

ON THE ST. LAWRENCE AT BROCKVILLE.

THRO' the whispering leaves,
And across the river,
Light playing with shadow
The moonbeams quiver.

From the water's edge
The white rocks rise
With crevice and ledge
To meet the skies.

Like ruined towers,
They rear on high;
And their mantle of green
Gleams dusk 'gainst the sky.

And so still is the night,
So calm is the river,
That we hear on the shore
The poplar's shiver.

Now we leave the land
And noiselessly glide
In your little canoe
'Neath the steep rock's side.

And the trees in greeting
Lean over the ledge.
Now stop, while I pluck
From its mossy edge

This tiny blue-bell,
Whose dark cup, mayhap,
Is a fairy's robe,
Or an elf-clown's cap.

Let us sail to-night
Down that golden track,
That pathway bright
Thro' the waters black.

A silver thread
As it nears our boat,
It grows broad and broader
As more remote.

Till over yonder
It is lost in a sea
Whose golden ripples
Stretch endlessly.

We move towards it,
(Together, thou and I,)
But, lo! as we near it,
It seems to fly.

The narrow pathway
Is still a thread,
Unattained, towards the day
Has that bright sea sped.

In vain we pursue it,
Then turn to the shore
Whose tender beauty
Can touch us no more.

It is thus in life—
There ever lies
Some joy before us
That ever flies.

The yearning soul
Stretches hands in vain;
Our blest ideal
We never gain.

KATE WILLIAMS.

TWO NIGHTS.

[Translated from the German of HACKLAENDER for THE WEEK.]

THE FIRST NIGHT—1884.

THE post-house stood on the farther side of the village on a slight hill thickly planted with grape vines extending, in fact, quite to the walls of the house. Although they were obliged to drive the entire length of the village, and one postilion woke the echoes with repeated cracking of his whip and his loud huzzas; he failed to rouse more than the echoes, for nothing stirred in the sleeping town, and even at the post-house it was only after repeated calls and vigorous raps from whip and sword on the stable door that a light finally appeared in an attic window. Presently a

disordered head was thrust out and its dazed senses gradually awakened to the fact that an extra post was waiting below; and after a minute or two the entire individual stumbled downstairs and opened the door—a picture of boorish perplexity as Count S. demanded a fresh relay.

"May the Holy Virgin be merciful to me! The Signor will have to wait at least two hours, till the horses come back from the next station—three miles from here."

"Have you no others?" asked the Count, much annoyed, while the postilion stood by shrugging his shoulders—another way of saying "I told you so."

"But where are your extra post-horses? According to law you should have at least four."

"So we have, Signor, but they went away an hour ago with an English travelling carriage."

"Sapristi!" murmured the Count angrily. "Come, you shall have a double pour-boire if you get me on."

"Impossible, Signor, I can do nothing. So few people come here, and the master—"

"Where is the master? I will speak to him."

"Gone to Lodi, Signor. I am the only person in the house," stammered the boy.

There was really nothing to do but wait for the return of the horses. It was a bore, of course, especially at that distance from the village café where one might possibly have found an enlightened newspaper and a cup of coffee with which to beguile the long two hours. The postilion helped to put up the horses, and then he and the stable boy betook themselves to a bench beside the door to chat the time away. And now, alas! even the exquisite night was powerless to quell the rising impatience of our traveller; in vain the nightingales sang more divinely than ever in the bushes; in vain the stars shone radiantly in their deep heavens; in vain Nature breathed forth her fragrant stillness, and the insects droned away their brief summer life. Count S. grew momentarily more angry, and, rather than wait alone, would have fraternised with the most unbrotherly man in the world. He walked round and round the stables, and at last climbed the little hill behind the house, in hopes of finding some one or something to shorten the enforced delay.

Arrived at the top, before him lay the long valley bathed in the soft light of the stars, the roads crossing it in every direction looked like bands of white ribbon in the dimness, here and there a tiny lake, and everywhere the dark close clusters of the vines and mulberry bushes. Once or twice he fancied he could hear the rippling of the brook below the hill, and the sound of a distant post-horn, but that was fancy; no one was in sight, and, disappointed, he turned to retrace his steps, when he caught a glimpse of a light burning in a lower window of the house—the vines which heavily framed it catching the reflection.

Count S., overjoyed at the thought of at last finding some one to speak to, approached the window. When near enough to look into the room he stopped in sudden surprise. Seated on an old-fashioned, high-backed wooden chair, a young girl—beautiful even in that light and at that distance—trying to sing and coax a small child to sleep; irresistibly he moved forward, and, not to startle her with the sound of his step, began to sing softly an old Italian aria. In an instant the girl covered with her hand the reflection of the lamp and leaned forward to peer into the darkness; an old dog lay evidently at her feet, for the Count distinctly heard two or three low growls, but the girl quieted him, and, bending as far out as she could without disturbing the child, called "who is there?"

"A traveller," came the answer, "who is forced to wait here for a fresh relay. I confess I dreaded at first the idea of waiting two long hours; now, however, if the Signora will permit me to stand and chat here for a while I shall be grateful for the delay."

So saying he came nearer still and leaned upon the window-sill,—the surest way to dispel girlish fears when the object is as young and handsome, with such a charming blond moustache, as our hero. The girl smiled and almost before she had seen his uniform, exclaimed:

"Ah, il Signor is an Austrian officer!"

What suddenly changed all his angry impatience to supreme content? Surely the charming picture now before him, framed in the dusky setting of the night, a picture more beautiful, he thought, than any he had ever before seen. There leaned the girl in her high-backed chair, her dark head rising from her white chemisette, her little bare feet peeping from beneath the hem of her scarlet skirt. Count S. gazed entranced at her long dark plaits which hung half unbraided over her shoulders and seemed to reach to her knees.

The child had wakened at the growling of the dog and now lay in wide-open wonder, his great eyes fastened on the gold braid and Attila cords of the stranger's cap.

"So the Signor must wait until the horses return? Well, it often happens, for this is a lonely station and father cannot afford to keep many horses,—times are bad; Lodi and Piacenza take the best of everything away from us. Long ago, when the dear mother was alive, we had a small inn, too, but that had to be given up—until Cecco here becomes a man, father says, then he can do it, either he or the son-in-law," the girl laughed.

"The son-in-law? And who is he?"

"Why, who else but Teresina's husband?" and she laughed again.

"And who pray is Teresina?"

"Why I am!" She glanced coquettishly at him from under her black lashes, then lowering her voice and passing her hand tenderly over the boy's dark curls—"yes, either Cecco or papa's son-in-law is to open the inn again some day and make us all rich."

"Ah," smiled Count S., "so you are married?"

"Who, I?" laughed the girl. "Madonna! I married? No indeed.