

THE CANADIAN FAMILY HERALD.

FIVE SHILLINGS PER ANNUM.]

Virtue is True Happiness.

[SINGLY, THREE HALF PENCE.

VOL. I.

TORONTO, SATURDAY, JUNE 12, 1862.

No. 27.

Poetry.

THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS.

In Eastern lands they talk in flowers,
And they tell in a garland their love and cares,
Each blossom that blooms in their garden bowers,
On its leaves a mystic language bears.

The rose is the sign of joy and love,
Young blushing love in its earliest dawn;
And the milkiness that suits the gentle dove,
From the myrtle's snowy flower is drawn

Innocence dwells in the lily's bell,
Pure as the heart in its native heaven;
Ferne's bright star, and glory's swell,
By the gloomy leaf of the bay are given.

The silent, soft, and humble heart,
In violet's hidden sweetness breathes;
And the tender soul that cannot part,
A twine of evergreen fondly wreathes.

The cypress that darkly shades the grave,
The sorrow that mourns its bitter lot;
And faith that a thousand ills can brave,
Speak in thy blue leaves—Forget-me-not.
Then gather a wreath from the garden bowers,
And tell the wish of thy heart in flowers.

PENICIVAL.

SONGS OF THE FLOWER SPIRITS.

SNOWDROPS.

STEALTHILY, stealthily up to the light,
When his gleaming wand first passes,
We creep in our garments of dazzling white
Ere the vernal leaves and grasses.

And the sun looks down with a wondering gaze,
As if in earth's bloomless bowers,
There the single snow of the winter days
Had its own buds into flowers.

And we lift our ice-crowned heads to feel
The warmth of his proud carcase,
For each kiss he gives is a magic seal
Of strength and loveliness.

CROCUSES.

From prison and gloom, and the ruthless cold,
We struggle and pant and are free,
And the noontide is riding our leaves for gold,
But at night right warily.

We'll close the gay roof of our stainless domes,
Lest the frost with his shining feet,
Should wander within, and our fairy homes
Become his winding-sheet.

See, green swards bristle around us well,
And the crisp snows drift away,
And a trench lies round our citadel—
'Tis safe as in rosy day.

Literature.

A TERRIBLY STRANGE BED.

(Concluded from our last.)

In the nervous unsettled state of my mind at that moment, I found it much easier to make my proposed inventory, than to make my proposed reflections, and soon gave up all hope of thinking in *Le Maître's* fanciful track—or, indeed thinking at all. I looked about the room at the different articles of furniture, and did nothing more. There was first, the bed I was lying in—a four post bed, of all things in the world to meet with in Paris!—yes a thorough clumsy British four poster, with the regular top lined with chintz—the regular fringed valance all around—the regular stifling, unwholesome curtains, which I remembered having mechanically

drawn back against the posts without particularly noticing the bed when I first got into the room. Then there was the marble topped washstand, from which the water I had spilt in my hurry to pour it out, was still dripping slowly and more slowly, on the brick floor. Then two small chairs, with my coat, waistcoat, and trowsers slung on them. Then, a large elbow chair covered with dirty white dimity with my cravat and shirt-collar thrown over the back. Then, a chest of drawers, with two of the brass handles off, and a tawdry, broken china inkstand placed on it by way of ornament for the top. Then, the dressing table, adorned by a very small looking glass, and a very large pincushion. Then, the window—an unusually large window. Then, a dark old picture, which the feeble candle dimly showed me. It was the picture of a fellow in a high Spanish hat, crowned with a plume of towering feathers. A swarthy sinister ruffian, looking upward, shading his eyes with his hand and looking intently upward—it might be at some tall gallows on which he was going to be hanged. At any rate he had the appearance of thoroughly deserving it.

This picture put a kind of constraint upon me to look upward too—at the top of the bed. It was a gloomy and not an interesting object and I looked back at the picture. I counted the feathers in the man's hat; they stood out in relief: three, white; two, green. I observed the crown of his hat, which was of a conical shape, according to the fashion supposed to have been favoured by Guido Favkes. I wondered what he was looking up at. It couldn't be at the stars; such a desperado was neither astrologer nor astronomer. It must be at the high gallows, and he was going to be hanged presently. Would the executioner come into possession of his conical crowned hat, and plume of feathers? I counted the feathers again; three, white; two, green.

While I still lingered over this very improving and intellectual employment, my thoughts insensibly began to wander. The moonlight shining into the room reminded me of a certain moonlight night in England—the night after a picnic party in a Welsh valley. Every incident of the drive homeward through lovely scenery, which the moonlight made lovelier than ever, came back to my remembrance, though I had never given the picnic a thought for years; though, if I had tried to recollect it I could certainly have recalled little or nothing of that scene long past. Of all the wonderful faculties that help to tell us we are immortal, which speaks the sublime truth more eloquently than memory? Here was I, in a strange house of the most suspicious character, in a situation of uncertainty, and even of peril, which might seem to make the cool exercise of my recollection almost out of the question; nevertheless remembering, quite involuntarily, places, people, conversations, minute circumstances of every kind, which I had thought forgotten for ever, which I could not possibly have recalled at will, even under

the most favourable auspices. And what cause had produced in a moment the whole of this strange, complicated, mysterious effect? Nothing but some rays of moonlight shining in at my bed-room window.

I was still thinking of the picnic, of our merriment on the drive home, of the sentimental young lady who could quote *Childe Harold* because it was moonlight. I was absorbed by these past scenes and amusements, when in an instant the thread on which my memories hung snapped asunder, my attention immediately came back to present things, more vividly than ever, and I found myself, I nether know why nor wherefore, looking hard at the picture again.

Looking for what? Good God, the man had pulled his hat down on his brows!—No! The hat itself was gone! Where was the conical crown? Where the feathers, three white; two green! Not there! In place of the hat and feathers, what dusky object was it that now hid his forehead—his eyes—his shading hand! Was the bed moving?

I turned on my back, and looked up. Was I mad? drunk? dreaming? giddy again? or, was the top of the bed really moving down sinking slowly, regularly, silently, horribly, right down throughout the whole of its length and breadth—right down upon me, as I lay underneath?

My blood seemed to stand still; a deadly, paralyzing coldness stole all over me, as I turned my head round on the pillow, and determined to test whether the bed-top was really moving, or not, by keeping my eye on the man in the picture. The next look in that direction was enough. The dull, black, frowsy outline of the valance above me was within an inch of being parallel with his waist. I still looked breathlessly. And steadily and slowly—very slowly—I saw the figure, and the line of frame below the figure, vanish, as the valance moved down before it.

I am constitutionally, anything but timid. I have been, on more than one occasion, in peril of my life, and have not lost my self-possession for an instant; but, when the conviction first settled on my mind that the bed-top was really moving, was steadily and continuously sinking down upon me, I looked up for one awful minute, or more, shuddering, helpless panic-stricken, beneath the hideous machinery for murder, which was advancing closer and closer to suffocate me where I lay.

Then the instinct of self-preservation came, and nerved me to save my life, while there was yet time. I got out of bed very quietly, and quickly dressed myself again in my upper clothing. The candle, fully spent, went out. I sat down in the arm-chair that stood near, and watched the bed-top slowly descending. I was literally spell bound by it. If I had heard footsteps behind me, I could not have turned round; if a means of escape had been miraculously provided for me, I could not have moved to take advantage of it. The whole life in me, was at that moment, concentrated in my eyes.