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Poetry.

INFLUENCES.

FROM THE AETHER, SUN.

God's world is passing into ours;
Its beauty, silent, ripe and sweet,
Its truth which we are proud to greet,
Fashion and strengthen all our powers.

The sun round whom the planets glide,
The moon that gives the light she takes,
The flowers in meadows and in tracks,
The flowing and the ebbing tides,—

The granite rock on which are laid,
Level or slanted, stark or stony
With flowers and mosses overgrown,
Sweet children of the sun and shade,—

The twinkling minnow, the blue gloom
That in humanly gorges sleeps,
The floating amber light that creeps
Over the fields where cowslips bloom,—

The pale green azure hue that gleams
On the sky's rim when suns are low,
Full of a sweet dead Long-Ago,
Yet breathing Hope's delicious dreams,—

God's world is passing into ours,
Sun, moon, and tide, with clouds that dye,
And trees that yearn to reach the sky
Fashion our minds and mould our powers.—

Men whom we champion wrong or right,
And women fond, with sweet warm breath
Flowing through lips that kiss all death,
And eyelids twinkling with delight,—

The children that about us play,
With golden hair and round soft flesh,
Smooth as magnolia flowers, and fresh
Full cheeks that blush like dawning day,—

The songs the elder poets sung,
The lays of Greece, the Hebrew's psalm,
The thoughts of wise men grave and calm
That live, or died when Time was young.

The soul is like a mirror fair,
Reflecting every shape or hue,
Yet as it changes, changing too,
All that we know, and all we are.

God's world is passing into ours,
This evening sea of life
Rolls its swift waves in calm and strife
O'er all our feelings, all our powers.

Literary.

THE POSTHUMOUS PORTRAIT.

A country town is not a very hopeful arena for the exercise of the portrait-painter's art. Supposing an artist to acquire a local celebrity in such a region, he may paint the faces of one generation, and then, haply finding a casual job once a year or so, may sit down and count the hours till another generation rises up and supplies him with a second run of work. In a measure, the portrait-painter must be a rolling-stone, or he will gather no moss. So thought Mr. Conrad Merlus, as he packed up his property, and prepared to take himself off from the town of C—, in Wiltshire, to seek fresh fields and pastures new, where the sun might be disposed to shine on portrait-painting, and where he might manage to make hay while the sun shined. Conrad was a native of C—. In that congenial spot he had first pursued the study of his art, cheered by the praises of the good folks around him, and supported by their demands upon his talents. While, in a certain fashion, he had kept the spirit of art alive in the place, the spirit of art, in return, had kept

him alive. But now all the work was done for a long time to come; every family had its great portraits, and would wait him no more yet awhile; and Conrad saw, that if he could not turn his hand to something else, and in place of pencils and brushes, work with last, spade, needle, or quill,—make shoes, coats, till the ground, or cast up accounts, he should shortly be hardly put to it to keep himself going. He had made and saved a pretty tolerable little purse during his short season of patronage, and determined to turn that to account in seeking, in other places, a continuation of commissions. His father and mother were both dead, and, so far as he knew, he had no near relative alive. Therefore, there were no ties, save those of association, to bind him to his native place—'No ties,' sighed Conrad, 'no ties at all.'

It was Monday evening, and the next day, Tuesday, was to behold his departure. His rent was paid, his traps were all packed up in readiness, and he had nothing to think about, saving whither he should proceed. He walked out, for the last time, into the little garden behind the modest house in which he had dwelt, pensive and somewhat triste; for one cannot, without sorrowful emotions of some sort, leave, perhaps for ever, a spot in which the stream of life has flowed peacefully and pleasantly for many years, and where many little enjoyments, successes and triumphs have been experienced. Even a Crusoe cannot depart from his desolate island without a pang, although he goes, after years of miserable solitude, to rejoin the human family. It was the month of August, and the glory of the summer was becoming mellowed and softened.—The nights were gradually growing longer and the days shorter, the reapers were in the harvest-fields, the woods and groves were beginning to shew the autumn tint, the sun sank behind the hills earlier and earlier day by day, and the broad harvest-moon reigned throughout the sweet and fragrant nights. Conrad felt the influence of the season, and though he had for some time contemplated his departure from his home with all the cheerfulness which the spirit of adventure imparts to young men, he now, as the time arrived, felt inclined to weep over the separation. He was indulging in reveries of a mournful complexion, when he observed his landlady leave the house, and, entering the garden, bustle towards him in a great hurry. Assured by the manner of the worthy old lady that he was wanted, and urgently, by some one or other, he rose from the rustic seat on which he had been sitting, and went to meet her. A gentleman had called to see him, in a phaeton, and was waiting in the parlour in a state of impatience and excitement, which Mrs. Farrell had never seen the like of. Wondering who the visitor could be, Conrad hastened into the parlour. He found there an elderly individual of gentlemanly appearance, who was walking to and fro restlessly, and whose countenance and demeanour bore affecting evidences of agitation and sorrow. He approached Conrad quickly.

'You are a portrait-painter, Mr. Merlus?'

'Yes, sir.'

'The only one, I believe, in this neighborhood?'

'Yes.'

'I am anxious,' continued the gentleman, speaking in a low tone, and with a tremulous earnestness that rendered his speech peculiarly emphatic—'I am anxious to have painted the portrait of one who is—who was—very dear to me, immediately—immediately, for a few hours may make such a performance impossible. May I beg that you will submit to some sacrifice of convenience—that you will be good enough to set aside your arrangements for a day or two, to execute this work? Do so, and you shall find that you have lost nothing.'

'Without entertaining any consideration of that sort, sir,' answered Conrad, deeply touched by the manner of his visitor, which betokened recent and heavy affliction, 'my best abilities, such as they are, are immediately at your service.'

'Many thanks,' answered the gentleman, pressing his hand warmly. 'Had you declined, I know not what I should have done; for there is no other of the profession in this neighborhood, and there is no time to seek further. Come; for Heaven's sake, let us hasten!'

Conrad immediately gave the necessary intimation to his landlady; his easel, pallet and painting-box were quickly placed in the phaeton; the gentleman and himself took their places inside; and the coachman drove off at his great a pace as a pair of good horses could command.

Twilight was deepening into dusk when, after a silent and rapid ride of some ten miles, the phaeton stopped before the gates of a park-like demesne. The coachman shouted; when a lad, who appeared to have been waiting near the spot, ran and opened the gates, and they resumed their way through a beautiful drive—the carefully-kept sward, the venerable trees, and the light and elegant ha-has on either side, testifying that they were within the boundaries of an estate of some pretensions. Half-a-mile brought them to the portal of a sombre and venerable mansion, which rose up darkly and majestically in front of an extensive plantation of forest-like appearance. Facing it was a large, level lawn, having in the centre the pedestal and sundial so frequently found in such situations.

A footman in livery came forth, and taking Conrad's easel and apparatus, carried them into the house. The young artist, who had always lived and moved among humble people, was surprised and abashed to find himself suddenly brought into contact with wealth and its accompaniments, and began to fear that more might be expected of him than he would be able to accomplish. The occasion must be urgent, indeed, thought he nervously, which should induce wealthy people to have recourse to him—a poor, self-taught, obscure artist—merely because he happened to be the nearest at hand. However, to draw back was impossible; and, although grief is always repellent, there was still an amount of kindness and consideration in the demeanour of his new employer that reassured him. Besides, he knew that, let his painting be as crude and amateur-like as any one might please to consider it, he had still the undoubted talent of being able to catch a likeness,—indeed, his ability to do this had never once failed him. This reflection gave him some consolation, and he resolved to undertake courageously whatever was required of him, and do his best.