

## BALLAD OF THE FALCON.

The sea is slumbering:  
Vast, breathing lazily here on the shore, it has already fallen fast asleep, and in the stilling it lies motionless, flooded with the blue radiance of the moon. Velvet-soft and black, it has melted yonder into the blue of the southern skies, and sleeps heavily, reflecting in its bosom the translucent web of fleecy clouds which float motionless and do not conceal the golden pattern of the stars. It seems as though the sky bent ever closer over the sea, desirous of understanding what the restless waves are whispering, as they sleepily creep up the beach.

The mountains, overgrown with trees, fantastically bent to the north-east, lifted their crowns above them, and their harsh, stern outlines are softened into roundness, clothed with the warm, caressing mist of the southern night.

The mountains were dignified, meditative. From them upon the superb greenish crests of the waves fell back shadows and cloaked them as though desirous of putting a stay to that motion, the only motion, and to drown the ceaseless plash of the water and the sighing of the foam—all sounds which disturb the mysterious silence diffused around, together with the silvery-blue gleam of the moon, still hidden behind the mountain tops.

"A-ah-a-ah-a-ah-a-ah," softly sighed Nadyr-Ragim-Ogliv, an old Crimean Tartar, always in the minor mood, tall, grey, tanned with the southern sun, a stern and wise old man.

We were lying together on the sand beside a huge boulder torn from its native mountain and clothed with shadow, overgrown with moss, and very melancholy and surly. On the side of it turned towards the sea the waves had cast slime and sea weeds, and draped with them the boulder seems bound to the narrow strip of sand which separates the sea from the mountains. The flame of our camp fire illuminates it on the side toward the mountains; it quivers, and the shadows fall over the ancient cleft with a close network of deep crevices. It seems to be a thinking, feeling creature.

Ragim and I are cooking a soup from freshly-caught fish, and we are both in that peculiar frame of mind when everything seems transparent, inspired, capable of being penetrated, when the heart is so pure and light, and one has no other desires except the desire to think.

And the sea caresses the shore, and the waves sound so melancholy and coaxing, as though they were imploring permission to warm themselves at the camp fire. Now and again, amid the general harmony of their breaking, a higher-pitched, more frolicsome cunning note makes itself heard, when one of the waves bolder than the rest, creeps closer to us. Ragim has already compared the waves to women, and has suggested them of a desire to embrace and kiss us.

He lies breast down upon the sand, with his head toward the sea, and gazes thoughtfully into the dim distance, propped up on his elbows, with his head supported by his palms. His shaggy sheekskin cap has fallen back upon the nape of his neck, and from the sea a fresh zephyr is wafted to his lofty brow, all covered with fine wrinkles. He philosophizes, taking no heed whether I am listening to him, and paying not the slightest attention to me, as though he were talking to the sea.

"The man who is faithful to God goes to Paradise! But how about the man who does not serve God and the Prophet? Perhaps he is in this foam. And perhaps he is those bright spots on the water—how knows?"

The dark, outspread heaven grows brighter, and in patches upon it the carelessly-cast lights of the moon make their appearance. She has already floated out from the shaggy crests of the mountains, and now meditatively pours her light upon the sea, which goes sighingly to meet her.

"Ragim, tell me a legend," I entreat the old man.

"Why?" asked Ragim, without turning. "Because I love your legends."

"I have told you of all them already. I know no more."

He wishes to have me implore him. So I implore him.

"If you like, I will relate to you a ballad?" assents Ragim.

I do wish to hear the ancient ballad, and he narrates, in a mournful recitative, endeavouring to retain the peculiar melody of the steppes which pertains to the song, and frightfully disturbing the Russian words:

I.  
High up the mountains crawled an adder, laid himself down there in a cleft, coiled up into a knot, and gazing at the sea.

High in the sky shone the sun, and the mountains gasped heavenward with the sultry heat, and below the waves beat against a rock.

And in the cleft, in the gloom and the spray a stream hastened to meet the sea, leaping over the stones.

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soul, and disturbing to the mind with a sweet expectation of some revelation. All lies slumbering, but slumbering with strained attention, and it seems as though with every succeeding second everything will come itself and ring with a melodious harmony of inexpressible sweet sounds. Those sounds will tell of the secrets of the world, will explain them to the mind, and then extinguish it, like a little phantom flame, and will lure away the soul high into the dark blue depths, where the tremulous patterns of the stars will greet it with an answering sound of the wondrous music of revelation.

The End.

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## THE JOKE CROW.

Browning is so obscure we can't help feeling thankful he didn't write a cook-book.

"John is so absent-minded." "What's the matter now?" "He bought a load of hay for our automobile."

"Poet—" "All I need is an opening, sir." Editor—"Well, what's the matter with the one you just came through?"

"Some men have the best luck." "How so?" "Them." McIntosh, for instance; ice cream gives his girl neurasthenia.

"What a pity we can't play golf on the ocean!" She—"What difference does that make? We can't talk about it."

"Did you ever laugh until you cried, Tommy?" "Yes, only this morning." "What at?" "Well, pa stepped on a tack, and I laughed; then pa caught me laughing, and I cried."

Miles—"Idleness breeds discontent. No thoroughly occupied man can be miserable." Giles—"Oh, I don't know. Did you ever attempt to amuse a baby while his mother was out shopping?"

Mater—"Girls, we mustn't worry your father about going away this summer. His finances are extremely low, I know. I looked in his cheque-book yesterday, and he only had one cheque left."

Tommy—"There's something in this paper about 'rheumatism and kindred diseases.' What are kindred diseases?"

Tommy—"I don't know. I guess they're the kind a feller's aunt has always got."

Spacer—"I believe that if Shakespeare were alive at the present time and trying to live by his pen in London, the comic papers would reject many of his best jokes." Humorist—"I know it. I have tried 'em all."

Old Lady—"I desire to leave all my property to charity." Lawyer—"Your relatives might try to break the will; why not give the property to charity at once?" "Old Lady—"Oh, dear, no! They'd put me in a lunatic asylum."

Exhibitor—"This, ladies and gents, this piece of straw is that celebrated last straw that broke the camel's back." Mrs. Farmer—"Well, well, John, that's wonderful. I've heard of that straw a' my life, but little did I ever expect to see it."

"That friend of yours uses remarkably good English," said the critical citizen. "He's always arguing I the opposite of a political question from mine." "But you don't think that prevents him from using good English?" "Of course. He doesn't use it; he wastes it."

The great detective paused. "The horseless carriage containing the murderer passed here just twenty minutes ago," he said. The other man looked astonished. "But I see no wheel tracks," he cried. "No," said the great detective, calmly, "but if you'll sniff a little you'll get the odour of the kerosene."

"Well, Johnny, my dear, how are you getting on with your French?" "Oh, very well, uncle. We translate quite nice sensible sentences now, such as 'My uncle never allows my birthday to pass without giving me a present;'"

"It is certain that my uncle will give me something quite splendid this time."

"Tom," said Jimmy, "do you know that some day the world will be burned up with fire?" "So I have heard," replied Tom. "But, Tom," went on Jimmy, who was deeply concerned about the approaching catastrophe, "what will you do when the world is burned up?" "Oh," replied Tom, with the air of one who has provided for all the contingencies, "I shall go out to Uncle Billy's and stay."

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## CONTINUITY.

Dr. St. George Milver contributes an article to the August "Nineteenth Century" entitled "What Church has Continuity?" He notes changes which took place at the so-called Reformation, and says that in his judgment they unquestionably constitute a breach of continuity. He promises another article on the subject, since at the end of his life's experience he is anxious to do the little he can towards the promotion of truth as it appears to him.



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