Lipari islands, Stromboli and its volcano, floating upon it like small dusky clouds; and the Calabrian coast visible, I should suppose, for two hundred miles, like a long horizontal bank of vapor! As the sun rose, the great pyramidal shadow of Ætna was cast across the island, and all beneath it rested in twilight-gloom. Turning from this wonderful scene, we looked down into the crater, on whose verge we lay. It was a fearful sight, apparently more than a thousand feet in depth, and a mile in breadth, with precipitous and in some places overhanging sides, which were varied with strange and

discordant colors. The steeps were rent into deep chasms and gulfs, from which issued white sulphurous smoke, that rose and hung in fantastic wreaths about the horrid crags; thence springing over the edge of the crater, seemed to dissipate in the clear keen air. I was somewhat surprised to perceive several sheets of snow lying at the very bottom of the crater, a proof that the internal fires were in a deep slumber. The edge of the crater was a mere ridge of scoriæ and ashes, varying in height; and it required some care, in places, to avoid falling down the steep on one hand, or being precipitated into the gulf on the other. The air was keen; but fortunately there was little wind; and after spending about an hour on the summit, we commenced our descent.

We varied our course from the one we took on ascending, and visited an altar erected to Jupiter by the ancients, now called the *Torre del Filosofo*. Soon after we came upon the verge of a vast crater, the period of whose activity is beyond the earliest records of history. *Val di Bove*, as it is called, is a tremendous scene. Imagine a basin several miles across, a thousand feet in depth at least, with craggy and perpendicular walls on every side; its bottom broken into deep ravines and chasms, and shattered pinnacles, as though the lava in its molten state had been shaken and tossed by an earthquake, and then suddenly congealed. It is into this ancient crater that the lava of the most recent eruption is descending. It is fortunate that it has taken that direction.

In another and concluding number, the reader's attention will be directed to the *Architectural Antiquities of Sicily*, especially

those of Grecian structure, which will be described in the order in which they were visited.

LINES TO TIME

BY MRS. J. WEBB

Oh Time! I'll weave, to deck thy brow,
A wreath fresh culled from Flora's treasure:
If thou wilt backward turn thy flight
To youth's bright morn of joy and pleasure.
'Joys ill exchanged for riper years;'
The bard, alas! hath truly spoken:
I've wept the truth in burning tears
O'er many a fair hope crushed and broken.

In vain my sager, wiser friends
Told of thy speed and wing untiring;
I drank of Pleasure's honied cup,
Nor marked thy flight, no change desiring;
When all too late I gave thee chase,
But found thou couldst not be o'ertaken:
With heedless wing thou'st onward swept,
Though hopes were crushed and empires shaken.

Thou with the world thy flight began'st;
Compared with thine, what were the knowledge
Of every sage in every clime,

The learning of the school or college?
Thou'st seen, in all the pomp of power,
Athens, the proudest seat of learning;
And thou couldst tell us if thou wouldst,
How Nero looked when Rome was burning.

What direful sights hast thou beheld,
As careless thou hast journied on:
The hemlock-bowl for Athen's pride;
The gory field of Marathon;
The monarch crowned, the warrior plumed,
With power and with ambition burning;
Yet they must all have seemed to thee
Poor pigmies on a pivot turning.

Their pomp, their power, with thine compared,
How blank and void, how frail and fleeting!
Thou hast not paused e'en o'er their tombs
To give their mighty spirits greeting;
But onward still with untired wing,
Regardless thou 'rt thy flight pursuing,
Unseen, alas! till thou art past,
While o'er our heads thy snows thou 'rt strewing.

Oh! vainly may poor mortals strive
With learned lore of school and college;
Their books may teach us wisdom's rules,
But thou alone canst teach us knowledge.
Oh! had I earlier known thy worth,

I had not now been left repining,
Nor asked to weave for thee the wreath
That on my youthful brow was shining.
Could but again the race be mine,
In life's young morn, I'd seek and find thee;
I'd seize thee by thy flowing lock,
And never more be left behind thee!

A NIGHT ON THE PRAIRIE

BY A BUFFALO HUNTER

While looking over my 'omnium gatherum;' the same being a drawer containing scraps of poetry, unfinished letters, half-written editorials, incidents of travel, obsolete briefs, with many other odds and ends that have fallen from my brain during the last three years, but which from want of quality in them or lack of energy in me, have failed to reach the dignity of types and ink; I came across a diary kept while hunting buffalo with the Sac and Fox Indians, some two hundred miles west of the Mississippi, during the summer of 1842. Finding myself interested in recurring to the incidents of that excursion, it occurred to me that matter might be drawn therefrom which would not be without interest to the public. I have therefore ventured to offer the following for publication; it being an account of a night passed at the source of the Checauque, when I did not deem my scalp worth five minute's purchase, and when I cheerfully would have given ten years of an ordinary life to have been under the humblest roof in the most desolate spot in the 'land of steady habits.'

I have said that we were in the country of the Sioux. That

our situation may be understood, I would remark farther, that between the latter and the confederated tribes of the Sac and Fox Indians, there has been for the last forty years, and still exists, the most inveterate hostility; the two parties never meeting without bloodshed. The Government of the United States, in pursuance of that policy which guides its conduct toward the various Indian tribes, for the preservation of peace between these two nations, have laid out between them a strip of country forty miles in width, denominated the 'Neutral Ground,' and on to which neither nation is permitted to extend their hunting excursions.

On the occasion of which I write, the Sacs and Foxes, having been disappointed in finding buffalo within their own limits, and perhaps feeling quite as anxious to fall in with a band of Sioux as to obtain game, had passed the 'Neutral Ground,' and were now several days' journey into the country of their enemies.

For the last two days we had marched with the utmost circumspection; our spies ranged the country for miles in advance and on either flank, while at night we had sought some valley as a place of encampment, where our fires could not be seen from a distance. Each day we had perceived signs which indicated that small parties of Sioux had been quite recently over the very ground we were travelling. The whites in the company, numbering some eleven or twelve, had remonstrated with the Indians, representing to them that they were transgressing the orders of the government, and that should a hostile meeting take

place they would certainly incur the displeasure of their 'great father' at Washington.

Heedless of our remonstrances they continued to advance until it became evident that the Sioux and not buffalo were their object. The truth was, they felt themselves in an excellent condition to meet their ancient enemy. They numbered, beside old men and the young and untried, three hundred and twenty-five warriors, mounted and armed with rifles, many of them veterans who had seen service on the side of Great Britain in her last war with this country, and most of whom had served with Black Hawk in his brief but desperate contest with the United States. Moreover, they placed some reliance on the whites who accompanied them; all of whom, except my friend B–, of Kentucky, one or two others and myself, were old frontier men, versed in the arts of Indian warfare.

As for myself, I felt far from comfortable in the position in which I found myself placed; hundreds of miles from any white settlement, and expecting hourly to be forced into a conflict where no glory was to be gained, and in which defeat would be certain death, while victory could not fail to bring upon us the censure of our government. The idea of offering up my scalp as a trophy to Sioux valor, and leaving my bones to bleach on the wide prairie, with no prayer over my remains nor stone to mark the spot of my sepulture, was far from comfortable. I thought of the old church-yard amidst the green hills of New-England, where repose the dust of my ancestors, and would much preferred to

have been gathered there, full of years, 'like a shock of corn fully ripe in its season,' rather than to be cut down in the morning of life by the roving Sioux, and my frame left a dainty morsel for the skulking wolf of the prairie. I communicated my sentiments to B–, and found that his views corresponded with mine. 'But,' said he, with the spirit of a genuine Kentuckian, 'we are in for it, Harry, and we must fight; it will not do to let these Indians see us show the white feather.'

It was under such circumstances, and with these feelings, that we pitched our tents after a hard day's march, in a valley near the margin of a little stream which uniting with others forms the Checauque, one of the tributaries of the Mississippi. The river flowed in our front. In our rear, and surrounding us on either side, forming a sort of amphitheatre, was a range of low hills crowned with a grove of young hickorys. A branch on our left, running down to the stream, separated our tents from the encampment of our Indian allies. Our camp consisted of three tents pitched some fifteen steps apart. B– and myself occupied the middle one. We had a companion, a scrub of a fellow, who forced himself upon us as we were on the point of starting, and whom we could not well shake off. To this genius, on account of his many disagreeable qualities, we had given the soubriquet of '*Common Doings*.' The other whites of the party occupied the other two tents.

We had just finished the usual routine of camp duty for the night, 'spansered' our horses, eaten our suppers, laid in a supply of fuel for our fires, and were sitting around them

smoking our pipes and listening to the marvellous tales of an old 'Leatherstocking' of the party, whose life had been passed between the Rocky Mountains and the Mississippi, when two of our Indian spies came in, passing in front of our tents and across the branch to the Indian camp. One of our party followed them to hear their report, and soon returned with the information that the spies had seen an encampment of Sioux, and that the Sacs and Foxes were then holding a council as to what measures it was best to pursue. Others of our party, who understood the Indian tongue, went across for farther information. Mean time we remained in great anxiety, canvassing among ourselves the probable truth of the report, and speculating on the course most proper for us to take. Our friends soon returned, having heard the full report of the spies as it was delivered before the chiefs in council. They had proceeded some eight miles beyond the place of our encampment to a hill in the vicinity of Swan Lake; from the hill they had seen a large body of Sioux, numbering as near as they could estimate them, five or six hundred. From the manner in which they were encamped and from other signs, they knew them to be a 'war party;' and having made these observations, they withdrew, concealing themselves as much as possible, and as they supposed, without being discovered. The effect of this information upon us may easily be imagined. We were 'in for it' sure enough! We had expected for several days that we should meet the enemy, but to find them so near us in such force, so far outnumbering our own, we had not anticipated.

The question now was, what were we to do? Some proposed that we should move our camp across the branch and pitch our tent among our Indian allies; for it was argued with much force that if our spies had been discovered, the Sioux would follow their trail, and as it passed directly by our tents, we should fall the first victims; that if the Sioux, notwithstanding their superiority in numbers, should not think it prudent to attack the main camp, they would not fail to attack, according to their custom, the out-camps, take what scalps they could, and retreat. But there was a strong objection to moving our camp: the Indians frequently during the march had desired us to pitch our tents among them, but we had always declined, preferring to be by ourselves. What would they say if we should now break up our encampment and go among them? 'White men are cowards! They rejected our request when all was safe, but now at the approach of danger they come skulking among us like dogs for protection.' No; we could not do this; pride forbade it. We next discussed the expediency of dividing ourselves into a watch, and keeping guard by turns through the night. The more experienced of the party, and particularly Jamison, an old hunter and Indian fighter, said that this would only exhaust us, and would be of no avail; that our Indian allies had spies around the encampment in every direction; that if they failed to perceive the approach of the enemy, we could not discover them; that the first intimation our sentinels would have would be an arrow through the body; that our best plan would be to extinguish our fires, prepare our arms, lie down

with them in our hands, rely on the Indian spies for notice of the enemy's approach, and on the first alarm make our way to the Indian camp, being careful as we approached it to give the password for the night, '*Wal-las-ki-push-eto*.' We all finally came to this conclusion.

During the discussion, two of the party had not spoken a word; one was our tent-mate 'Doings,' who was so completely paralyzed with fright as to be unable to think or speak; the other was old 'Leatherstocking,' who listened with the utmost coolness to all that was said, occasionally expressing assent or dissent by a nod or shake of the head. I now observed him quietly examine his rifle, draw the charge and reload; take out the flint and replace it with a new one; he then threw himself down for the night, his bared knife in his left hand, and his right resting on the breech of his rifle, remarking as he composed himself to sleep, 'We must be ready boys; there's no telling when the varmints will be upon us.'

B– and myself prepared our arms: each of us wore a brace of pistols in a belt; these were carefully loaded and buckled on; our rifles were next examined and put in order; our hatchets were placed at hand, and with many misgivings we laid ourselves down. It was some time before I could sleep, and when I did, my repose was disturbed by dreams. How long I slept I am unable to say, perhaps not more than an hour, when I was suddenly awakened. I listened. The noise of the horses, of which there were several hundred grazing in the valley, with the tinkling of

the bells on their necks, were the only sounds that at first met my ear; all else was silent. Presently I heard a noise as if made by the stealthy tread of a man; then a voice, or perhaps the cry of some animal. It was repeated. I heard it in the grove, on the hill, then an answering cry on the other side of the stream. I knew that Indians in a night-attack make signals by imitating the cry of some animal; and the sounds I heard, though like those made by wild beasts, seemed to me to be in reality human voices. I drew a pistol from my belt, cocked it, and with a hatchet in my other hand, crept out of the tent, and lying on the ground, looked cautiously around. The cries continued at intervals, and I became more and more satisfied that they were human voices. I felt, I *knew* that the Sioux were about to attack us. A thousand thoughts flashed across my mind. I thought of the home of my childhood, my far distant kindred; a mother, sisters, brothers. Unskilled as I was in Indian warfare, I expected to be slain. I was alarmed; frightened perhaps, but not paralyzed. I resolved to fight to the last, and if I *must* die, to fill no coward's grave.

As my eyes became more accustomed to the darkness, I began to distinguish objects; and peering beyond our line of tents, I saw on our right, between me and the grove, three dark objects like human heads projecting out of the grass. While I was observing them, two of them disappeared, and I could discern the grass wave as they made their way toward our encampment. There was no longer room for doubt. I called to B– in a whisper; he was on his feet and by my side in an instant, a cocked pistol in each

hand. I directed his attention to what I saw. He looked steadfastly for a moment, then raising his eyes to the grove, exclaimed in a whisper, 'The timber is full of Indians! I see them advancing from tree to tree; it is time for action. I shall fall, but you may be saved; if so, let my friends in Kentucky know that I died like a brave man. I will arouse the rest.'

He went to the tent on our left, while I remained watching the approach of the enemy. I could see them distinctly as they moved from tree to tree. I heard B– call in a whisper, 'Jamison! Jamison!' Jamison came out of his tent but without his arms. B– told him of our danger, and directed his attention to the Indians in the grove. As he spoke Jamison stretched out his arms and gave a yawn, remarking, 'These Injuns are mighty unsartin critters; there's no knowing about their motions;' crawled into his tent again. B– returned; neither of us spoke. We lay down and drew our blankets over us; at length B– said:

'Harry?'

'What?'

'Hoaxed! by thunder!'

The whole truth, which had been breaking in upon my mind by degrees, now flashed upon me, and I raised a shout of laughter. At this instant, poor 'Doings,' who had been awake from the commencement, but who was so scared that he had rolled himself under the eaves of the tent, and contracted himself into a space scarcely larger than my arm, and who in his terror would have lain still and had his throat cut without wagging a finger

in defence; this poor, miserable 'Doings' exclaimed 'Haw! haw! haw! I knew it all the time; I never see fellows so scared!' This was too bad. However, we had our laugh out, discussed plans for vengeance, went to sleep and had quiet slumbers for the rest of the night.

The next morning we ascertained that the whole story about the Sioux encampment had been fabricated for the purpose of trying our mettle, and that all save B–, myself and 'Doings,' were in the secret. The moving objects which I had seen in the grass were Indian dogs prowling around for food, and the Indians in the timber existed only in our excited imaginations.

I may hereafter give an account of the *modus operandi* of our revenge, and of our mode of hunting the buffalo, in which we met with much success; and of other matters of interest which fell under my observation during the sixty days we spent with this tribe of Indians.

H. T. H.

LIFE'S YOUNG DREAM

'There is no Voice in Nature which says 'Return."

Those envious threads, what do they here,
Amid thy flowing hair?
It should be many a summer's day
Ere they were planted there:
Yet many a day ere thou and Care
Had known each other's form,
Or thou hadst bent thy youthful head
To Sorrow's whelming storm.

Oh! was it grief that blanched the locks
Thus early on thy brow?
And does the memory cloud thy heart,
And dim thy spirit now?
Or are the words upon thy lip
An echo from thy heart;
And is *that* gay as are the smiles
With which thy full lips part?

For thou hast lived man's life of thought,
While careless youth was thine;
Thy boyish lip has passed the jest
And sipped the sparkling wine,

And mingled in the heartless throng
As thoughtlessly as they,
Ere yet the days of early youth
Had glided swift away.

They say that Nature wooeth back
No wanderer to her arms;
Welcomes no prodigal's return
Who once hath scorned her charms.
And ah! I fear for thee and me,
The feelings of our youth
Have vanished with the things that were,
Amid the wrecks of truth.

Oh! for the early happy days
When hope at least was new!
Ere we had dreamed a thousand dreams,
And found them all untrue;
Ere we had flung our life away
On what might not be ours;
Found bitter drops in every cup,
And thorns on all the flowers.

Ye who have yet youth's sunny dreams,
Oh guard the treasure well,
That no rude voice from coming years
May break the enchanted spell!
No cloud of doubt come o'er your sky
To dim its sunny ray,

Be careless children, while ye can,
Trust on, while yet ye may.

Albany, January, 1844.A. R.

THE QUOD CORRESPONDENCE

HARRY HARSON

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIRST

In the same room from which Craig and Jones had set out on their ill-fated errand, and at the hour of noon on the following day, the latter was crouching in front of the fire-place, which had been so bright and cheery the night before, but which now contained nothing except ashes, and a few half-burned stumps, charred and blackened, but entirely extinguished. Over these Jones bent, occasionally shivering slightly, and holding his hands to them, apparently unconscious that they emitted no heat, and then dabbling in the ashes, and muttering to himself. But a few hours had elapsed since he had left that room a bold, daring, desperate man; yet in that short time a frightful change had come over him. His eyes were blood-red; his lips swollen and bloody, and the under one deeply gashed, as if he had bitten it through; his cheeks haggard and hollow, his hair dishevelled, his dress torn, and almost dragged from his person. But it was not in the outward man alone that this alteration had taken place. In spirit, as well as in frame, he was crushed. His former iron bearing

was gone; no energy, no strength left. He seemed but a wreck, shattered and beaten down—down to the very dust. At times he mumbled to himself, and moaned like one in suffering. Then again he rose and paced the room with long strides, dashing his hand against his forehead, and uttering execrations. The next moment he staggered to his seat, buried his face in his hands, and sobbed like a child.

'Tim,' said he, in a low broken voice, 'poor old Tim; I killed you, I know I did; but blast ye! I loved you, Tim. But it's of no use, now; you're dead, and can never know how much poor Bill Jones cared for you. No, no; you never can, Tim. We were boys together, and now I'm alone; no one left—no one, *no* one!'

In the very phrenzy of grief, that succeeded these words, he flung himself upon the floor, dashing his head and hands against it, and rolling and writhing like one in mortal pain. This outbreak of passion was followed by a kind of stupor; and crawling to his seat, he remained there, like one stunned and bereft of strength. Stolid, scarcely breathing, and but for the twitching of his fingers, motionless as stone; with his eyes fixed on the blank wall, he sat as silent as one dead; but with a heart on fire, burning with a remorse never to be quenched; with a soul hurrying and darting to and fro in its mortal tenement, to escape the lashings of conscience. Struggle on! struggle on! There is no escape, until that strong heart is eaten away by a disease for which there is no cure; until that iron frame, worn down by suffering, has become food for the worm, and that spirit and its persecutor stand before

their final judge, in the relations of criminal and accuser.

A heavy step announced that some one was ascending the stairs. Jones moved not. A loud knock at the door followed. Still he did not stir. The door was then flung open, in no very gentle manner, for it struck the wall behind it with a noise that made the room echo: but a cannon might have been fired there, and Jones would not have heard it.

The person however who had thus unceremoniously opened the way to his entrance, seemed perfectly indifferent whether his proceedings were agreeable or otherwise. His first movement on entering the room was to shut the door after him and lock it; his next was to look about it to see whether it contained any other than the person of Jones. Having satisfied himself on that score, he walked rapidly up to him and tapped him on the shoulder.

Jones looked listlessly up at him, and then turning away, dabbled in the ashes, without uttering a word.

'Hello! Bill Jones,' said the stranger, after waiting a moment or two in evident surprise, 'what ails you?'

The man made no reply.

'Are you sulky?' demanded the other; 'Well, follow your own humor; but answer me one question: where's Craig?'

Jones shuddered; and his hand shook violently. Rising up, half tottering, he turned and stood face to face with his visiter.

'Good day to ye, Mr. Grosket,' said he, with a ghastly smile, and extending his hand to him. 'Good day to ye. It's a bright day, on the heels of such a night as the last was.'

'Good God! what ails you, man?' exclaimed Grosket, recoiling before the wild figure which confronted him; and then taking his hand, he said: 'Your hand is hot as fire, your eyes blood-shot, and your face covered with blood. What have you been at? What ails you?'

Jones passed his hand feebly across his forehead, and then replied: 'I'm sick at heart!'

He turned from Grosket, and again crouched upon the hearth, mumbling over his last words, 'Sick at heart! sick at heart!'—nor did he appear to recollect Grosket's question respecting Craig. If he did, he did not answer it, but with his arms locked over his knees, he rocked to and fro, like one in great pain.

'Are you ill, man, or are you drunk?' demanded Grosket, pressing heavily on his shoulder. 'Speak out, I say: what ails you? If you don't find your tongue, I'll find it for you.'

Jones, thus addressed, made an effort to rally, and partially succeeded; for after a moment he suddenly rose up erect, and in a clear, bold voice, replied:

'I'm not drunk, Mr. Grosket, but I *am* ill; God knows what's the matter with me. Look at me!' he continued, stepping to where the light was strongest; 'Look at me well. Wouldn't you think I'd been on my back for months?'

'You look ill enough;' was the blunt reply.

'Well, then, what do you want?' demanded Jones, in a peevish tone; 'why do you trouble me? I can't bear it. Go away; go away.'

'I will, when you've answered my question. Where's Craig?'

'I don't know. He was here last night; but he went out, and hasn't been here since.'

'Where did he go?'

Jones shook his head: 'He didn't say.'

'Was he alone?'

'No,' replied the other, evidently wincing under these questions; 'No; there was a man with him, nigh about my size. He went with him. That's all I know about either of them. There, there; get through with your questions. They turn my head,' said he, in an irritable tone.

'Why did he take a stranger?' demanded Grosket, without paying the least attention to his manner. 'You forget that I know you and he generally hunt in couples.'

It might have been the cold of the room striking through to his very bones that had so powerful an effect on Jones, but he shook from head to foot, as he answered:

'Look at me! God! would you have a man out in such a night as that was, when he's almost ready for his winding-sheet?'

Grosket's only reply was to ask another question.

'What was the name of the man who went with him?'

'I don't know.'

'What did they go to do?'

Jones hesitated, as if in doubt what answer to make, and then, as if adopting an open course, he said: 'I've know'd you a good while, Mr. Grosket, and you won't blab, if I tell you what I suspect, will ye? It's only guess-work, after all. Promise me that;

I know your word is good.'

Grosket paused a moment before he made the promise; and then said: 'Well, I'll keep what you tell me to myself. Now then.'

'It was a house-breaking business,' said Jones, sinking his voice. 'They took pistols with them; and I heard Tim tell the other one to take the crow-bar and the glim. That's all I know. I was too much down to listen. There; go away now. I've talked till my head is almost split. Talking drives me mad. Go away.'

Grosket stood perfectly still in deep thought. The story might be true; for the city was ringing with the news of the burglary, and of the death of one of the burglars by the hands of his comrade. It was rumored too, that the dead man had been identified by some of the officers of the police, and that his name was Craig. It was this, taken in connection with the facts that the attempt had been made on Harson's house; that an effort had been made to carry off a child who lived with him, and of its being known to Grosket that Rust had often employed these two men in matters requiring great energy and few scruples, that had induced him thus early to visit their haunt, to ascertain the truth of his suspicions; and to endeavor, if possible, to ferret out the plans of their employer. The replies of Jones, short and abrupt as they were, convinced him that his suspicions respecting Craig were correct; but who could the other man be?

Engrossed with his own thoughts, he appeared to forget where he was and who was present; for he commenced walking up and down the room; then stopped; folded his arms, and talked to

himself in low, broken sentences. Again he walked to the far end of the room and stopped there.

Jones, in the mean time, to avoid farther questioning, seated himself; and leaning his elbows on his knees, hid his face in his hand. He was disturbed, however, by feeling himself shaken roughly by the shoulder. 'What you've just been telling me, is a lie!' said Grosket, sternly. 'You should know me well enough not to run the risk of trifling with me. I want the truth and nothing else. Where were *you* last night?'

Jones looked up at him and then answered in a sullen tone: 'I've told you once; I was here.'

Grosket went to a dark corner of the room and brought back Jones' great-coat, completely saturated with water. 'This room scarcely leaks enough to do that,' said he, throwing it on the floor in front of Jones. 'Ha! what's that in the pocket?'

He thrust in his hand and drew out a pistol. The hammer was down, the cap exploded, and the inside of the muzzle blackened by burnt powder.

'Fired off!' said he. 'You told the truth. The man who went with Craig *did* look like you. I know the rest. Tim Craig is dead, and you shot him.'

An expression of strange meaning crossed the face of the burglar as he returned the steady look of his visiter without making any reply. But Grosket was not yet done with him; for he said in a slow, savage tone: 'Now mark me well. If you lie in what you tell me, I'll hang you. Who employed you to do this job?'

Jones eyed him for a moment, and then turned away impatiently and said, 'I don't know what you're talking about. Don't worry me. I'm sick and half crazy. Get away, will ye!'

'*This* to me! to *me!*' exclaimed the other, stepping back, his eyes flashing fire; 'you forget yourself.'

Jones rose up, his red hair hanging like ropes about his face, and his bloodshot eyes and disfigured features giving him the look rather of a wild beast than of a man. Shaking his finger at Grosket, he said, 'Keep away from me to day, I say. There's an evil spell over me. Come to-morrow, but don't push me to-day, or God knows what you may drive me to do. There, there—go.'

Still Grosket stirred not, but with a curling lip and an eye as bright as his own, and voice so fearfully quiet and yet stern that at another time it might have quelled even the strong spirit of the robber, he said 'Enoch Grosket never goes until his object is attained.'

'Then you won't go?' demanded Jones.

'No!'

Jones made a hasty step toward him, with his teeth set and his eyes burning like coals of fire; but whatever may have been his purpose, and from the expression of his face, there was little doubt but that it was a hostile one, he was diverted from it by hearing a hand on the latch of the door and a voice from without demanding admittance.

'It is Rust,' exclaimed Grosket, in a sharp whisper. He touched the burglar on the shoulder and said in the same tone, 'I'm going

in *there*.' He pointed to a closet in a dark part of the room, nearly concealed by the wainscotting. Let him in, and betray me if you dare!'

'You seem to know our holes well,' muttered Jones. 'You've been here afore.' Grosket made no reply, but hurried across the room and secreted himself in the closet, which evidently had been constructed as a place of concealment, either for the tenants of the room themselves, or for whatever else it might not suit their fancy to have too closely examined.

Jones stared after him, apparently forgetting the applicant for admission, until a renewed and very violent knocking recalled his attention to it. He then went to the door, drew back the bolt, and walked to his seat, without even glancing to see who came in, or whom the person was who followed so closely at his heels. Nor did he look around until he felt his arm roughly grasped, and a sharp stern voice hissing in his ear:

'So, so! a fine night's work you've made of it. Tim Craig is dead and the whole city is already ringing with the news; and *you*, you're a murderer!'

Jones started from his seat with the sudden spasmodic bound of one who has received a mortal thrust. He stared wildly at the sharp thin face which had almost touched his, and then sat down and said:

'Don't talk to me so, Mr. Rust; I can't bear it.'

'Ho, ho! your conscience is tender, is it? It has a raw spot that won't bear handling, has it? We'll see to that. But to business,'

said he, his face becoming white with rage; his black eyes blazing, and his voice losing its smoothness and quivering as he spoke.

'I've come here to fulfil my agreement; you were to get that child for me to-day; I've come for her; where is she?'

Jones looked at him with an expression of impatience mingled with contempt, but made him no answer.

'Tim Craig was to have gone to that house; he was to have carried her off; he was to have her here, *here*, HERE!' said he, in the same fierce tone. 'Why hasn't he done it?'

'Because he's dead,' said Jones savagely.

'I'm glad of it! I'm glad of it!' exclaimed Rust. 'He deserved it. The coward! *Let* him die.'

'Tim Craig was no coward,' replied Jones, in a tone which, had Rust been less excited, would have warned him to desist.

'Ha!' exclaimed Rust, scanning him from head to foot, as if surprised at his daring to contradict him, 'Would you gainsay me?'

Jones returned his look without flinching, his teeth firmly set and grating together. At last he said:

'I *do* gainsay you; and I *do* say, whoever calls Tim Craig a coward lies!'

'*This*, and from *you*!' exclaimed Rust, shaking his thin finger in his very face; '*this* from you; *you*, a house-breaker, a thief, and last night the murderer of your comrade. Ho! ho! it makes me laugh! Fool! How many lives have you? One word of mine could

hang you.'

'*You'll* never hang *me*,' replied Jones, in the same low, savage tone. 'I wish you had, before that cursed job of yours made me put a bullet in poor Tim. I wish you had; but it is too late. You wont *now*.'

Words cannot describe the fury of Michael Rust at seeing himself thus bearded by one whom he had been used to see truckle to him, whom he considered the mere tool of Craig, and whom he had never thought it worth while even to consult in their previous interviews.

'Wont I? *wont* I? Look to yourself,' muttered he, shaking his finger at him with a slow, cautioning gesture, 'Look to yourself.'

'You're right, I *will*; I say I *will*,' exclaimed Jones, leaping up and confronting him. 'I say I *will*; and now I do!' He grasped him by the throat and shook him as if he had been a child.

'I might as well kill him at once,' muttered he, without heeding the struggles of Rust. 'It's *him* or *me*; yes, yes, I'll do it.'

Coming to this fatal conclusion, he flung Rust back on the floor and leaped upon him. At this moment, however, the door of the closet was thrown open, and Grosket, whom he had entirely forgotten, sprang suddenly out:

'Come, come, this wont do!' said he; 'no murder!'

Jones made no effort to resist the jerk at his arm with which Grosket accompanied his words, but quietly rose, and said:

'Well, he drove me to it. He may thank *you* for his life, not *me*.'

Relieved from his antagonist, Rust recovered his feet, and

turning to Grosket said, in a sneering tone:

'Michael Rust thanks Enoch for having used his influence with his friend, to prevent the commission of a crime which might have made both Enoch and his crony familiar with a gallows. A select circle of acquaintance friend Enoch has.'

Grosket, quietly, pointed to the closet and said:

'You forget that I have been there ever since you came in the room; and have overheard every thing that passed between you and *my* friend.'

Rust bit his lip.

'Don't let it annoy you,' continued he, 'for the most of what I heard I knew before. I have had my eye on you from the time we parted. With all your benevolent schemes respecting myself I am perfectly familiar. The debt which you bought up to arrest me on; your attempt to have me indicted on a false charge of felony; the quiet hint dropped in another quarter, that if I should be found with my throat cut, or a bullet in my head, you wouldn't break your heart; I knew them all; but I did not avail myself of the law. Shall I tell you why, Michael Rust? Because I had a revenge sweeter than the law could give.'

'Friend Enoch is welcome to it when he gets it,' replied Rust, in a soft tone. 'But the day when it will come is far off.'

'The day is at hand,' replied Grosket. 'It is here: it is now. Not for a mine of gold would I forego what I now know; not for any thing that is dear in the world's eyes, would I spare you one pang that I can now inflict.'

Rust smiled incredulously, but made no reply.

'Your schemes are frustrated,' continued Grosket. 'The children are both found; their parentage known; *your* name blasted. The brother who fostered you, and loaded you with kindness will have his eyes opened to your true character; and you will be a felon, amenable to the penalty of the law, whenever any man shall think fit to call it down upon your head. But this is nothing to what is in store for you.'

'Well,' said Rust, with the same quiet smile; 'please to enumerate what other little kindnesses you have in store for me.'

'I will,' replied Grosket. '*I* was once a happy man. I had a wife and daughter, whom I loved. My wife is dead; what became of my child? I say,' exclaimed he bitterly, 'what became of my child?'

'Young women will forget themselves sometimes,' said Rust, his thin lip curling. 'She became a harlot—only a harlot.'

Grosket grew deadly pale, and his voice became less clear, as he answered:

'You're right—you're right! why shrink from the word. It's a harsh one; but it's God's truth; she *did*—and she died.'

'That's frank,' said Rust, 'quite frank. I am a straight-forward man, and always speak the truth. I'm glad to see that friend Enoch can bear it like a Christian.'

A loud, taunting laugh broke from Grosket; and then he said:

'Thus much for *me*; now for yourself, Michael Rust. *You* once had a wife.'

Rust's calm sneer disappeared in an instant, and he seemed absolutely to wither before the keen flashing eye which was fixed steadfastly on his.

'She lived with you two years; and then she became—shall I tell you what?'

Rust's lips moved, but no sound came from them. Grosket bent his lips to his ear, and whispered in it. Rust neither moved nor spoke. He seemed paralyzed.

'But she died,' continued Grosket, 'and she left a child—a daughter; *mine* was a daughter too.'

Rust started from a state of actual torpor; every energy, every faculty, every feeling leaping into life.

'That daughter is now alive,' continued Grosket, speaking slowly, that every word might tell with tenfold force. 'That daughter now is, what you drove my child to be, a harlot.'

'It's false as hell!' shouted Rust, in a tone that made the room ring. 'It's false!'

'It's true. I can prove it; prove it, clear as the noon-day,' returned Grosket, with a loud, exulting laugh.

'Oh! Enoch! oh, Enoch!' said Rust, in a broken, supplicating tone, 'tell me that it's false, and I'll bless you! Crush me, blight me, do what you will, only tell me that my own loved child is pure from spot or stain! Tell me so, I beseech you; *I*, Michael Rust, who never begged a boon before—*I* beseech you.'

He fell on his knees in front of Grosket, and clasping his hands together, raised them toward him.

‘I cannot,’ replied Grosket, coldly, ‘for it’s as true as there is a heaven above us!’

Rust made an effort to speak; his fingers worked convulsively, and he fell prostrate on the floor.

THE SACRIFICE

'One day during the bloody executions which took place at Lyons, a young girl rushed into the hall where the revolutionary tribunal was held, and throwing herself at the feet of the judges, said: 'There remain to me of all my family only my brothers! Mother, father, sister—you have butchered all; and now you are going to condemn my brothers. Oh! in mercy ordain that I may ascend the scaffold with them!' Her prayer was refused, and she threw herself into the Rhone and perished.'
Du Broca

The judges have met in the council-hall,
A strange and a motley pageant, all:
What seek they? to win for their land a name
The brightest and best in the lists of fame?
The light of Mercy's all-hallowed ray
To look with grief on the culprit's way?
Nay! watch the smile and the flushing brow,
And in that crowd what read ye now?
The daring spirit and purpose high,
The fiery glance of the eagle eye
That marked the Roman's haughty pride,
In the days of yore by the Tiber's side?
The stern resolve of the patriot's breast,
When the warrior's zeal has sunk to rest?

No! Mercy has fled from the hardened heart,
And Justice and Truth in her steps depart,
And the fires of hell rage fierce and warm
Mid the fitful strife of the spirit's storm.

But a wail is borne on the troubled air:
What victim comes those frowns to dare?
'Tis woman's form and woman's eye,
That Time hath passed full lightly by;
The limner's art in vain might trace
The glorious beauty and winning grace
Of that fair girl; youth's sunny day
Flings its radiance over life's changing way:
Why has she left her princely home,
Why to that hall a suppliant come?
Her heart is sad with a deepening gloom,
For Hope has found in her heart a tomb.
With quiv'ring lip, and eye whose light
Is faint as the moon in a cloudy night,
And with cheek as pale as the crimson glow
That the sunset casts on the spotless snow;
Nerved with the strength of wild despair,
Low at their feet she pours her prayer:

'My home! my home! is desolate,
For ye have slain them all,
And cast upon the light of Love
Death's cold and fearful pall.
We knelt in agony to save

My father's silver hair,
Ye would not mark the bitter tears,
Nor list the frantic prayer!

'And then ye took my mother too:
Ye must remember now
The words that lingered on her lip,
The grief upon her brow;
My sister wept in bitter wo—
Her dark and earnest eyes
Asked for the mercy ye will seek
In vain in yonder skies!

'But your hearts were like the flinty rock,
And cold as ocean's foam;
You tore them from my clasping arms,
And bore them from our home:
And now my brothers ye will slay!
But they are proud and high,
And come with spirits brave and true,
Your tortures to defy.

'I will not ask from you their lives,
I will not seek to roll
The clouds of midnight from your hearts;
Ye cannot touch the soul!
But grant my prayer, and I will pray
For you in yonder sky;
Oh, God! I ask a little thing—

I ask with them to die!'

But the burning words fell cold and lone,
As the sun's warm rays on a marble stone;
Life was a curse too bitter and wild
For the broken heart of Earth's weary child;
And the stricken one found a self-sought grave
'Neath the crystal light of the foaming wave.

Shelter-Island.Mary Gardiner.

THE DEATH BED

A STRAY LEAF FROM THE PORT-FOLIO OF A 'COUNTRY DOCTOR.'

BY F. W. SHELTON

'Bury me in the valley, beneath the willows where I have watched the rippling waves, among the scenes of beauty which I loved so well, oh! my friend!' exclaimed the dying youth; and as he grasped my hand his lips moved tremblingly, tears gushed upon his wan cheeks, and an expression of very sadness stole upon him. His looks were lingering; such as one flings back upon some paradise of beauty which he leaves forever; some home which childhood has endeared to him, and affection has filled with the loves and graces. Pity touched my soul as I regarded silently that beaming countenance, alas! so shrunken from the swelling, undulating lines of his hilarious health; a pity such as one feels whose hopes are too inexplicably bound up with another's, who shares his very being, and who knows by all the sympathies of a brother's bosom that the other's heart-strings are snapping. *Animæ dimidium meæ!*—beautiful expression of

the poet, comprehended less while life unites, than when death severs. It is only when gazing on the seal which has been set, we inquire 'Where is the spirit?' and struggle in vain to understand that great difference; when the smiles which shed their sunshine have rapidly vanished, and the voice we loved has died away like the music of a harp; when that which was light, joy, wit, eloquence, has departed with the latest breath; when, in short, we are awakened from our revery by the clods falling on the coffin, and the mourners moving away; it is then that the soul, diminished of its essence, flits away with a strange sense to its unjoyous abode, as a bird would return to its lonely nest.

There never existed one who more lived and moved, and had his spiritual being in the affections; a sensitive nature wooed into life by the kindness of the faintest breath, but killingly crushed by the footsteps of the thoughtless or the cruel. For such a one, life is well deserving of the epithet applied to it by the poet Virgil: *dulcis vita*, sweet life. It is not a vulgar sensuality, a Lethean torpor; the triumph of the grosser nature over the eternal principle within. It is already a separation of the carnal from the spiritual; a refinement of fierce passions; a present divorce from a close and clinging alliance; a foretaste of the waters of life; in short, the very essence and devotion of a pure religion. Would it seem strangely inconsistent that a being of so sweet a character as I shall describe him, my poor young friend declared, with a gush of the bitterest tears, that he *could* not go into the dark valley, for he loved life with an inconceivable, passionate love?

His was the very agony and pathos of the dying Hoffman, when almost with his latest breath, he alluded to 'the sweet habitude of being.' But it was only, thanks be to God! a short defection, a momentary clouding of that bright faith which was destined soon to see beyond the vale. His tears ceased to flow, glistened a moment, and then passed away as if they had been wiped by some gentle hand.

He leaned upon a soft couch, so very pale and haggard that his hour seemed very near. Costly books strewed his table; pictures and many exquisite things were scattered about with lavish hand; for wealth administered to refined luxury, and affection crowned him with blessings which gold can never buy. A mother hid from him her bitter tears, and spoke the words of cheerfulness; sisters pressed around him with the poignant grief an only brother can inspire; a beautiful betrothed betokened to him in irrepressible tears her depth and purity of love. Letters came to him hurried on the wings of friendship, and impressed on all their seals with sentiments which awakened hope. Youth and beauty hovered around him with their unintermitted care, and Age sent up its fervent prayers to heaven. Oh! who but the ungrateful would not love a life so filled with blandishments and crowned with blessings? Who could see all these receding without a sigh, or feel the pressure of that kiss of love as pure as if it had its origin in Heaven? But with the finest organization of intellectual mind, he had been accustomed to look at all things in the light of poetry. For one so constituted the pleasures which are in store are as

inexhaustible as the works or mercies of his God. Not an hour which did not present some new phase of undiscovered beauty. He revelled in the beams of the morning; the rising sun was never a common object, nor its grandeur ever lost upon a soul so conscious of the sublime. For all beauty in nature he found a correspondent passion in the soul; and intoxicated alike with the music of birds or the perfume of flowers, found no weariness in a life whose current was like the living spring, pure, perennial and delightful.

To be so susceptible of pleasure, I would be willing to encounter all the keenness of pangs suffered by such natures. For such, the rational delights of a year are crowded into a day, an hour; and the ignorant reader of their obituary sighs mournfully, computing their lives by a false reckoning. Yet after all, we have been disposed to regard the death of the young as something unnatural; the violent rending asunder of soul and body; the penalty enacted of a life artificial in its modes and repugnant to nature. As Cicero has beautifully expressed it, it is like the sudden quenching of a bright flame; but the death of the virtuous Old is as expected, as free from terror as the sunset; it is the coming of a gentle sleep after a long and weary day.

Travers was in the very gush and spring-tide of his youth; yet crowned as he was with blessings, and every attribute for their most perfect enjoyment, the true secret of his too fond desire to live, was that *he loved*:

'He loved but one,
And that loved one, alas! could ne'er be his.'

In her the poetry of his life centred; and as a river is swollen by divers rills, and tributary streams, so all the thoughts and passions of his soul hurried with a pure and rapid tide to mingle and be lost in one. But illness, and the long looking at death, and above all, the Christian's hope, enable us one by one to break off the dearest ties, and to renounce whatever we most love on earth. And so my young friend in good time emerged from the cloud which obscured his prospects, and saw clearly beyond the vale. It is not long since, being well assured that his fate was inevitable, he expressed a desire, which he carried into execution, to visit once more his well-loved haunts, and take a solemn farewell of them all. As one grasps the hand of a friend at parting, he looked his last at things which were inanimate. He rambled in the deep, dark groves whither he had so often gone in health, to enjoy their Gothic grandeur, to breathe the spirit of the religion they inspire, or to murmur in their deepest shades the accents of his pure and passionate love. He inscribed his name for the last time upon the smooth bark of a tree; then leaving them forever, as he emerged into the gay meadows, he turned to me with tears and said:

'Ye woods, and wilds, whose melancholy gloom
Accords with my soul's sadness, and draws forth
The voice of sorrow from my bursting heart!'

He clambered the steep hill-side, and sinking exhausted beneath a smitten tree, enjoyed the picturesqueness of the scene; the meadows, the streams, the pasture-grounds, the dappled herds, the sereneness of the summer skies, cleft by the wing of the musical lark, in all their purity of blue. He sat beside the sea-shore, and watched the big billows breaking and bursting at his feet; and as he looked where the waters and the sky met together in the far horizon, he exclaimed, 'Now indeed do I long to fly away!' Then he returned to his pillow, never to go forth again. 'I shall die,' he said, 'when the season is in its prime and glory; when the fields are green and the trees leafy; and the sunlight shall shimmer down through the branches where the birds sing over my grave.' Then casting a look at his books, where they stood neatly arranged on the well-filled shelves, he lamented that he had not time to garner half the stores of a beautiful literature; to satisfy his perpetual thirst; to drink to the full at the 'pure wells of English undefiled.' There were the Greek poets, whom he would have more intimately cherished, (he had been lately absorbed in the sublimity of the 'Prometheus Vinctus;') there was the great master and anatomizer of the human heart, who knew how to detail the springs of action common to all ages, the paragon of that deep learning which is not derived from books, but gleaned by his genius from all nature with a rare intuition, and with an incomprehensible power of research. In him what mines of instruction, what sources of undiscovered delight, what philosophy yet to be grappled with, to be laid to the heart!

Charles Lamb has with a quaint melancholy depicted the pain of parting from his books, and from the indefinable delights laid up in each dear folio. Yet after all, what is the literature of one age but the reproduction, the remoulding, the condensation of the literature of another; the loss and destruction of its waste ore, but the re-setting of its gems, and the renewed investiture of all its beauties. There is no glowing thought, no exquisite conception, no sublime and beautiful idea, which is not imperishable as the mind itself, and which shall not be carried on from age to age, or if destroyed or lost upon the written page, revived by some happy coincidence of intellectual being, and perpetuated and enjoyed, here or hereafter, wherever mind exists. A communion like this will be a communion of spirits. A finer organization, expanded faculties shall rapidly consume the past; but oh, the future! what glories are to be crowded into its immensity? How shall knowledge be commensurate with the stars, or wander over the universe? Now bring me the written Revelation, the written word. It clasps within its volume all excellencies, all sublimities of speech; secrets which could not be developed by reason, nor found in the arcana of human wisdom. Henceforth this shall be my only companion, and its promises shall light my passage over the grave.'

I marked the lustrous beaming of his eye, and from that time he looked at all things on the 'bright side.' His very love could think upon its object without a tear, and look forward to a pure and eternal re-union. At last the hour of dissolution came. I knew

it by its unerring symptoms; yet still I listened to his passionate, poetic converse. It was for the last time; I was in the chamber of death. What observer can mistake it; the darkened windows, the stillness, the grouping, the subdued sobs, the awful watchfulness for the identical moment when a lovely and intellectual spirit breaks its bonds, as if the strained vision could detect the spiritual essence. What a heart-sickness comes over those who love! What a change in the appearance of all things! The very sun-light is disagreeable, the very skies a mockery; the very roses unlovely. We look out of the casement, and see the external face of nature still the same; how heartless, how destitute of sympathy, now appears the whole world without, with the home, that inner world! How can those birds sing so sweetly on the branches; how can the flowers bloom as brightly as ever; how can those children play so gleefully; how can yon group laugh with such unconcern! He is an only son. Though wan, and wasted in all his lineaments, his pure brow, his gentle expression, tell that he was worthy to be loved. Can no human power restore him to the arms of a fond mother? It is in vain! The spirit flutters upon his lips; it has departed. But it has left behind it a token; a clear, bright impress; a smile of undissembled love and purity; an expression beaming with the last unutterable peace; the graces which were so winning upon earth, but which shall attain their perfection in heaven.

FREEDOM'S BEACON

'To-day, to-day it speaks to us! Its future auditories will be the generations of men, as they rise up before it and gather round it'
Webster.

'To-day it speaks to us!'
Of 'the times that tried men's souls,'
When hostile ships rode where yon bay
Its deep blue waters rolls:
When the war-cloud dark was lowering
Portentous o'er the land;
When the vassal troops of Britain came
With bayonet, sword and brand.

'To-day it speaks to us!'
Of brave deeds nobly done,
When patriot hearts beat high with hope,
Ere Freedom's cause was won:
Of the conflict fierce, where fell
New-England's valiant men,
Who waved their country's banner high,
Though warm blood dyed it then!

And will its voice be still
When the thousands of to-day,

Who have come like pilgrim-worshippers,
From earth shall pass away?
Oh no! 'the potent orator'
To future times shall tell
Where Prescott, Brooks, and Putnam fought,
Where gallant Warren fell.

'Twill speak of these, and others—
Of brave men, born and nurst
In stormy times, on Danger's lap.
Who dared Oppression's worst:
Of Vernon's chief, and he who came
Across the Atlantic flood,
To offer to the patriot's God
A sacrifice of blood.

Long as the 'Bay State' cherishes
One thought of sainted sires,
Long as the day-god greets her cliffs,
Or gilds her domes and spires;
Long as her granite hills remain
Firm fixed, so long shall be
Yon Monument on Bunker's height
A beacon for the free!

A WINTER TRIP TO TRENTON FALLS

IN THREE SCENES

SCENE FIRST

Morning; eight on the clock. Billing's Hotel, Trenton. Outside, a clear bright sun glancing down through an atmosphere sparkling with frost, upon as fine a road for a sleigh-ride as ever tempted green-mountain boys and girls for a moonlight flit. Inside, a well-furnished breakfast-table, beef-steak, coffee, toast, etc., etc. On the one side of it your correspondent; serious, as if he considered breakfast a thing to be attended to. He is somewhat, as the lady on the other side of the table says, *somewhat* in the 'sear leaf,' by which name indeed she is pleased to call him; but there is enough of spring in her, to suffice for all deficiencies in him. Like the morning, she is a *little*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.