BABYHOOD.

Heigh ho, Babyhood! Tell me where you linger?
Let's toddle home again, for we have gone astray—
Take this eager hand of mine and lead me by the finger
Back to the lotus land of the far-away.

Turn back the leaves of life—don't read the story—
Let's find the pictures and fancy all the rest;
We can fill the pages with a brighter glory
Than old Time, the story-teller, at his very best.

Turn to the brook where the honeysuckle, tipping
O'er its vase of perfume, spills it on the breeze,
And the bees and humming-birds in ecstasy are sipping
From the fairy flagons of the blooming locust trees.

Turn to the lane where we used to "teeter-toter,"
Printing little foot-palms in the mellow mold—
Laughing at the lazy cattle wading in the water,
Where the ripples dimple round the buttercups of gold.

Where the dusky turtle lies basking on the gravel
Of the sunny sandbar in the middle tide,
And the ghostly dragon-fly pauses in his travel
To rest like a blossom where the water-lily died.

Heigh ho, Babyhood! Tell me where you linger:
Let's toddle home again, for we have gone astray—
Take this eager hand of mine and lead me by the finger
Back to the lotus land of the far-away!

—James Whitcomb Riley.

A SPELL IN MUSIC.

It had been threatening rain all day, and as the afternoon drew to a close it fulfilled the promise and began to sprinkle. It was a cold, dreary afternoon that made one long to be within doors. The wind was rising and clouds of dust rolled up the avenues. It was in the city of New York and the month was March. Winter had really never taken his cold hands off the weather, and it was still bleak and raw.

A young man was rapidly walking through a side street that lay in the direction of Broadway. Although it had begun to rain he had not put up his umbrella. His eyes were gazing blankly before him, and the muscles of his mouth had a hard, drawn look. He was slightly under the medium height, but well made and graceful. He wore no hair on his face, and his eyes were dark brown. He had on a soft felt hat that rested lightly on a mass of black curls. He was what he looked to be—a musician. His name was Paul Bianchy, and he was recognized already by the few as one of the rising artists. He had only been a year in the metropolis, but more than once his art had been exhibited in the prominent music halls.

"Yes," said his critics, "his future is assured if he goes on as he has begun." What, then, was the cause of that look of despair on his face? Ah, it was the old story. The idol whom he had been worshiping was broken, and he was left with the scattered pieces. His dream had ended. He had loved with all that intensity which only those with keen sensibilities can, and he had found that friendship only could be given him in exchange for the love he proffered.

His history was not an uncommon one. He was, as his name implied, of foreign descent. His father was a teacher of French and Italian, and his early life had been spent in one of the cities of central New York. While in Rochester—that was his birthplace—he had met Mabel Normington. A boy and girl friendship had resulted. With her it was nothing more; with him it was the beginning of a passion that was to dominate him completely. By a change of fortune the Normingtons moved to New York. Bianchy followed them. Miss Mabel became a great favorite with society, and soon plunged into its mad whirl. Indeed it would have been strange if she had not. To a graceful figure, a pretty face and a graciousness of manner that charmed every one, she added a voice of singular sweetness. As for Bianchy he toiled on at his art, and slowly but surely began to climb the base of Parnassus. His success had been above the average; but only lately had he felt himself in a position to honorably propose marriage.

He walked on in gloomy silence. Crossing Broadway he entered Washington Park. Pausing before an old-fashioned house facing the square he ascended the steps and let himself in by a private latch-key. The house had been once in the fashionable part of the city, but now it had changed its inmates, and its rooms were let out to artists, musicians and literary men, some of them successful, but the majority very well able to stand more of fortune's favors.

Entering his room on the third story, Bianchy flung himself into a chair that faced the fire; but he did not stay long in that position. Getting up he went to the window and looked out. He saw the lamplighter going his usual round. The faint glow from the street fell on his face, and it seemed to have grown old and gray.

"And so it is all ended! What a fool I was not to have guessed it. Why should she, the pet of society, look on me—a struggling musician? And yet—and yet—I can't give her up—I can't bear it!" And he began to traverse the room with hasty strides.

"Why give her up?" he seemed to hear a voice whisper in his ear. "You have as much right to wed Mabel Normington as has the man to whom she is engaged."

He laughed aloud at the last thought: "Aye, a thousand times more right, if love weighed in the balance."

Throwing some coal on the fire he pulled forward an easy chair and sank wearily into it. Lighting a cigar he gazed into the glowing coals.

Night slowly settled on the city. The shadows grew in Bianchy's room; but he stirred not. Save for the occasional gleam of the cigar as he inhaled its fragrant smoke he might have been asleep. The roar in the streets grew less, and presently a distant clock tower chimed 12. The noise seemed to startle Bianchy out of his reverie. He was stiff and cold, but his brain was on fire with a new thought.

"Whithin a week she will be his. Ha! ha! we shall see." and his laugh sounded weirdly.

Jumping to his feet, he searched nervously for a match. Finding one, he lighted two candles, and hurrying with them to the other end of the room where stood a piano, he placed them on it, one on each end. His face was agitated with the spirit that raged within him. At first his fingers ran trembling over the keys, but gradually they obeyed their master's will. There was no particular tune in the wild music. But almost imperceptibly, if one had not carefully listened, there would come again and again a peculiar air—now leaving the melody as if shy to be found there, and then coming boldly forward and dancing through all its throbbing variations. Through the night he played, and when the first flush of morning appeared he started from his seat exclaiming:

"I have found it. She will not marry him. I will prevent it!" And he seized an empty music score and dashed down some notes. Then putting on his coat he went out into the chill morning air and took an early breakfast.

What had Bianchy found in his prolonged playing? Aye, a charm, a spell, that she to whom he played it would forget for a time where she was and would remember only her old playmate. The present would be blotted out, and the past would take its place.

Bianchy, after having partaken of his breakfast, made his way to the East Side and took the elevated railway to Forty-seventh street. Walking westward, he he came to a row of three-story houses. Stopping at one, he rang the bell and inquired for a Mr. Jones. He was ushered into a cosy parlor, and presently a cheery voice exclaimed:

"Ah, Bianchy, old fellow, how are you? You are just in time for breakfast!" And his friend came forward with outstretched hand.

"Thanks, but I have had mine."

"What, already?"

"Well, you know I'm a thorough-going Bohemian and I eat when I can."

"Why, Bianchy, what is the matter with you?" and his friend came close to him. "You don't look well. What is it?"

"I did not have a good night, that is all, Jones. I came," he continued, "to ask you a favor. You are going to play the organ at the marriage of Miss Normington, are you not?"

"Yes, I have been asked to."

"I want you to let me take your place."

"Why, do you know them?"

"I know the bride very well," returned Bianchy.

"Certainly, I have no objection. And to tell the truth, I am very glad some one has volunteered to take my place, because I have an engagement on that day and I would have to break it. I will let the Normingtons know you will occupy my place."

"I would rather you did not. Just let things go on as they are. I will simply," continued Bianchy, "take your place, that is all."

"Very well, and if I can help you out the same way any time, don't hesitate to call on me," replied Jones.

Shortly afterward Bianchy withdrew. The day of the wedding opened bright and beautiful. There was a breath of spring in the air that made one wish to be out of doors. The wedding was fixed for 4 o'clock, but long before that hour the church was comfortably filled. No woman—especially if she be young—can resist the fascination of a wedding. It would be hopeless to describe who was there—the many sorts and conditions of women, the upper ten, and those who though they ought to be included in that number. There they all were, eager, expectant, and—shall we say it?—critical.

No one noticed a slight figure steal up to the organ loft; but shortly the music burst forth, and the buzz of conversation stopped. There was, however, something peculiar about the music, and more than one eye was turned toward the loft. The groom and his best man were seen to come out and stand to the right of the altar. The main doors were swung open and a bevy of bridesmaids appeared, followed by the bride leaning on the arm of her father. The glad wedding march sounded. The procession moved up the aisle. But what had come over the music? And what was the matter with the beautiful bride? Withdrawing her arm from that of her father, she glanced for a moment at the organ loft and then, putting one hand to her forehead, she would have fallen had not her father caught her. "My darling, what is it?" he exclaimed. "Look up!" But she looked as if she was in a sound sleep.

They carried her into the vestry, where after a time she seemed to awake as if from slumber. She wished to have the service continued, but the doctors forbade it, and she was taken home. The marriage was indefinitely postponed, and the crowd of curiosity-seekers dispersed with their tongues wagging about the sights they had just witnessed.

No one saw the look of demoniac triumph on Bianchy's face as he hastily closed the organ and hurried down the winding stair and out into the street.

"Ha, ha! So my charm did work," he cried when he found himself alone in a deserted side street. "I have found a means to stop that accursed marriage. Ha, ha, no one will ever think that I was the means of stopping that sacrifice."

Hurrying home, tired and worn out with the strain, he threw himself on the bed and slept soundly.

In the meantime a thousand and one inquiries were pouring in at the house of the bride to know how she was. Strange to say, she said she was perfectly well and that there was absolutely nothing the matter with her. Her physicians were puzzled and knew not what to say. She said that the last thing she remembered was walking up the aisle on her father's arm. Then—but she knew no one would believe her—everybody and everything seemed to vanish, and instead, she was on a lake in a boat with an old playmate of hers—Paul Bianchy. He was telling—but then it did not matter what he said, and then she awoke.

It occasioned a nine days' wonder in society, which received a fresh impetus when the wedding for the second time was announced to take place that day two weeks.

Meanwhile Bianchy was a prey to the violent passions of revenge and love. He sought to drown his despair in a round of gayeties; with his Bohemian friends he tried to drink the cup of pleasure to the lees, but it was no use; the iron had entered too deeply into his soul.

It was a stormy night two days before the wedding. Driving rain was deluging the streets. The wind screamed around the house, banging to any shutters that had not been securely fastened. It was the last struggle of old Winter.

In his room with haggard and bloodshot eyes Bianchy sat staring at an empty grate. He was thinking, thinking of all that had happened in the last few weeks. And then came the thought—just as the idea of a spell in the music had come to him—confused and indistinct, at first, but gradually gaining definiteness:

"If you love Mabel Normington, have you shown it by keeping her from the man she wishes to marry?"

He tried to force the question away, to twist it so that it would agree with his bitter feelings; but it always came back, and, in desperation, he was compelled to answer it, and answer it he did before sleeping that night.

The next day he called upon Mabel Normington. It was late in the afternoon. She lived in a spacious house on Madison avenue. Bianchy was shown into a small reception room, and almost immediately afterward Miss Normington appeared. She was a trifle pale and there was a certain restraint in her manner. After a few commonplaces, Bianchy got up and shut the door. Then he said in a voice that shook with emotion:

"Miss Normington—Mabel—I am going to tell you something."

"What is it?" and her face grew white as his.

"I—played the organ—on the day you were to have been married. I discovered a secret in the music by which I have a power over you which you are not aware of—I caused you to—"

"Paul!"

"Aye, spurn me as I deserve. I've played the coward. I used that power. Forgive me, but I—oh, my God—I loved you," and his voice ended in a dry sob that went to her heart quicker than any words.

"Paul," she said and laid one hand on his shoulder, "I am so very sorry for you. Can I help you."

"No—but—but say that you forgive me."

"Why, of course I do, and Paul, won't you play my wedding march to-morrow?"

Her womanly instinct had touched the right chord. She still trusted him. His face quivered with emotion as he stammered:

"You are too good. I wish you every success in your new life. May it be as happy—as love can make it. Good-by." And he was gone.

To-morrow soon came, and, as before, the church was crowded. The news of the former attempt was still on the lips of everyone. There was an undercurrent of deep excitement that was only allayed when the organ burst forth in a merry peal.

"They must have got a new organist," said one lady to her friend. "Why it is Bianchy who is playing. Did not you know it?"

At length the main doors were opened and the bridal procession began its march up the aisle. Then did the organ seem to go mad with joy and the air to pulse with life.

Society papers the next day spoke of the wedding as one of the greatest successes of the year, and after enumerating the notabilities who were there, closed their remarks by a special tribute to the marvellous playing of Bianchy on the organ.

And so the world went by. Soon forgetting about the incident of the postponed marriage, it became engrossed with new schemes and plans.—*The Epoch.*

Too Near the Stage.

If ever a young man has a need of all his fibbing resources it is when he is trying to make a cold, cruel and inconsiderate girl believe that the rear row of seats in the balcony are just as good, if not really a little more desirable, than the $1.50 orchestra seats. As they take their seats he says, cheerily:

"I never like to sit too near the stage, do you?"

"Well, I don't know," she says in a discouraging way. "Of course I don't like to be too near."

"No; I don't either," says the young man a trifle gloomily. "One is more apt to see all the sham and pretense of the thing; don't you think so?"

"Well, I—I—suppose so," she says in a tone that no girl of any feeling would ever use after she has had 75 cents squandered on her.

"I rather prefer the balcony to any part of the house," says the young man cheerily and falsely.

"The front seats are very desirable," she says.

"Yes, I like them; and yet, do you know, it always makes me feel a little dizzy to sit and look over the balcony railing?"

"Does it?" she asks in a kind of I-know-you-are-fibbing tone. "How strange! I like the front row best of all."

"I tried to get seats there," he says, "and I had a messenger boy stand in line three hours"—this is a big one—"but there wasn't an orchestra or front balcony seat to be had when he got to the window. All sold four days ago."

"How strange!" she says, "they must have told the boy a story, for brother Fred got three splendid orchestra seats this afternoon."

"Got them from speculators, didn't he?" says the desperate young man.

"No; he got them right at the box office, and he said there were lots left; so if I were you I'd complain about it."

"I certainly will," he says earnestly, while he makes a solemn vow that he certainly will not take that girl to the theatre again as long as he lives.

The Country Editor.

"Generally speaking, the country editor is a man of some consequence in his community. His position, it matters not how precarious it may be from a financial point of view, is such as to command a certain social recognition. He finds himself invited to all the parties and balls and picnics and weddings. He is a mourner at every funeral, a guest at every feast; he is the secretary at every public meeting, the receptacle of the confidence of all who aspire; his advice is sought by the young, and he is the esteemed protege of all the old. His trousers may be baggy at the knees, but the big man of the village, mindful of the power of the press, stops to talk with him in front of the post office and shows him about town in his carriage.

"The Hon. John Quincy Adams Smithers, M. C., comes down from the city to look after his fences around Podunk, and he makes a bee-line for the editor's sanctum, where he cracks a chestnut and passes around fat-looking cigars that exhale the odor of luxury. The presiding elder also honors the editor's dingy den with his pious presence; the president of the local railway company sends him a pass—that is, he used to; all the farmers fetch him the biggest ear of corn, the first watermelon, the prize pumkin, or the banner sheaf of wheat; and, more than all and better, the village beauties call in bevies to view the mysteries of the art preservative and flirt with the editor's assistant. That is the treat above all treats, and what wonder if the editor gets to dreaming dreams and weaving fancies with a woof of golden hair?"—*Birmingham Age.*

Robert Mansfield, the actor, who plays the double part of "Dr. Jekyll" and "Mr. Hyde" so effectively, showed a Chicago reporter recently that he used no mechanical aids whatever in making the transformation. He said: "I have no mask, no pigments, no tricks of any kind. I stand erect, brush back my hair, fold my arms, wear a placid expression on my face. I am 'Jekyll.' I crouch, pull my hair over my forehead, twist my mouth awry, crook my arms and legs, what am I now?" "You are 'Hyde,'" said the reporter. The transformation was made in an instant, the actor being in plain clothes and using neither paint nor powder.

She Knew Him.

"You know the defendant in this case, do you?" asked a Kansas lawyer of a female native of the soil.

"Know which?" she asked.

"The defendant, Jake Lynch."

"Do I know Jake Lynch?"

"Yes."

"You want to know if I know Jake Lynch—well, if that ain't a good one. Why, mister, the Lynch family an'——"

"Can't you say yes or no?"

"Why, Jake Lynch's mother an' my step-dad's father was once first cousins an'——"

"Then you know him?"

"Who, Jake Lynch? *Me* know Jake Lynch. You're a stranger in these parts, ain't you?"

"That has nothing to do with the case. If you know Jake Lynch, say so."

"If I know him! Lemme tell you that Jake Lynch's birthday and my brother Hiram's is on the same day, an' ——"

"You know him, of course, then?"

"Who—Jake Lynch? Ask Jake if I know him! Ask him if he was ever interdooced to Betty Skelton."

"I don't care to ask him anything. I simply want to ask you if Jake Lynch is known to you personally."

"Pussonly? Well, I don't know what you mean by 'pussonly,' but if you want to know if *I* know Jake an' if he knows *me*, I can tell you in mighty few words. Jake Lynch's father an' my father——"

"Now, I want you to say 'yes' or 'no.'"

"Thought you wanted me to say if I knew Jake Lynch."

"That's just what I do want."

"Well, then, lemme alone an' I'll tell you all about it. Jake Lynch was born in Injeeany an' I was born in the same county an'——"

"And of course you know him?"

"Who—Jake Lynch? *Do I* know Jake Lynch, when the very horse he rid here on was one he traded my pa a pair of young steers for? Why, man, Jake's wife was Ann Elizy Skiff, an' her an' me is the same age to a day, an' ——"

"That will do, I see that you do know him."

"Know him? Know Jake? Why, man——"

"That will do."

"Why, I was married on a Chewsday an' Jake was married the next day, an' his oldest boy an' my oldest girl is most the same age, an'——"

"That will *do*."

Speed on English Railways.

"You don't know what fast traveling means in this country."

An Englishman who had recently made a trip throughout the New England states and the West was discussing our railroad system with a friend in a cafe.

"Don't, eh? What do you say about our limited express to Chicago?"

"How fast do you claim that it runs?"

"Forty miles an hour."

"Now listen and I'll give you some news. In England third-class passengers ride from 40 to 45 miles an hour, and nobody pays extra prices on account of the speed. From New York to Albany it is 142 miles by a splendid track. There are ten express trains daily between these cities, and their average speed is 20 miles an hour. Between London and Sheffield, 162 miles, the Great Northern runs nine trains daily, with an average speed of 45 miles an hour. One train makes 50 miles an hour. Between New York and Boston the average speed is 30 miles an hour, and the fastest, a train composed exclusively of sleeping cars, makes 30 miles an hour. Between London and Manchester, 203 miles, there are 20 trains daily, with an average speed of 41 miles an hour, and some trains making 50. Between London and Glasgow, 440 miles, there are 13 daily expresses, and their average speed is almost 40 miles an hour, one train being much faster than this."

"Yes, but that is only on favored lines."

"Not at all. All over England and Scotland express trains composed of first, second and third class carriages make from 35 to 50 miles an hour, while in America a 35 mile train is called a stroke of lightning. The fastest regular train in America, so I am told, is one on the Baltimore & Ohio, which makes the 50 miles between Washington and Baltimore in 50 minutes. There are three or four fast trains between New York and Philadelphia covering 46 miles an hour. Between Liverpool and Manchester there are 12 trains daily, none of them slower than 45 miles an hour, and four of them making 51½ miles an hour."—*Mail and Express.*

Carrying a Lady's Muff.

A Cincinnati lady tells a story of an experience she had several years ago with a New Orleans cousin who was visiting her, and who, with all his freshness as to Northern ways and fashions, was exceedingly polite. The time was winter, when large muffs were the proper caper, and muffs in the Crescent City were unknown. The first day out for a walk the young New Orleans gentleman, noticing his fair cousin supporting the large muff, mistook it for a burden, and said:

"Cousin Lucy, let me tote you' bal' skin fo' you?"

"No, Cousin Thomas," responded his companion, "all the young ladies in Cincinnati carry them: you see it's the fashion."

"Well, I never saw but one of them before," replied the young Chesterfield, "and that was in New Orleans, and a young lady was not totin' it, either. It was in front of a brass band and on the head of the drum majah."—*Cincinnati Times.*