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Poetry.

A DREAM.

BY ALICE B. BROWN.

When every sign of day had died,
Each song bird sought its leafy bed,
When sweetest filled the summer air,
Each flower hung its jewelled head;

When stars came gently one by one,
To crown the dusky brow of night,
The image that I love the best
Rose brightly on my captured sight.

I felt thy kisses, warm and sweet,
I saw thy dark eyes, tender beam;
Fond words were spoken, when, alas!
I woke, to find it but a dream!

A dream, that like some holy strain
Of music lingers with me still;
A blessed dream, that makes my soul
With bright anticipations thrill.

I see the lilies fold their leaves,
And watch the golden daylight flee;
With joy that night hath come again,
To bring me pleasant thoughts of thee.

An Amnesty for RIEL never promised by the Queen's R. representatives.

Important correspondence has been submitted to Parliament relating to the Amnesty question. The most significant of these seem to be

1st. A letter from Archbishop Tache, dated 9th June, 1870, addressed to Mr. Howe as Secretary of State, in which occur the sentences following:

"I hasten to communicate to you, for the information of His Excellency in Council, a very important promise I have just made in the name of the Canadian Government. I feel all the responsibility I have incurred in taking such a step, while on the other hand I am confident that His Excellency the Governor-General and his Privy Council will not judge with too much severity an act accomplished in order to avoid great misfortunes and secure the welfare of the country."

The act he wished to have judged leniently was promising an amnesty.

2nd. A reply to this letter by Mr. Howe, dated July 4th, 1870, in which the following passages occur:

"Your Lordship has, no doubt, read the debate and explanations which took place in Parliament during the discussion of the Manitoba Bill. The question of amnesty was brought forward, and the answers and explanations given by the Ministers in the House of Commons were that the Canadian Government had no power to grant such amnesty, and that the exercise of the prerogative of mercy rested solely with Her Majesty the Queen. The Rev. Father Ritchot and Mr. Scott, on their arrival, have informed your Lordship that in the repeated interviews which they had with Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir Geo. E. Cartier, they were distinctly informed that the Government of the Dominion had no power as a Government to grant an amnesty; and I would add, that this Government is not in a position to interfere with the free action of Her Majesty in the exercise of Her Royal clemency."

The foregoing explanations are given to your Lordship in order that it may be well understood that the responsibility of the assurance given by your Lordship of a complete amnesty cannot in any way attach to the Canadian Government."

3rd. A petition addressed to the Queen by Pere Ritchot and A. A. Scott, North West delegates, 8th Feb. 1872, praying for an Amnesty, which among others contains these paragraphs:

"That before closing the negotiations, that is to say on the 30th May, 1870, the delegates of the North-west were honoured by an official invitation from Your Majesty's representative, the Hon. John Young, Governor-General of Canada."

That during that interview His Excellency introduced the delegates to Sir Clinton Murdoch, stating to them that the hon. gentleman was a Commissioner sent by the Government of Your Majesty to assist in the settlement of the difficulties of the Red River people."

That both the Governor-General of Canada and Sir Clinton Murdoch enquired of the delegates of the North-west if they were satisfied with the arrangements of the Cabinet of Ottawa; if not, they were really and authorized by the Government of Your Majesty to adopt such measures as would satisfy them."

That in reply the delegates stated that the question of amnesty had been a certain uneasiness, as they had no written document to lay before the people of Red River as a proof of the promise made to them on the same point."

That the representatives of Your Majesty repeatedly assured the delegates that there would be no difficulty on that point, and that the amnesty would surely be granted in order to do away with the illegality and irregularities of the late troubles."

4th. A letter of explanation enclosing said petition, addressed by Lord Lisgar to Earl Kimberley, this document being of great importance we here append in full:

TO THE HONORABLE EARL KIMBERLEY.

OTTAWA, April 25, 1872.

MY LORD.—I have the honor to forward herewith a petition to Her Majesty the Queen, from the Rev. Albe Ritchot and Mr. A. Scott. These gentlemen, with Judge Black, visited Ottawa in the spring of 1870 with the view of settling in an amicable manner the difficulties that had arisen in the North-west. The petition prays that Her Majesty will grant a general amnesty for all illegal acts which may have been committed by any parties concerned in those troubles. It is necessary that I should, in my own defence, remark upon the paragraphs which state, on the part of the Rev. Albe Ritchot and Mr. A. Scott, their impression of what passed at the interviews which they had with Sir Clinton Murdoch and myself. I cannot do otherwise than express my extreme surprise at the version which they think fit to give of what I said, I am clear that I never made any such promise of an amnesty as that which they allege. I had the benefit of more than one conversation with my responsible advisers in reference to this question of amnesty, and quite on my guard in respect to it. In reply to the earnest and repeated instances of the delegates, I uniformly answered that the question of amnesty should be duly submitted for the consideration both of the Dominion Government and Her Majesty's Ministers, and that I had no doubt it would receive from them that serious attention in all its bearings which it merited; but I guarded myself by adding that I was not in a position to make any promise or give any assurance whatever upon the subject. Sir Clinton Murdoch will, I am persuaded, bear me out in stating that this was the line agreed upon and the language used at the interview."

I have, etc.

(Signed) LISGAR.

Reclaiming the Desert Places.

The explanation of French engineers have proved that the surface of the great Desert of Sahara is below the level of the ocean, in fact that it is the bottom of an ancient fresh water lake which has dried up by gradual changes in the surrounding levels, the streams which once supplied it now going directly to the ocean. It has been therefore suggested to change this desert back into a lake, and in this way to alter the whole climate of the country. This would, of course, create a moist atmosphere in place of the burning hot, dusty whirlwinds which are the curse of that region. There are, however, no rivers to be turned into the basin; and the artesian wells, successfully bored by the French, which create oases in the desert around them, give too insignificant a supply for such a great purpose. It has, therefore, been proposed to make a channel to the ocean, and lead the ocean water into the desert; but in consequence of its vigorous evaporation in that latitude, the water when once spread out over any considerable surface, would probably disappear as quickly as even the largest sized canal could pour it in.

The Caspian sea, which is situated below the surface of the ocean, evaporates the waters of the Volga as rapidly as that colossal river, the largest in Europe, is able to pour them in. The water of the Volga is fresh, containing only a small percentage of salt; but this small amount of salt remains in the Caspian sea, while pure water, only is abstracted by evaporation; thus the sea is very salt, and becomes more so every year. If now the collection of fresh water, in a closed lake, from which there is no exit but evaporation, ends in making a salt lake in a cold climate, the introduction of sea water to form such a lake under a tropical sun, as proposed for Sahara, would result in making a huge salt pan, which would gradually fill up with salt till it reached the level of the supplying ocean; and we should only have transformed the dry sandy plains of the desert into dry salt plains, and which of the two would be the worse is a matter for discussion.

We think that a continuation of the French system of boring artesian wells in all available spots is the best method of reclaiming the desert. Many of these wells have already been completed, and it is indeed touching to read the description of the joy and religious enthusiasm of the natives when they see, for the first time, a beautiful supply of fresh cool water poured forth from the bowels of the earth in spots where never before was water seen to miles around. The creation of an oasis in the desert is the immediate consequence of each well; and in the course of years the dreadful Sahara may be so profusely clothed with artificial oases that most of its terrors will have passed away.

As to our American deserts, recent explorations and surveys of the great desert of the Colorado river, have shown that it also was the bottom of a lake which has dried up, because the river has cut its channels in the rocks, through which it flows to the ocean, so low down (from 4,000 to 6,000 feet) that the lakes, formerly connected with and supplied by the river, lie now far above its present level. These lakes have for centuries collected at their bottoms the deposits of the Colorado river; and the now exposed surface consists, therefore, of an alluvial soil of extreme fertility (containing phosphorus, soda, lime and phosphates); which, however, cannot produce any crop except an account of the total absence of moisture. The whole region is indeed a desert like that of Sahara; and like the latter, a period of if lies below the surface of the ocean, as proved by barometric observations. It is believed that the waters of the Gulf of California, formerly extended some 175 miles further inland than they do now, that subsequently the delta deposits of the Colorado (which were enormous, considering the deep channel which it has hollowed out for

itself) formed a dam in the sea 175 miles from the shore, finally enclosing a sheet of water, which then dried up and now forms that part of the desert which is lower than the ocean.

It is proposed to level the waters of the ocean in this low portion, so as to inundate it, and increase the atmospheric moisture in that region; and it appears that the plan is feasible, at a comparatively small cost; but one objection is that then a large portion, some 30,000 or 40,000 square miles, which otherwise might be made productive, would be sacrificed; and this plan is also open to the same objection as that of inundating the Sahara with sea water; it would end in the creation of an enormous salt pan. We prefer the other plan which has been suggested, irrigation from the upper part of the Colorado river, which, to be sure, would cost much more, but would reclaim all the highlands of the desert. The geologist of Williamson's expedition, Mr. W. P. Blake, points out that, by cutting a canal or deepening a certain small river low enough, so that the water from the Colorado could enter it at all seasons of the year, a constant and plentiful supply of water can be furnished to the interior of the desert and used for irrigation, while the surplus will fill the low portions with fresh water, find its exit to the Gulf by a pass to be constructed, and also establish navigation from the Gulf of California to the interior of the great lake. A thorough survey is needed, and also experiments in boring artesian wells; which, without doubt, would here be as successful as in the African desert, as indicated by indisputable geological evidences.

The Obituary Editor.

By Mac Alester in Danbury News.

Two or three years ago I was attached to the Morning Argus, the only paper published in our village, and during my engagement was employed as an obituary editor a young man named Drinker. When Drinker began his duties the manager said to him:

"So here, Drinker, among other things, I want you, whenever you see, in the exchanges or anywhere else a good biographical sketch of any prominent man, to clip it out and put it away, so, when he dies, you understand, we can rush it out as an obituary article, as it were."

Drinker went to work, and about two months afterwards some well-known man died and I examined the obituary bureau for the purpose of obtaining his history. It was not there; but I discovered that the assiduous Drinker had stored away in that mortuary receptacle one biographical sketch of John Wesley, a collection of anecdotes about General Putnam, and an essay upon "The Life and Services of John Hancock."

Mr. Drinker, I said, after calling his attention to the article about the father of Methodism, you certainly must be aware that John Wesley died long before you came into this office."

"None!" exclaimed Drinker with a look of painful surprise upon his face. "Why, what! John Wesley died! That great and good man gone! Thunder! Why it's too bad. No, I hadn't heard a word about it. I had no idea of such a thing. What a shock it must have been to his family!"

And as for General Putnam, Drinker, it is perfectly absurd for you to pretend that you thought he was alive, you know. Come now, that's too much."

"Is he dead too? Well! Well! The fact is I've been living down in the country for two or three years, and I haven't kept the run of things. And so old Putnam's dead! That's no old man. Strange, strange, how we are passing away!"

And, Drinker, you certainly can't be such an idiot as to have put away this article about Hancock with the expectation that he would die again. You knew he did die once. Why, Drinker, he died about ten thousand years ago."

"Come now I exclaim!" Drinker, exultingly. "I've got you there. Ah, ha! Did ten thousand years ago, did he, surely? You know too much. You think everybody's a fool but your self! Dead is he now what's the use of your trying to stuff that down the when I know well enough that the Democrats talked about running Hancock for the Presidency at the last election! O, please! You must fill to write for a newspaper that's got any sense."

The Drinker was discharged. I didn't enlighten him. He will probably go down to the grave with a firm conviction that General Hancock is the man who signed the Declaration of Independence."

THE ONE THING IMPOSSIBLE TO DENY.—In a recent debate a member of the California Legislature exclaimed: "The honorable gentleman from Calaveras county is undoubtedly a person of great abilities, a man of talent, a natural born genius; but there is one thing I don't like him to do, and that is to 'bite the bottom of a frying-pan' without smutting his nose."

Domestic young lady (making pie). "Frank, the kitchen is no place for you. Has dough such an attraction for you?" "Never, Youth, it isn't the dough, cousin, it's the heat."

JOHN AND MAC. During a session of the Territorial Legislature of Montana held several years ago a measure was introduced which involved grave constitutional questions, as it seemed to some. One fiery orator declaimed quite fiercely against it, urging that it was "clearly in opposition to the great principle of Magna Charta which the brave barons in days of old had wrested from King John, a blessed result of a bloody conflict." Possibly all this was nothing but a bit of fine talk not fully comprehended by the speaker himself. Judge D.—"evidently lacking upon this daring flight of his colleague as a studied 'sunner,' rose immediately to reply, determined to show that he for one was not to be ever seduced by high sounding words of obscure allusions. Plunging at once in medias res, he declared that it was a matter of but the slightest importance to him what might have been the opinions or principles of King John and his man Macarty. They might have been very good and able men, but it was high time for legislative bodies of Montana to think and act for themselves."

Under the influence of the Judge's eloquent effort, the measure was defeated.

John and Mac have done noble duty for a long time, but at last their authority has been boldly and successfully challenged. Our Legislature has indignantly repelled their interference from this time on forever. "Let the dead past bury its dead."—Editor's Drawer, in Harper's Magazine for May.

Lincoln and Negro Logic.

President Lincoln's irrepressible penchant for narrating humorous anecdotes, and his frequent application of them to affairs of the most weighty consequence, are proverbial.

This exuberant flow of vivacious metaphorical wit seemed to issue from a perennial source, and as his stories for the most part were fresh and decidedly unique, it has been conjectured by some that they have been the conception of a prolific imagination, induced by the spontaneous effusion of the moment, and not actual occurrences. However this may have been, it is quite certain that they were uniformly apposite, as well as forcible illustrations of his sentiments."

I have (writes a distinguished military correspondent of the Drawer) a vivid recollection that upon one occasion when I happened at the White House, just previous to the promulgation of his "emancipation Proclamation," Mr. Lincoln observed to a pro-slavery man present that the subject had been under consideration for some time, and he was fully impressed with the conviction that it would prove the most prompt and efficacious method of terminating hostilities, besides being an act of justice to the negroes. The other begged to differ from him as to the wisdom of the policy of immediate universal emancipation, remarking that in his judgment the decided preponderance of the animal over the intellectual faculties, as developed by the organization of the African cranium, rendered that race ethnologically so far beneath the white man in reasoning and other mental faculties that it would be unsafe to trust the former with the unrestricted exercise of the elective franchise, or with plenary participation in legislative or other important governmental functions."

The President admitted that the blacks had as yet received but little political or parliamentary training, yet he had known instances going to show that they were by nature singularly astute and logical reasoners. "Indeed," added he, "when I was a small boy, living in Kentucky, some of the more intelligent slaves in our neighborhood started a sort of dialectical association for debating questions of interest to them; and I once attended one of their periodic meetings, upon which occasion the following was enunciated as the subject for discussion: 'If a certain hen lays ten eggs, and a different hen sits upon and hatches out those eggs, which of the two fowls is entitled to the maternity of the chickens?'"

The meeting was duly organized, and the subject most thoroughly canvassed in all its imaginable phases and bearings, until the pros and cons had been well exhausted, and the presiding officer was about rendering his decision upon the merits of the argument when an antiquated individual who was seated upon a barrel in a remote corner of the apartment suddenly rose to his feet, and in a tremulous and cracked but ludicrously solemn intonation of voice, propounded the following stirring interrogatory: "But, Mister President, a possum dem eggs what dar ole hen lay, an' de obidiental eggs what dar chile under hen she hatch out, be duck eggs? De'n de nigger like for to know, ef de ole pluck, who am de mudder ob de chickens?"

This at first seemed a puer to the umpire, but after a moment's hesitation he replied, "Dat venerable person, my tickler fien" Mister Jefferson, will please fur to preclude his bar'l, an' de duck eggs an' not in de yesternum tur dis oleben." He then concluded in the following words: "De judges ole fowl speck an' gurally monstrous onartin, an' de tickler birds what de c'ety been cussin on dis kashan an' p'iently more onartiner bur de gurally ob de ben gous. Mabey dis yere chicken got ten fadders; den, agi, mabey so be brin' got

but 'one; but dat he bab two mudder am, is de 'pin, on ch dis chis r, garin sure.—ibid.

NITROGEN AND VEGETATION.—Our foreign journals bring the usual number of accounts of agricultural investigations, particularly in the experiment stations, of which some new ones have been lately established in Germany.

Ritthausen and Pott, of the station at Poppoelst, in Prussia, have lately been studying the influence of manures, rich in nitrogen, upon the composition of plants fertilized by the same. Ritthausen concludes that by increasing the amount of nitrogen in the food supplied to the plant the percentage of nitrogen, both in the plant as a whole and in its different parts, may be increased.

Deherain has investigated the relations of atmospheric nitrogen to vegetation by experiments on the absorption of nitrogen by carbonaceous humifiers, as glucose, decayed wood, etc., mixed with alkalies. He concludes that atmospheric nitrogen can, either in the cold or at the temperature of the soil, fix itself on carbonaceous matter analogous to that which is found in vegetable decomposition, and that the presence of oxygen is unfavorable to this reaction. He infers that carbonaceous matter in nature is advantageous, since it liberates hydrogen in decomposing, and renders the conditions for absorbing nitrogen more favorable by removing oxygen from the air confined in the soil.—Editor's Scientific Record, in Harper's Magazine for May.

THE KING AND THE ANTS.—According to Jewish and Mohammedan tradition, King Solomon, who was wise beyond all other men, knew the language of animals, and could talk with the bees of the field and the birds of the air. One day the king rode out of Jerusalem with a great retinue. An ant-hill lay directly in his path, and Solomon heard its little people talking.

Here comes the great king, he heard one of them say, "The flatterers call him wise, and just, and merciful, but he is about to ride over us, and crush us without heeding our sufferings."

And Solomon told the Queen of Sheba, who rode with him, what the ants said. And the queen made answer, "He is an insolent creature, O king! It is a better fate than he deserves, to be trodden under our feet."

But Solomon said, "It is the part of wisdom to learn of the lowest and weakest. And he commanded his train to turn aside and spare the ant hill."

Then all the courtiers marvelled greatly, and the Queen of Sheba bowed her head and made obeisance to Solomon, saying: "Now I know the secret of thy wisdom. Thou listenest as patiently to the reproaches of the humble as to the flatteries of the great."

"Selling" a Sophomore.—A Sophomore who is trying to sell himself to become a missionary, and who is a very exemplary youth, expected a sister from home to visit him together day. Some of his mischievous classmates happened to hear of this, and while the missionary evangelizer was gone to the train to meet his sister, they entered his room and strewed about it sundry empty bottles, marked "Old Rye," "Pines," cigar boxes and holders, bird bills relating to entertainments of doubtful propriety, and other little trinkets, meant generally found in the shade of our somewhat dissipated. When the happy brother and sister entered the room, she was astonished and grieved, but not more so than he. With criminal care he essayed an explanation, but the sad face of a classmate ejaculated, "Lend me your pony, Jack." John looked soon after by another with "Give me a pipe full of tobacco," and similar requests put a period to his efforts. It was not until the next day that the injured youth was able to convince his relative that he had been made the victim of a practical joke.

Chicago wants to have the next World's Fair held there. "In the first place," says "The Boston Post." "It isn't certain that the next world will have a fair, and in the second place, those who're likely to attend it will prefer a more pleasant town in which to celebrate it."

A story is told that once upon a time, Mr. Hamilton Fish was showing a visitor the portraits of his children, the great ex-aimol, "Dad little carmine?" "What do you mean by that?" asked Mr. Fish. "Why," was the reply, "they are little fishes in oil."

A Boston paper wonders why a member of Congress who recently spoke with so much feeling of the "day sent in his hair," and "died in his throat," failed to complete the diagnosis of the case by alluding to the rye in his stomachs.

"Now, John, suppose there's a load of hay on one side of a river, and a jackass on the other side, and no bridge, and the river is too wide to swim, how can the jackass get to the hay?" "I give it up." "Well, that's just what the other jackass did."