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Poetry.

[FOR THE LITERARY TRANSCRIPT.]

BOADICEA.

A vision of old times!

Hark! the wild hunter-calls, the gathering cry,
The promise of a well-earned sure revenge,
Ringing through England's ancient forest-grounds,
—Whither so hastily, O warrior, hold I
‘To fight for Boadicea and our land!’
—Whither so hastily, O strapping rash!
‘To fight for Boadicea and our land!’
—Whither so hastily, O Druid old!
‘To fight for Boadicea and our land!’

Strange was the contrast of the great hosts—
On one side stood the Roman soldiery,
Perfect in arms, a firm and solid mass,
With lance and buckler glancing in the sun.
Opposed to them, a stern and dusky crowd
Covered the upland slope. Rude hunting spears,
And wicker shields, and scythed chariots,
Appeared among their host; but they themselves
Stood naked in their war-paint, all unclad,
Save the loose wolf-skin girt about their loins.
Deep silence came upon them, when their Queen
Arose to speak; but sorrowing and shame
Had quelled the utterance of her lion heart:
Twice rose her towering form, and twice again
She bent in silence; then, at last, one word,
One word, her passion-whisper came,—
‘Strike!’—and they struck.
Spear-point, and helm, and iron panoply
Went down before that rash of naked men:
Gleamed the blue eye, and breath came hot & thick,
And riley muscles leapt up from the arm.
Writhing and straining with a giant's grasp,
All martial order was outwrought of then;
All art and discipline was trodden down;
And as the sages read some stately book,
Whose ribs of oak and solid bolted frame
Seemed almost everlasting in their strength,
So the wild onset of these savages
Broken through the perished lines of Roman war.
It was no conquest but a slaughtering!
No strife, but a pursuit; no victory,
But an extermination of their foes.
Still the wild work went on; till, at the last,
A stalwart chiefman tossed his arid aloft,
And, standing thus, as if he felt a pride
In his strong beauty, with a trumpet voice,
Cried ‘Victory!’—and all the warriors,
And all the Druids and the sacred bards,
And women watching on the mountain tops,
And even the eternal hills themselves,
Caught up the sound, and gave back ‘Victory!’

Such was the massacre at Colchester.
But England has been fruitful in bold Queens:
—Phyllis, she who quelled her brother's foe;
—Ethelgiva then, who trod on Scotland's neck;
—Jane Grey, who earned the martyr's holy wreath;
—Elizabeth, the scourge of haughty Spain,
—With many such; and now Victoria,
Goes, full of promise, to the throne of power.
O God of battles! let her empire be
Not over hands but hearts; let her keep down
The frantic efforts of the mob, (who strive
To mutilate our Constitution—ark.)
With glove of velvet, but with hand of iron;
Let her career of wise and sovereign glory
Be as a planet's calm and regular
Not as a comet's, scattering fear and awe.
And when her mighty power shall yield at last
To mightier death, let her down memory be
Established and consecrated with the stars.
Ead blessings of all time. Amen. Amen.

E. T. F.

Quebec, December 16th, 1838.

THE HERMIT OF SAINT MAURICE.

From the Literary Garland.

(Continued.)

While we slowly approached the village, I learned from my companion that, a short time previously, the Baron de Loridale had suddenly determined upon spending the summer months at the deserted Hall of his ancestors, and prompt in the execution of his designs, had arrived at the castle, accompanied by his son and daughter, without waiting for the necessary repairs.

The young lord, accompanied by his sister, desirous to escape the din of the workmen, as well as to enjoy the pleasure of a ride round their ancestral grounds, had risen early on the morning of the second day after their arrival, and had driven along the road that led towards the hamlet; on entering the forest the steed ridden by the youth, being suddenly startled, and springing on one side, threw his rider, and finding himself at liberty, started forward on the wings of terror,—the other followed. The sequel of the tale is told.

We had now reached within a few paces of the cottage, and the lady stood at the door, anxiously waiting for her brother's approach, and I felt all the loneliness of my own lot, when I saw her eagerly start forward to meet him, and sing herself into his arms.

Joy to meet wild him, she had last seen in such danger, had for a moment obscured her vision and she saw not the blood that stained his garments. When she did, she cried out, in a voice of anguish, ‘Thou art hurt, my brother. I have had dreadful fears, but they were forgotten when I looked on thee. Oh, hasten, and this kind woman will dress thy wounds, and tend thee with a mother's care as she has tended me.’

‘Nay, Clara,’ he answered, ‘I am not hurt, the blood-flowing from a few slight scratches, and mingling with the mire, hath given me the seeming of a wounded man. A single drop of water, for which I will trouble the little pure water, for which I will trouble the goodness of your protectress, will remove all traces of my disaster. But how, my sister, didst thou escape unhurt?’

Indeed I know not, save to the self-devotion of this gallant youth I owe my safety. My whole adventure is indistinct and dreamlike, from the moment when I saw thy fall, until revived by the generous care of these kindly cottagers.’

The young Baron was courteous in his acknowledgments for his sister's life; but she offered her thanks with a more kind, that it seemed to me as if the obligation were transferred to a result in the accident that had led to a result in the little looked for.

A messenger having been despatched to the castle informing the Baron of the accident, a carriage soon after drew up at the cottage door, and after partaking of such refreshments as the village commanded, the young nobles prepared to return to their father's anus.

Again the lady would have thanked me, but the words died unspoken on her lip, when her eye met the unconscious gaze of mine, and she gave me her hand in silence. The youth requested that I would visit at the castle, and receive his father's acknowledgments. I promised, and we parted.

Such is fate! I, the most wretched of the outcasts of humanity, had been led by the very goodness of my misanthropy, to save a being so beautiful and so pure. Life, then, was not altogether the useless burthen I had deemed it. It was consecrated by the use to which it was applied by destiny, and I should no longer repine. What to me was the misery of life, if chequered by aught so blissful. I would be sad no more. Such were the thoughts with which my mind was busy, while the carriage slowly rolled from the cottage, and it seemed as if a ray of light had suddenly pierced the dungeon of my soul. Time hath taught me that first impressions were the safest, and that distrust should mingle with every draught of joy, if we would shun the bitter chalice of despair and woe. Of my departure I thought no more. Imagination dwelt with the maiden of Loridale, and it seemed an age, till the next day found me a loiterer in the Baron's hall,

awaiting admission into his presence; I felt awed by the reflections conjured up by the pomp and state which usurped, as if called thither by the magician's wand, the lately ruined scene.

Fancy was busy, and its pencil lined the Baron de Loridale as something above humanity. I was not of those who deemed that man was better because he was rich and powerful, but the father of the glorious girl I had yesterday looked on with so rapt a gaze, must be something beyond his race—that eye and brow could come of no common stock,—and then her form, it was such as a sculptor's dream of, when their master passion fires their waking or their sleeping thoughts. He—her site—must bear upon his front, the stamp of his nature's own nobility.

Fantastic and visionary dreams I—the poetical Baron—the descendant of a hundred ancestors, whose names were blazoned among the great of former times—was a miserable and decrepit being—palsied with the debauchery of wasted youth—a thing to spurn at, if met on the way-side—but, to be worshipped as the descendant of the ‘mighty dead,’ when seen among the trappings of their day of pride.

He rose at my entrance, and offering his hand, which I lightly touched, he tendered his acknowledgments, in a voice whose assumed sincerity gave place as he proceeded, to its wonted pride.

‘Brave youth,’ he said, ‘father thanks thee for thy daughter's life, and for all thy friendly care; and the Baron de Loridale acknowledges the debt incurred to the preserver of the daughter of an honoured house. May he learn the name and lineage of the family which claims a boy so gallant for its pride.’

‘There was a strange feeling of dislike—a loathing for which I knew no cause—except upon me, while I looked upon the time-worn Baron, and as he proceeded with his cant about honor and lineage, I felt all the degradation of my birth, and answered bitterly, ‘I, my lord, have neither lineage nor family, nor is there a created being who claims blood akin to mine; the woman at whose breast I drank life would seem to own relationship with the child she bore to me. I am without name, save that I hold my sufferance, and the villagers call me Walter Madden.’

The Baron started and turned pale, as I believed, from owning an obligation to one of birth so mean, but recovering himself he said, ‘I am grieved that I have struck a chord that jars so rudely, yet would I ask, whence have you then derived that name?’

‘My sole companion from earliest remembrance, my nurse, is called Dame Budget Madden, and village courtesy hath added the name of Walter.’

The cheek of the Baron became of a yet more livid hue, and he staggered to his seat. I would have called assistance, but he motioned silence.

‘I am subject to fits of lethargy,’ he said; ‘but they are of short endurance, and I will speedily recover. Take this,’ he continued, while he took a purse from the table, ‘as it will be of use to one so friendless. I will see thee again when I am better.’

‘My lord, I thank thee,’ I replied proudly, ‘but I came not here to accept of alms. When next we meet, I trust that thou wilt have better learned to command thy feelings, nor thus wantonly insult even a wretch like me.’

The Baron's agitation increased, while I turned to take my leave, and a groan came from the deepest recess of his bosom, as the door slowly closed behind me.

Crossing the hall, I was met by the young lord, but as I was in no mood to receive his welcome, and hastily mentioning that his father was unwell, I hurried from the castle, and strode towards the hamlet. Approaching the outer wall, I heard the music of a woman's voice, and looking up, my eye caught the gaze of the Baron's daughter. I bowed lowly and passed on.

Such then was my interview with the long descended Baron, and I felt sickened with its result, although I had expected nothing that should have rendered disappointment painful. True, the fancy sketch of the maiden's father had been a fantasy, but what mattered that I

me?—and his bearing had been less courteous and noble than I had reckoned on, but why should I heed that? Could it indeed, be, that it was shame at holding converse with me, which caused the agitation that shook his frame. Could the contamination of another's crime so change the current of his gratitude, that he should forget it all? Was this not enough to wither up the spring of every kindly feeling, and make the fated wretch forget or curse humanity. Whatever blissful dreams there might have idly played upon my heart, were chased away ere they had found a lodgment there, and I again felt as I was wont to feel.

Some weeks elapsed, and no event occurred to alleviate the dull monotony of my weary life, until at length I was astonished to see a travelling carriage draw up at the door, and the young Baron de Loridale enter the cottage to bid me farewell, previous to his departure on a tour of pleasure among the northern mountains. He was desirous to offer, on his father's behalf, whatever I might judge most valuable to the welfare of my future life, if it were my desire to leave the inactivity in which I had been fostered. My answer was, that I thanked them for all their kindness, but I desired nothing I could not command. He looked at me with a disappointed gaze, and reluctantly bade me fare well.

Clara was now alone. Her mother had long been dead, and her father was too much engaged with his own business to waste much of his time with her, and she was thrown upon her own resources for amusement. She often strolled forth among the oaks, or along the river's brink, into the wood-n shades, that skirted her father's wide domain.

Destiny led us to the same haunts, in the woods of Loridale, and they were those which were most lonely. She sought them, for she loved to look undisturbed upon the frowning precipices of nature, and I, because I could there batten in the deepest solitude on my own cheerless doom. At first, I sought not her presence, and she knew not that my eye saw all her wanderings. Familiar with every rock and tree, unobserved I was a guard to her while she gathered the wild flowers, and wove them into wreaths. A female attendant had followed for the first days she sought the forest, but as she became familiar with its devious paths, and secure from intrusion, she often walked forth alone, or with only a playful spaniel to gambol beside her.

But this could not endure forever. It was the morn of a beautiful day, and I had early sought my wonted haunts in the forest, but I roved further on, that my moody thoughts might not be chased away, even by the fair and gentle girl, and I lay down behind a jutting rock, to think over my own sad thoughts alone.

I was aroused from a reverie by the shrill bark of the dog, and starting up, Clara of Loridale stood before me. Timid and shrinking, she would have retired from my presence, but I hastily approached and craved forgiveness for the alarm my presence had given,—and ‘* * * that day I was the companion of her wanderings.’

Time sped on, and day after day, I was by the side of the Baron's daughter. We talked together, and her brother was the theme on which she loved to dwell, and I wished that I too had a sister to care for me. Once, indeed, I told the whole tale of my own misery, and she listened till the tears rolled over her fair cheeks—I would have forfeited earth or heaven to have kissed them off. Was it strange that I should love—madly love—a being so beautiful and so kind—one who listened to me, and did not chide—who was sad at my afflictions, and whispered that it was in my own power to make the world—myself—forget that which gnawed at my heart-strings.

Summer was advancing, and the time for her father's return was near at hand, when her lonely walks would cease. The sun was near his setting, and I walked beside her towards her home, when, crossing a shining brook, in which a few stones had been placed as a rude ford, the step shook, and Clara's struggle. I was beside her, and my arm caught her as she fell.