

The Leisure Hour.

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Jacob's Ladder.

The following stanzas are an extract from a recent Prize Poem of the University of Oxford, by Rev. Wm. Alexander:

Ah! many a time we look on starlight nights
Up to the sky as Jacob did of old,
Long looking up the eternal lights,
To spell their lines in gold.

But nevermore, as to the Hebrew boy,
Each on his way the angle walk abroad,
And nevermore we hear, with awful joy,
The audible voice of God.

Yet, to pure eyes, the ladder still is set,
And angel visitants still come and go,
Many bright messengers are moving yet,
From the dark world below.

Thoughts that are red crossed Faith's outspread-
ing wings,
Prayers of the Church, are keeping time and
try—
Heart-wishes making bee-like murmurings,
Their flowers, the Eucharist—

Spirits sweet, though suffering rendered meet
For these high mansions, from the nursery
door,
Bright ladders that climb up with their clay-cold
feet,
Unto the golden door.

These are the messengers, forever wending
From earth to heaven, that faith alone may
see,
These are the angels of our God, ascending
Upon the Son of Man.

"ONE TOO MANY."

A TALE OF THE EQUINOX.

BY PAUL H. HAYNE.

IV.

Deeply perplexed by the Italian's conduct, and disposed to attribute it to that notorious policy, which, from the age of Machiavelli, and Cesar Borgia, has been considered the distinguishing characteristic of his nation, I quitted the house, rest-less, feverish, impatient, and mounting my horse, dashed along the beach at a wild gallop, now compelling the animal to rush breast-high into the surf, and again spurring him up some heavy block of sand, as if bent upon imparting a portion of my own restless torture to the unoffending steed. Riding onward in this hurried, irregular manner, I soon found that I had gone several miles; and was opposite a thin tongue of land—the extremity of "Fashion Island"—upon which a large and well-constructed lighthouse had been recently built. I knew the superintendent very well, and as the prospect from the tower was magnificent, I occasionally paid him a visit. He was an intelligent and well-informed old man, who had spent fifty years of his life in the Pilot service, and was quite content to end his days in his present lonely position, keeping bright the flame that was to warn from rock, shoal, and headland the "bonny ships" that sailed across the harbor bar. As I approached the light-house, my attention was attracted by the singular appearance of the moon, which loomed at that moment above the eastern horizon, not silvery, calm, and majestic as is her wont, but in the exquisite words of Hood, as if

"The ghost of the late buried sun
Had crept into the sky."
Or, to make the figure more applicable to the occasion, as if the sun, murdered by foul and stifling vapors that had thronged about his setting, now re-appeared, a bloody and lurid spectre, portending, it was impossible to imagine what, of approaching misfortune.

Giving out a dull-red gleam like the glow of a half-burned furnace, the radiance she cast upon the earth was ghastly and funereal; the very stars shone pale and sickly in the ominous lustre.

I dismounted near the light-house door, and knowing that R-lph (that was the superintendent's name) was, as usual, in the tower, I ascended the narrow and dark stairway towards that "perilous eminence," hoping to divert my thoughts by the grand spectacle of sky and ocean, enlivened, perhaps, by some appropriate "yarn" of the old Pilot's. I found the faithful fellow diligently arranging his light, and so absorbed in the occupation, that he did not remark my entrance. He was muttering moodily to himself:

"A thundering squally night I'll blow great guns before 9 o'clock, and a hundred and twenty pounds by morning—the Lord help them as gets to windward of the 'Devil's Grip' any time these next thirty-six hours."

"Always prophesying storms, you old croaker!" said I, breaking upon the thread of his soliloquy; "do you think that because the moon looks bilious and has these circles around her, that it's necessary to predict a hurricane; can't you curb your extravagance and be content with a moderate gale?"

"Faith! Mr. Brantly," said the old man, gloomily, "I've no sperit for fun to-night; look yonder," he continued, drawing me to the window, "don't you see that dark coppery line there away down to the north-east, dead on the water level? Well, sir, I never see that but I know there'll be the devil to play; and listen do you hear that dull boom! It's the ground swell, sir, and it bodes mischief."

And truly, as he spoke I detected a low, deep

wrathful murmur like the ingathering of innumerable phantom hosts, coming up from the abysses of the sea to do the bidding of the Storm King, who had sent the inscrutable heralds of his approach through the waste of the dark waters, and upon the fitful and sobbing gusts of the mournful winds. But I was not in the humor to be impressed by these various tokens of the tempest, and so, after questioning Ralph for a few minutes, and receiving only curt and absent replies, I bade him good evening, and rode slowly back to "mine inn," which rejoiced in the name of "The Triton."

Wearied by the pressure of anxious thoughts, I retired early to rest. There are some phases of mental trouble from which there is no escape in sleep. But, then, there are other moods in which the sensibilities, deadened by the reaction from long excitement, instinctively demand repose. In this condition of feeling, I had no sooner laid my head upon the pillow, than a profound slumber crept over me. I was awakened—I now hot at what hour—by a steady, deafening, continuous roar, which reminded the unintermitted discharges of a hundred batteries. I felt my bed rocking and swaying, and heard the rafters of the chamber groaning like the timbers of a ship in the path of a tropical tornado. The great iron bell in the cupola of the hotel, gave out a heavy, irregular, sullen toll, and a stifled hum rose from the stairways and passages of the building, as if a throng of people were passing and re-passing upon them. I rushed to the window, drew aside the curtains, and saw that Ralph's predictions were being fearfully fulfilled. Above, the Heavens were of an inky blackness, a hollow and starless void, through which the hurricane swept like a voice of Doom. No pause, no subsidence in its terrible monotone! But if the sky was utterly rayless, the ocean, which had swept away every ancient landmark and had already so gained upon the shore as to be within fifty or sixty yards of the knoll on which "The Triton" stood, gleamed with a thousand varying lines of foam, whose white "caps" tossed high into the air, dissolved with magical celerity, devoured by the encircling gloom. Far out, apparently sinking rapidly beneath the waters the light-house, with its unsteady flame, could be faintly discerned through the thickening mist; but as I gazed the light suddenly went out, and the "blackness of darkness" fell upon the scene.

All this I have occupied some time in describing, but the entire spectacle presented itself to me at a single glance.

My first thought, after the stunning shock of the danger had past, was of Miss Richardson and her father.

Dressing in haste, I left my chamber, and making the quickest progress possible through the crowd of persons who blocked up the corridors, and whose faces were ghastly with affright, I sought the stables, saddled my horse, (who, with the strange warning instinct of danger which we see in animals, was trembling in his stall,) and taking what was called the "back beach," rode rapidly in the direction of Col. Richardson's house.

I succeeded in finding it, but not before I had repeatedly lost the way and thus consumed much valuable time. The family were up, and, of course, in great alarm. As I entered the parlor in which they were assembled, the Colonel grasped me by the hand.

"My brave boy, how can I thank you? You know this locality well—you have come to show us some mode of escape."

"Yes! or to die with you," replied I firmly.

"I knew you would come," said Julia in a low voice, as I took my seat beside her for an instant and endeavored to brace up my energies for the dreadful crisis. Signore Buonarrotti was standing by the window, pale, but quiet and calm as a cast iron statue. Even then, I could not but admire the indomitable courage of the man!

"Have you a boat in the neighborhood of the house Colonel?" I inquired, after a brief silence, during which half a dozen schemes of escape were suggested to my mind, and quickly dismissed as impracticable.

"None! none! The fishing smack I used to moor in the creek was sent to C—last Wednesday for repair, and as for the ten-oared barge at the Cove, we could not manage that."

"And if we could," said I, "it would signify nothing for the barge is leagues out at sea by this time."

"Great God! what then are we to do?"

"This house," I answered, "is on the highest and firmest portion of the beach. The foundation is of stone, securely laid. The sea may not reach us, and if it does, the building is staunch and will weather it out."

"But suppose the tide completely overtops it?"

I rejoined in a tone of forced confidence, "that that was impossible."

"It seems to me," remarked Buonarrotti, who was intently watching the changes of gale, "that anything is possible in such a hurricane as this."

"Perhaps," said I with a half sneer, which was execrable under the circumstances, "perhaps the Signora has some plan to suggest."

My rival remained silent. I took Col. Richardson aside, and frankly explained to him the nature of our position. We were hemmed in on every side by the ocean, with the exception of a waste of marsh on the south-west, through the midst of which a small creek usually wound its slow course towards the mainland. But beyond doubt, the marsh was flooded to-night, and the creek swallowed up by the encroaching sea. To abandon the house would be to rush on our doom. We were, therefore, compelled to await in quiet the issue of events. Half an hour passed, and I began to imagine that the wind had subsided. It was only a treacherous lull. My secret self congratulation had scarcely assumed a definite form, when it burst forth with ten-fold fury, not with its former unvarying force but in gusty spasms more dangerous and fearful still.

It is useless to dwell upon the minutiae of the scene.

The storm momentarily increased, until it rose to a strength and fury which threatened to hurl the roof tree bodily from above our heads. To have opened a door or window at this juncture in order to examine the advance of the tide, would have been madness. So, with our senses strained to the utmost tension of uncertainty and terror, we sat in silence, bidding our doom. An hour—two hours elapsed. Suddenly, above the howling of the wind, we heard the dash of water, sullen and close at hand. Then, through the interstices of the door, and whirling with a hiss to our very feet, the eddies of some wave, more ambitious than its compeers, swept in, as if to apprise us that our fate was sealed.

We abandoned the parlor for a chamber in the second story. There we sat for another hour of horrible suspense, knowing all the while that the implacable tides which girded our place of refuge, were mounting—ever mounting to complete their mission of destruction. We heard them grinding against the stone walls of the basement, and dashing in furious glee athwart the massive posts of the piazza. And now, a mist generated by the heated atmosphere, spread like a miasmic exhalation through the apartment, a mist in which the features of all present seemed distorted and enlarged. The very room appeared widening, and the solid outlines of the ceiling changed into fantastic, shadowy, lowering shapes, suggesting to our startled imaginations the presence of cruel phantoms, who exalted over our agony. I well recollect that at the upper end of the chamber there stood a full-length mirror, which, as the vapors increased, took the semblance of a sheet of sluggish water, over whose dull surface the shades of pallid clouds were passing in weird procession. As I gazed, fascinated by some supernatural spell, the clouds, (I solemnly swear that what I tell you is true—true as the terrible events of which the vision was a symbol and a prophesy) assumed more definite forms, they grew into the palpable and distinct likeness of human figures; and these figures, at first vague and meaningless, gradually deepened into individuality, and I could see, walking as it were upon the sluggish waters, two men, whose faces were averted, but in whose gate and bearing there was something familiar. Slowly the shades of the pallid clouds became black, and threatening the phantom waves broke into agitation and turmoil, and the figures of the two men, no longer with their faces averted, threw up their arms wildly in the air, and fell struggling and helpless between the ridges of towering billows. I could distinguish no more. The vision melted into chaotic gloom, but the pressing actualities of the drama in which we were unwilling actors, hastened towards the dreadful catastrophe. We had been driven from the parlor to the chambers, from the chambers we retreated to the attic, and there, despairing, and in the silence of agonizing self-communion, of hopeless prayers for mercy, we crouched and trembled, while the hurricane shouted its mad staves above and around us, and the thunder—crash on crash—paled a reverberating chorus. So great was the tumult of the mingled and conflicting elements, that we were able to communicate with each other only by signs. At last, one of the windows fronting the east, and most exposed to the violence of the storm, was dashed from its hinges, and the next instant the raging sea poured in upon us. It was no time for conventionalities, and so I seized Julia in my arms, and hurried with her to the back room of the attic. The door, constructed of solid oak planks, was double locked and bolted; but with the strength of a madman I wrenched it open, beckoning to Col. Richardson and Buonarrotti to follow me. They did so, and for five minutes longer we managed to keep ourselves above water. But the apartment was rapidly filling. Moreover, I felt that the building itself was giving away. We were irrevocably abandoned to ruin, and the hour of the final anguish had come. I clasped the woman so devotedly beloved more closely to my bosom, and ever then, at the entrance of the Valley of the Shadow, I experienced a thrill of the keenest ecstasy as I read in her large, eloquent, hopeless eyes, the secret which for so many weary months I had buried in vain to learn. Yes! she loved me, and with a passion mated to my own, pure as

heaven, and "strong almost as death." Would you believe it, that as this blessed conviction flashed upon me, I turned with an expression of haughty pride to my rival, taunting him with a glance of triumph?

The Italian was close beside—nay, literally bending over us, with a look of such vindictive hatred that I shuddered and half rose to my feet.

TO BE CONTINUED.

A Day with Byron and Shelley.

At two o'clock on the following day, in company with Shelley, I crossed the Ponte Verchio and went on the Lung' Arno to the Palazzo Lanfranchi, the residence of Lord Byron. We entered a large marble hall, ascended a giant staircase, passed through an equally large room over the hall, and were shown into a smaller apartment which had books and a billiard table in it. A surly looking bull-dog (Moretto) announced us, by growling, and the Pilgrim instantly advanced from an inner chamber, and stood before us. His halting gate was apparent, but he moved with quickness; and altho' pale, he looked as fresh, vigorous, and animated as any man I ever saw. His pride, added to his having lived for many years alone, was the cause, I suppose, that he was embarrassed at first meeting with strangers. This he tried to conceal by an affectation of ease. After the interchange of commonplace question and answer he regained his self-possession, and turning to Shelley, said, "As you are addicted to poesy, go and read the verses I was delivered of last night, or rather this morning—that is if you can. I am posed. I am getting scrupulous. There is a letter from Tom Moore; read, you are blarneyed in it ironically." He then took a cue, and asked me to play billiards. He struck the balls and moved about the table briskly, but neither played the game nor cared a rush about it, and chatted after this idle fashion:—"The purser of the frigate I went to Constantinople in, called an officer *scritturo* for alluding to his wig. Now, the day before I mounted a wig—and I shall soon want one—I'll ride about with it on the pommel of my saddle or stick it on my cane. In that same frigate, near the Dardanelles, we nearly ran down an American trader with his cargo of notions. Our captain, old Bathurst, hailed, and with the dignity of a lord, asked him where he came from, and the name of his ship. The Yankee captain bellowed, 'You coppershot-tombed sergent, I guess you'll know when I've reported you to Congress.'" The surprise I expressed by my looks was not at what he said, but that he could register such trifles in his memory. Of course, with other such small anecdotes, his great triumph at having swum from Sestos to Abydos was not forgotten. I had come prepared to see a solemn mystery, and, so far as I could judge from the first act, it seemed to me very like a solemn farce. I forgot that great actors, when off the stage, are dull dogs; and that even the mighty Prospero, without his book and magic mantle, was but an ordinary mortal. At this juncture Shelley joined us; he never laid aside his book and mantle; he waved his wand, and Byron, after a faint show of defiance stood mute—his quick perception of the truth of Shelley's comments on his poem transfixed him, and Shelley's earnestness and just criticism held him captive. I was, however, struck with Byron's mental vivacity and wonderful memory; he defended himself with a variety of illustrations, precedents, and apt quotations from modern authorities, disputing Shelley's propositions, not by denying their truth, as a whole, but in parts; and the subtle questions that he put would have puzzled a less acute reasoner than the one he had to contend with. During this discussion I scanned the Pilgrim closely. In external appearance Byron realized that ideal standard with which imagination adorns genius. He was in the prime of life, thirty-five; of middle height, five feet eight and a half inches; regular features, without a stain or frown on his pallid skin; his shoulders broad, chest open, body and limbs finely proportioned. His small highly finished head and curly hair, had an airy and graceful appearance from the massiveness and length of his throat; you saw his genius in his eyes and lips. In short, Nature could do little more than she had done for him, both in outward form and in the inward spirit she had given to animate it. But all these rare gifts, to his jaundiced imagination, only served to make his one personal defect (namelessness) the more apparent, as a flaw is magnified in a diamond when polished; and he brooded over that blemish as sensitive minds will brood, until they magnify a wart into wen. His lameness certainly helped to make him sceptical, cynical, and savage. There was no peculiarity in his dress—it was adapted to the climate; a tartan jacket braided; he said it was the Gordon pattern, and that his mother was of that ilk. A blue velvet cap with a gold band, and very loose nankeen trousers, strapped down as to cover his feet; his throat was not bare, as represented in drawings. At three o'clock one of his servants announced that his horses were at the door, which broke off his discussion with Shelley, and we all followed him to the hall. At the outer door we found three or four very

ordinary looking horses; they had bolsters on the saddles and many other superfluous trappings, such as the Italians delight in, and the Englishmen eschew. Shelley, and an Irish Visitor just announced, mounted two of these sorry jades. I luckily had my own cattle.—Byron got into a caleche, and did not mount his horse until we had cleared the gates of the town, to avoid, as he said, being stared at by the "d-d Englishers," who generally congregated before his house on the Arno. After an hour two of slow riding and lively talk—for he was generally in good spirits when on horseback—we stopped at a small podere on the roadside; and, dismounting went into the house, in which we found a table, with wine and cakes. From thence we proceeded into the vineyard at the back. The servant brought two brace of pistols, a cane was stuck in the ground; and a five-paul piece, the size of half a crown, placed in a slit at the end of the cane. Byron, Shelley, and I fired at fifteen paces, and one of us generally hit the cane or the coin. Our firing was pretty equal. After five or six shots each, Byron pocketed the battered money, and sauntered about the grounds. We then remounted on our return homewards, Shelley urged Byron to complete something he had begun. Byron smiled, and replied, "John Murray, my patron and paymaster, says my plays won't act. I don't mind that, for I told him they were not written for the stage; but he adds, my poesy won't sell; that I do mind, for I have an 'itching palm.' He urges me to resume my old 'Corsair style, to please the ladies.'" Shelley indignantly answered, "That is very good logic for book seller, but not for an author; the shop interest is to supply the ephemeral demand of the day. It is not for him, but you, to put a ring in the monster's nose to keep him from mischief." Byron, smiling at Shelley's warmth, said, "John Murray is right, if not righteous. All I have yet written has been for woman kind. You must wait until I am forty; their influence will then die a natural death, and I will show the men what I can do." Shelley replied, "Do it now. Write nothing but what your conviction of its truth inspires you to write; you 'should give counsel to the wise, and not take it from the foolish. Time will reverse the judgment of the vulgar. Contemporary criticism only represents the amount of ignorance genius has to contend with." I was then and afterwards pleased and surprised at Byron's passiveness and docility in listening to Shelley; but all who heard him felt the charm of his simple, earnest manner, while Byron knew him to be exempt from the egotism, pedantry, cocknobby, and, more than all, the rivalry of authorship, and that he was the truest and most discriminating of his admirers. Byron, looking at the western sky, exclaimed, "Where is the green your friend the Laker talks such fustian about," meaning Coleridge;

"Gazing on the western sky,
And its peculiar tint of yellow green."

Dejection: an Ode.
"Who ever," said Byron, "saw a green sky?" Shelley was silent, knowing that if he replied Byron would give vent to his spleen. So I said, "The sky in England is oftener green than blue." "Black, you mean," rejoined Byron; "and this discussion brought us to his door. As he was dismounting he mentioned two odd words that would rhyme: I observed on the felicity he had shown in this art, repeating a couplet out of *Don Juan*. He was both pacified and pleased at this, and putting his hand on my horse's crest, observed, 'If you are curious in these matters, look in Swift. I will send you a volume; he beats us all hollow—his rhymes are wonderful.'" And then we parted for that day, which I have been thus particular in recording, not only as it was the first of our acquaintance, but as containing as fair a sample as I can give of his appearance, ordinary habits and conversation.—From *Trelawney's Recollections of the last days of Shelley and Byron*.

Profane Swearing.
BY REV. E. H. CHAPIN.

"I would speak strongly against the common sin of profaneness. Are there any before me who are accustomed to use God's name as an expletive, and to bandy it as a by-word? who employ it in all kinds of conversation, and to throw it about in every place? Perhaps in their hearts, they consider this habit as an accomplishment; think it manly and brave to swear! Let me say, then, that profaneness is a brutal vice. He who indulges in it is no gentleman. I care not what clothes he wears, or what culture he boasts. Despite all his refinement, the light and habitual taking of God's name betrays a coarse nature and a brutal will. Nay, he tacitly admits that it is ungentlemanly, and he who fears not to rush into the chancery of heaven and swear by the Majesty there, is decently observant in the drawing-room and the parlor. But again, profaneness is an unmanly and silly vice. It certainly is not a grace in conversation, and it adds no strength to it. There is no organic symmetry in the narrative that is ingrained with oaths; and the blasphemy that bolsters an opinion does not make it any more correct.

"Our mother English has variety enough to make a story sparkle, and to give point to wit; it has toughness enough and vehemence enough to furnish the sinews for a debate, and to drive home conviction, without degrading the holy epithets of Jehovah. Nay, the use of these expletives argues a limited range of ideas, and a consciousness of being on the wrong side.—And if we can find no other phrases through which to vent our choking passion, we had better repress that passion. And, again, profaneness is a mean vice. According to general estimation he who repays kindness with contumely, he who abuses his friend and benefactor, is deemed pitiful and wretched. And yet, oh profane man! whose name is it you handle so slightly? Is it that of your best benefactor? You, whose blood would boil to hear the venerable names of your earthly parents hurled about in scoffs and jests, abuse without compunction, and without thought, the name of your heavenly Father! Finally, profaneness is an awful vice. Once more I ask, whose name is it you so lightly use? The name of God! Have you ever pondered its meaning? Have you ever thought what it is that you mingle thus with your passion and your will? It is the name of Him whom the angels worship, and whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain."

Meeting of Bryant and Montgomery.

"It was on a bright June morning of 1854; that the poet Bryant paid a visit to the Mount to see one 'whose name,' he said, 'had long honored, and of the admiration of whom he had given evidence by committing to memory, when young, the whole of 'The Wanderer of Switzerland.' The quiet and unaffected manners of his American guest charmed Montgomery, and he felt at home with him immediately. 'I am anxious,' said he, 'in the course of conversation, to see your poets give to their works an impression of native originality, more of an interest derived from the peculiar character of their country, and imitate less those of our own—on this account I have been much pleased with Longfellow.' Of Bryant himself, this is a marked excellence, whose descriptive writings are essentially American, and the graphic felicity of whose details transport us to all the brilliant peculiarities of our forest scenery. On Montgomery playfully remarking, 'You pirate our books so in your country, sometimes reprinting a whole volume in a newspaper; Bryant rejoined—'And you certainly return the compliment. I say nothing of Longfellow's poems, which you have named; but my own have all been reprinted here without either consultation or concurrence on my part, and I was surprised, when in London the other day, to have put in my hand a metropolitan impression of a few pieces which I published only just before I left home, to complete a volume. The English printer seems to have thought them equally desirable to perfect his surreptitious edition."

Visit to Walter Savage Landor.

A correspondent of the Providence Journal gives the following interesting account of a visit to Walter Savage Landor, at Bath, England:—"Yesterday, we accepted an invitation to take tea with Walter Savage Landor, at his house in River-street. Hardly less of a recluse than the author of 'Vathek,' Mr. Landor ignores general society, professes not to know a dozen people in England, and politely expresses his enjoyment in the society of 'foreigners.' Mr. Emerson, in his 'English Traits,' speaks of Landor as one of the three or four persons whom he wished to see in visiting Europe. He still lives, as in Italy, among a 'cloud of pictures.' His rooms are hung from basement to attic with rare paintings, by the best French, English, and Italian masters. Dutch pictures he does not like, and has carefully weeded them from his walls. He holds to the only orthodox creed in art—that beauty should be its sole and devout aim. His conversation surprises by its freshness and novelty, and stimulates by its resistance. With all his fine taste and culture, he is too arbitrary in his opinions and too eccentric in his tastes to be a safe guide to others; but it is pleasant to talk with a man who has faith in his own fancies. His manners are a singular compound of noble courtesy and abrupt, uncompromising protest and assertion. He said, 'you have great writers in your country,' and spoke in high praise of Emerson, recalling, with evident pleasure, their personal interviews in Italy, many years ago. He objected to his style, as to that of many of the ablest English writers of the last half-century—insisting on a classic directness and transparency of diction as one of the cardinal virtues. Among others, he instance Sidney Smith and Washington Irving as examples of feeble style. With the exception of Howitt's last work, which has just been sent him by the author, I saw no book in his apartments. He is said to give away his books as soon as he has read them—a most princely and gracious habit. Beautiful flowers were on the table, and bloomed in beds of earth on the broad stone ledge of the windows, as in the almost universal custom in Bath. He gave us moss-roses and musk plants, at parting, and we left him with pleasant memories of the hours passed in his society."