

THE MEANING OF AN OPAL.

"See with what vivid and what varied flame
I love you, Agnes," said my love to me.
Always so tenderly he breathes my name.
The little name seems a caress to be.

Clasped in an endless circle of fair gold,
An opal—less a jewel than a fire—
Burned with bright hues whose symbols sweetly told
Of deathless love, of truth, and pure desire.

We studied this keen opal, he and I,
Cheek warm on cheek, hand safe in sheltering hand:
Here burned the blue of fair fidelity,
There shot the gold of wisdom and command;

Here vivid violet, in which red and blue
Blent cunningly to tell the truth of love;
And then all suddenly love's crimson hue
Triumphantly all colors spread above.

Next sprang to light the emerald's fairy sheen,
Whereat I looked at him; he, whisperingly:
"Of old, Hope's sacred symbol was this green;
Professed it means, love's tender jealousy."

Then glowed an orange light, where red and gold
Met in an *oriflamme*; and softly he
Spoke yet again: "This union, sweet, doth hold
Sign of eternal wedlock that shall be.

"Fire-like, this trembling and most vivid light
Speaks deepest passion—hear you me, my life!
Yet purely above flame reigns virgin white,
So does this opal speak of you, my wife!"

SENTENCED TO BE SHOT.

Farmer Owen's son had been found asleep when doing sentinel duty, and he was sentenced to be shot. A telegram had been received by his father saying the sentence would be carried out in 24 hours. Mr. Allen, the minister, called to do what he could to comfort the sorrowing family. During the visit a letter arrived; Blossom, the farmer's daughter, opened the door and received it. "It's from him," was all she said. It was like a message from the dead. Mr. Owen took the letter but could not break the envelope, on account of his trembling fingers, and he held it toward Mr. Allen with the helplessness of a child. The minister opened it and read as follows:

"Dear Father,—When this reaches you I shall be—in—eternity. At first it seemed awful to me, but I have thought about it and now it has no terror. They say they won't bind me, but that I may meet my death like a man. I thought, father, that it might have been on the battle-field of my country, and that when I fell, it would be fighting gloriously, but to be shot down like a dog for nearly betraying it—to die for neglect of duty—oh, father, I wonder the thought does not kill me! But I shall not disgrace you. I am going to write you all about it, and when I am gone you may tell my comrades. You know I promised Jimmie Carr's mother I would look after her boy; and when he fell sick I did all I could for him. He was not strong when ordered back into the ranks, and the day before that night I carried all his luggage, besides my own, on our march. Toward night we went on double quick, and the luggage began to feel very heavy, everybody else tired, too. And as for Jimmie, if I had not lent him an arm now and then he would have dropped by the way. I was tired when we went into camp, and then it was Jimmie's turn to be sentry, and I would take his place; but I was too tired, father. I could not have kept awake though a gun had been pointed at my head; but I did not know it until, well—until it was too late.

"God be thanked!" said Mr. Owen. "I knew Bennie was not the boy to sleep carelessly at his post."

"They tell me to-day that I have a short reprieve—'time to write to you,' our good Colonel says. Forgive him, father, he only does his duty; he would gladly save me if he could. And do not lay my death against Jimmie. The poor boy is broken hearted, and does nothing but beg and entreat them to let him die in my stead.

"I can't bear to think of mother and Blossom. Comfort them, father. Tell them I die as a brave boy should, and that when the war is over they will not be ashamed of me as they must be now. God help me! It is hard to bear. Good-bye, father. God feels near and dear to me, as if he felt sorry for his poor broken hearted child, and would take me to be with him in a better life.

"To-night I shall see the cows coming from the pasture and precious little Blossom standing on the stoop waiting for me; but I shall never—never—come home. God bless you all! Forgive your poor Bennie."

Late that night a little figure glided down the footpath toward the railway station. The guard as he reached down to lift her in the carriage, wondered at the tear-stained face that was upturned toward the dim lantern he held in his hand.

A few questions and ready answers told him all, and no father could have cared more tenderly for his own child than he for our little Blossom. She was on her way to Washington to ask President Lincoln for her brother's life. She had brought Bennie's letter with her. No kind heart like the President's could refuse to be melted by it.

The next morning she reached New York and the guard hurried her on to Washington. Every minute now might be life. The President had just seated himself to his evening's task, when the door softly opened and Blossom, with downcast eyes and folded hands, stood before him.

"Well, my child," he said in his pleasant, cheerful tones, "what do you want?"
"Bennie's life, please sir," faltered Blossom.
"Bennie! Who is Bennie?"

"My brother, sir. They are going to shoot him for sleeping at his post."

"Oh, yes; I recollect. It was a fatal sleep. You see, child, it was a time of special danger. Thousands of lives might have been lost by his negligence."

"So my father said," replied Blossom, gravely. "But poor Bennie was so tired, sir, and Jimmie was so weak. He did the work for two, sir, and it was Jimmie's night, not his; but Jimmie was too tired. Bennie never thought of himself, and he was so tired too."

"What is this you say, child? come here. I do not understand," and the kind man, as ever, caught eagerly at what seemed to be a justification of any offence.

Blossom went to him. He put his hand tenderly on her shoulder, and she turned up her pale anxious face toward him. How tall he seemed! and he was President of the United States, too. A dim thought of this kind passed for a moment through little Blossom's mind; but she told her simple, straightforward story and handed Bennie's letter to Mr. Lincoln to read.

He read it carefully, then, taking up a pen, wrote a few hasty lines and rang his bell. Blossom heard his order given.

"Send this despatch at once!"

The President then turned to the girl and said: "Go home, my child, and tell that father of yours, who could approve his country's sentence even when it took the life of a child like that, Abraham Lincoln thinks that life far too precious to be lost. Go back, or—wait until tomorrow. Bennie will need a change after he has faced death; he shall go home with you."

"God bless you, sir!" said Blossom.

Two days after this interview, the young soldier came to the White House with his little sister. He was called into the President's private room and a strap was fastened around his shoulder. Mr. Lincoln then said: "The soldier that can carry a sick comrade's baggage and die uncomplainingly, deserves well of his country."

Then Bennie and Blossom took their way to their Green Mountain home. A crowd gathered at the railroad station to welcome them; and, as farmer Owen's hand gasped that of his boy, tears flowed down his cheeks, and he was heard to say fervently: "The Lord be praised!"

ECHOES FROM LONDON.

At the Princess's Theatre a new romantic drama by Mr. G. R. Sims is in rehearsal, to take the place of the "Lights of London" as soon as that most successful of plays is withdrawn.

MONSIGNOR CAPEL has been to Rome, and will soon again be preaching in London. From the first he was one of the most effective of the preachers at the Pro-Cathedral, and the building was always crowded when he was to occupy the pulpit.

It is said that up to the present the cost of the Land Act has been nearly £90,000. How many peasant proprietors would this money have created? And how many poor land owners or annuitants on land would have been kept from ruin and starvation by this large sum of wasted money.

MRS. LANGTRY'S photographic popularity is immense, and she has beaten Miss Mand Branscombe clean out of the field. There is another lady now whose beauty is the subject of general admiration. She is on the stage at the Gaiety, and what is strange is that though she has been there a long time her merit is only now being recognized. It is none of the famed Gaiety quartette—Nettie Warren, Kate Vaughan, Annie Gilchrist, or Phillis Broughton.

THE "bustle," which was inaugurated with other objectionable features of female costume at the beginning of the present season, is attaining exaggerating proportions. Combined with tight lacing, which, in spite of Dr. Richardson and other moralists of the hygienic school, is now flourishing more than ever, it has the effect of entirely disguising the natural proportions of the human figure. Moreover, it is not only ugly in itself, but it sometimes gets displaced, with ridiculous results.

THE most important picture sale of the season at Christie's will be the magnificent portraits, paintings, and miniatures from Hamilton Palace. The sale will also include the Duke of Hamilton's collection of art treasures, sculpture, bronzes, steel work, coins, clocks, enamels, porcelain, chandeliers, decorative furniture, &c. The sale, which will last many days, will commence on Saturday, June 17, and the illustrated catalogues are one guinea each. No such disposal of unique works has taken place in this country for many years.

CETYWAYO was to have left Cape Town by this time, but difficulties have arisen about his interpreter, the deposed king displaying very violent likes and dislikes as regards those who are to be his companions. He is, none the less, coming to England. The statements to the contrary are wholly unfounded; but the question of where he shall be housed is not yet settled. It is agreed he is not to go to Buckingham Palace, nor do his friends like the idea of putting him in an hotel. It seems to be the

intent to provide a private house for him, where he will be free to act as he pleases. The Colonial Office, of course, will pay all the necessary expenses.

ONE of Prince Leopold's gifts to his bride is a fan, which a fashionable paper describes as being of the most delicate workmanship and design. The sticks are of goldfish pearl, inlaid with gold, which grows pale as the tapering points are approached. The material of the fan itself is lace, on which the designs of the garlands on the sticks are repeated, the blossoms chosen being Marguerite flowers, which, with the daffodil and pink, are immensely in favor at present. Between each daisy wreath are roses, the petals of which are detached and form a fluttering shower with the slightest movement of the fan.

It is said that the Marquis of Lorne will be asked to veto the Canadian Bill for legalizing marriage with a deceased wife's sister; and in the event of his refusal, Her Majesty the Queen will be petitioned to disallow the bill. In the event of such an extreme course being resorted to, there is no likelihood of the Queen complying with the terms of such a petition. Apart from the wrench such an act would give to the Constitutional relationship between this country and Canada, it must be remembered that both the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Edinburgh ostentatiously voted for a similar Bill in the House of Lords, and it has always been understood that they thus gave expression to "family feeling" on this delicate subject.

THE United States seems to be the paradise of the notorious. Directly a man's name is in everybody's mouth, whether he be a martyr or murderer, he is at that moment wanted in America, there to give lectures and otherwise exhibit himself to a people thirsting for information. Mr. Oscar Wilde has been over there at least two months, and something new must be discovered. That something has been discovered in the manly form of the expelled legislator. Mr. Bradlaugh has been asked to go to America in the autumn and deliver a course of lectures, and what was very much more to the purpose, an immediate advance of £2,000 was offered. What a pity it is that some of these people return, and if we could only be sure that America would keep all the British notoriety, how happy should we be to part with some of them.

There is a duel on the tapis, and it is exciting a great deal of emotion. The principals are an Englishman and an American. The former is known as a young baronet, who prides himself upon an ancient ancestry in the North Riding of Yorkshire and a new-born gallantry at Nice towards a beautiful brunette, widowed countess; and the American boasts of his cousins in the banking business of the metropolis. Both the intending or possible belligerents are young, and, of course, indiscreet. A gentleman who is "in it," says that nothing short of the baronet's blood will satisfy the cravings of the American, and that a trip to the region of *le brave Belge* is to bring the belligerents face to face. Friends are endeavoring to avert the meeting, but the Yankee renders this difficult of attainment.

THE chairmen of the various London gas companies have been telling their shareholders that they have nothing to fear from the electric light; that electricity gives no better light than gas, and is much more expensive. Electrical engineers, on the other hand, are equally confident that gas as a lighting agent is doomed, and that electricity gives a more economical, and in every way better light. Sir Henry Bessemer says we might burn all our coals at the pit's mouth, and convey its force to London by cable, in the form of electricity; and he calculates there would be a saving of three-fourths of the cost of every ton of coal. "Would it might come true!" ejaculates the smoke-begrimed Londoner. Competition between the various Electric Companies in London is very keen. The Brush Company have proposed to light the shops and houses in Fleet street with the electric light, at a cost very little, if anything, in excess of that of gas.

ECHOES FROM PARIS.

A CHAMBERLAIN of the King of Servia has arrived in Paris with an invitation to President Grévy to be present at the coronation this summer in Belgrade.

BACCARAT not being a sufficiently sure means of ruin to most, a new gambling game has been introduced at the clubs; it is called Makao, and is of Italian nationality. The novelty may perhaps be the charm.

THE celebrated Cora Pearl is about to make her debut at the Cirque d'Été as an equestrian artist. It is believed that she will have a greater measure of success than on the occasion of her appearance as an actress.

It is the intention of the Government to introduce a bill for the repression of the obscene publications which for months past have been hawked about so freely on the boulevards. The project meets with general approbation, as it is

recognized that it is high time something was done to put an end to a scandalous nuisance.

A FRENCH advocate who seeks distinction in another field of science has submitted to the Academy a scheme for producing perpetual Spring in England and France. All that has to be done is to construct a dyke 500 miles long across the sea from Ireland to Norway, to keep out the current of water and floating ice.

SOME time ago the *Figaro* jocularly announced the marriage of M. Gambetta to a widow of Marseilles. The details of the supposed happy event were so farcical that it is hard to believe that they could have been taken seriously; but since then bouquets and presents of all kinds have been sent to Ville d'Avray, the parcels being all addressed "To Monsieur and Madame Gambetta."

A PARIS milliner has just concluded a contract by which a dealer in game in Berlin undertakes to deliver the skins of 30,000 pigeons during the season, for the adornment of hats and bonnets. The birds are to be caught in all parts of Germany, and taken to the railway yard, and there killed and immediately skinned, the skins being forwarded to Paris, and the carcasses being retailed for a small sum each on the spot.

If the Palais des Tuileries is not soon restored or razed, a forest will have grown up round what remains of the old pile. Behind the wall of planks which extends along the Rue des Tuileries a vegetation may be seen slowly but steadily creeping up, and even small trees—lime, maple and plantain—have taken root among the ruins. If nothing is done, nature will certainly soon screen from our eyes this ghastly memorial of the Terrible Year, for the small trees, with the present magnificent weather, will rapidly send up their branches in front of the remains of the building devised by Philibert Delorme.

ON returning from the first representation of *Francesca de Rimini* we fully echoed the general execration against the abominable obtrusive insolence of the *claque*. Never was their impertinence so offensively demonstrated. It is an insult to the audience at the Opera to turn into their midst a horde of unwashed, coarse persons. The papers call for the suppression of the *chevaliers du lustre*, but they will call in vain. The performers say that this stimulant of hired applause is indispensable; without this encouragement they cannot play, sing, or dance. Our English performers contrive to dispense with this loathsome aid. On many occasions we have expected to see the audience rise against these interlopers and expel them by force; but it seems that there are no limits to Parisian endurance, and the nuisance is allowed to continue.

A LADY called recently at the establishment of a celebrated mal doctor. She sobbed bitterly; she was in great trouble. Her son, who had a large fortune, fancied himself a merchant's clerk engaged in extensive mercantile transactions. She called with her son one day by appointment. The doctor requested her to retire; she left with a small parcel, and the youth presented a bill for payment. The doctor had been prepared for this form of insanity. The young man was pounced upon by four employees and held by their united force under a *couche* bath upon his head, he screaming the while for his money. It transpired that the lady had represented herself to be the doctor's wife, and had made extensive purchases from a jeweller, who had sent his clerk with her in a cab to receive the money from her husband.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.—Mr. Emerson's life was a happily rounded period filled with noble activities and crowned with merited honors. He passed away when he had finished his labors, at the close of his day, without encountering the long twilight of enforced inaction. In the full measure of respect and reverence he vanished from the gaze of his fellowmen, to be conjoined more intimately to the Spirit of Nature which he loved and to the ineffable Over-soul which he adored.

There the holy essence rolls
On through separated souls;
And the sunny *Æon* sleeps
Folding nature in its deeps.
The race of gods,
Or those we erring own,
Are shadows flitting up and down
In the still abodes.

All honor to-day to his high worth and famel and no word of cavil over the small dust of the balance of any limitations of opinion and life. Enough that his counsel and example will endure as long as men need encouragement in the path of spiritual perfection, need to be emboldened to follow their higher inner light in defiance of current hypocrisies, to dare to be true, to be themselves though legions should be banded in error against them.

For this is love's nobility—
Not to scatter bread and gold,
Goods and raiment, bought and sold;
But to hold fast his simple sense
And speak the speech of innocency,
And with hand and body and blood
To make his bosom-counsel good.
For he that feeds men serveth few:
He serves all who dares be true.
—*Horne Journal*.