

RIDING TO BATTLE.

[FOURTEENTH CENTURY.]

Before the cock began to crow,
We took our morning meal,
And by the torches' trembling glow
We girt ourselves in steel:
While wintry thoughts around us fell
Like blossom-showers in June,
For weal or woe, we bade farewell
At setting of the moon.

As from the castle court we rode,
And down the village street,
The dawning day his coming showed,
The larks rose up to greet:
A swell of sorrow's sprayless wave,
A sad, foreboding pang,
Marked every stride our chargers gave,
And every weapon's clang!

But morn grows bright, the scented wind
Folds back across the hills
The curtains of the mist, untwined
From meadows veined with rills.
Past maid and churl in sad amaze
We hold our stern advance,
Till sheaves of light with greeting rays
Illumine every lance.

How all our spirits feel the charm!
Hopes waken one by one:
Dead joys in every heart rise warm
Neath wizard touches from the sun:
Our leader turns with smiling face
And veils his flowing crest,
To kiss the sign of lady's grace
That's bound about his breast.

No kerchief in my helmet shines,
No silken sleeve or glove;
I watch our lone-advancing lines,
Our banner-folds above—
Whatever may come, I cannot care,
I wait without a sigh,
My past it roundeth full and fair,
If I this day should die!

OLD SONGS.

In reading over the songs that were sung by our English grandfathers, we naturally divide them into three classes: the ballad, the convival, and the madrigal. The first still remains with us, occupying about the same position as of yore: the second class has almost succumbed to the latter-day temperance movement, only the most incorrigible daring to indulge in anything Anacrotic; while the third, often very silly, has given way to those mournful ditties which inform us of the precise spot in which the remains of the angelic Lilly Dale do rest, or impart to us the anxiety of some young man regarding his "mother now." As now, so in our grandfathers' time, a lively, pretty air would cover a multitude of sins in the poetry it accompanied; and, if the notes were but free and jingling, a country boor would not mind confessing—in language there was not a possibility of his understanding—the terrible effects the glances of the beautiful Daphne had produced upon his too susceptible heart. Especially in the amative songs was the language apt to be exuberantly flowery; where to-day we are satisfied with singing the praises of plain Nelly Grey or Kitty Clyde, then nothing would satisfy short of Chloe, Cynthia, or Phillis, which seem to have been the favorites, while at times their Pegasus would reach a Musidora, Sparabella, Blandusia, or Manxelinda. We can easily believe that any young lady who had survived such a name as either of these must have been above the common, and worthy of all tribute. Another feature that marred many of the songs of the past, otherwise gems, was a coarseness often reaching the obscene, and which we might expect of an age in which "Tom Jones" and "Roderick Random" were the most popular of novels. First in favor among the ballads was "Chevy Chase," and any person who has heard it sung by a fine, manly voice, must admit its popularity was not undeserved. "Margaret's Ghost" was another. This tells us, in the short space of seventeen verses, how the ghost of the deserted Margaret visited the faithless William in the dead of night, and chided him for his cruel treatment, and how William, the next morning, stung by remorse, stretched himself on Margaret's grave:

"And thrice he called on Margaret's Name,
And thrice he wept full sore;
Then laid his cheek to the cold Grave,
And word spake never more."

It is in this ballad the words occur—

"And Clay-cold was her Lilly-Hand,
That held her sable Shroud."

This I believe to be the only case on record where a ghost has been known to appear in a sable shroud, and which collides with all our preconceived notions of ghostly raiment.

Among the convival songs yet sung, is the one commencing—

"With an honest old Friend, and a merry old Song,
And a Flask of old Port let me sit the Night long."

Another favorite tells us that Diogenes, Heraclitus, Copernicus, Aristotle, and Plato, owed all their merits to generous wine. Tobacco was not neglected by any means, and one moralist wrote, while many sung—

"Tobacco's but an Indian weed,
Grows green at Noon, cut down at Eve;
It shows our Decay, we are but Clay,
Think of this when you smoke Tobacco"

and so on in four more verses it moralizes from the weed and pipe on the frailty of man's life, and his unavoidable destiny. Knowing the regard our grandfathers held toward their stomachs, we shall not be surprised to find a laudation to "The Roast Beef of Old England," which credits this nutritious article of diet with

all the courage and robustness of their ancestors, at the same time mourning over the degeneracy of the then existing race, which it charges to French ragout-eating. This same song also informs us that—

"When good Queen Elizabeth sat on the Throne,
Ere Coffee, and Tea, and such Slip-slops were known;
The World was in Terror if e'er she did frown—
Oh, the Roast Beef of Old England!"

which shows a terrible state of affairs, and should cause that unimportant part of the world lying outside of the United Kingdom to be very thankful for the advent of "slip slop," which relieved them from these periodical attacks of cold terror.

Then, as now, love formed the great theme of the poet's song, and we are forced to the conclusion that, however unfortunate these poets may have been in other respects, they were each and every one of them especially favored in possessing the handsomest of the female sex to love and cherish, and further, that "handsomest young ladies" were as numerous then as "handsomest babies" are now. What is there in the soft passion that allies it so to poetry? Men who never attempted anything of the kind, either before or after, have been guilty of metrifying the charms of their first love. Fortunately, a large proportion of such poetry is cast into the stove when their "hearts' treasure" first proves fickle, followed by old bouquets, hair-pins, and other momentos they had surreptitiously become possessed of. Still sufficient remains to prevent our complaining of any scarcity. How many pair of lips have been compared to cherries, or sets of teeth to strings of pearls; how many eyes have been called heavenly blue, and how many heads of red hair have been entered as golden tresses! One ancient lover, who seems to have been in a very bad way, sings:

"Alas! when charming Sylvia's gone,
I sigh, and think myself undone:
But when the lovely Nymph is here,
I'm pleas'd, yet grieve: and hope, yet fear."

Further on, after dying with grief when she leaves him, he revives at her return, while, all in the same space of time, he smiles, freezes, pants, and burns. Another unfortunate exclaims:

"Enchanted by your Voice and Face,
In pleasing Dreams I fainting lie:
I bleed, fair Nymph, I bleed apace,
And, oh! I languish! oh! I die!"

According to another authority, if he bleed long enough he will probably recover, for he tells us—

"Love's Distemper that comes with high Feeding,
And is cur'd like a Fever, by Emptying and Bleeding."

Treatment has changed since then, and we now treat both love and fevers by whiskey-punch and brandy-straights.

The following dainty dish, prepared for the bright Selinda, contains considerable salt as well as a most generous amount of sugar:

"As near a fountain's flowery side
The bright Selinda lay,
Her Looks increase'd the Summer's Pride,
Her Eyes the Blaze of Day."

"The Roses blush'd with deeper red,
To see themselves outdone:
The Lillies shrunk into their Beds,
To find this fairer one."

A bee—

"Drawn by the Fragrance of her Breath,
Her rosy Lips he found,
Where he in Transports met his Death,
And dropt upon the Ground."

Which bee, we are assured, is envied by kings, who would gladly leave their royal state to enjoy such a death.

These poetical offerings to their affinities, if they had affinities in those days, usually ceased immediately upon marriage, those offered afterward being as a rule not flattering. Thus:

"Once in our Lives, let us drink to our Wives,
Tho' their numbers be but small:
Heaven take the best, and the Devil take the rest,
And so we shall get rid of them all."

Another, after reminding the gods how thankful he had been when they gave him a wife to be the comfort of his life, continues:

"But if your Providence divine
For greater Bliss design her,
To obey your Will at any Time
I am ready to resign her."

Here is a little feminine strategy, not yet obsolete, according to the best judges. After stating that young damsels, like archers and fiddlers, should have two strings to their bow in the shape of two lovers, she sings:

"One Spark for our Sport we may jilt and yet by,
And t'other, poor Soul! we may marry."

Here is the girl of the past period, and the description proves that our grandmothers were very like our sisters indeed:

"Bellinda's pretty, pretty, pleasing Form
Does my happy Fancy charm:
Her Prittle-prattle, Tittle-tattle's all engaging,
Her prinking, nipping, trinking, pinking's all transporting,
How like an Angel she pouting lies!"

We hope this contains more poetry than truth.

Forming an important feature in the comic songs of to-day, are the Negro, Irish, and Yankee melodies. Of the first and last of these our grandfathers were entirely wanting, while they had but few of the second in comparison with ourselves. In looking over the songs of the past we are quickly struck with this absence, and it leaves the impression on the mind of a scarcity of comic songs, which is really the case. Several of their comic songs possessed sufficient merit in either music or words, or both, to have lived, and

are quite generally known and sung at the present day. "Sally in our Alley," "Happy Dick," with a whole family of "Derry Downs," are among these, not to forget side-splitting "Lillibulero."

They were not altogether wanting in dialectic songs, the most admired of which were the Scotch and Welsh. A quite favorite Scotch comic song, to those with sufficient lingualistic powers to master it, was "Let us a' to the Bridal," which describes the great goings on at the wedding of Jockie to Maggie, a list of the company present, and the bill of fare of the feast. Let us first glance at the goodies:

"And there will be Fades and Braehen,
With furth of good Cabbocks of Skate,
Powsowly, and Drammock, and Crowdy,
And caller howt-foot in a Plate;
And there will be Partans and Buekies,
And Whytens and Speldings enew,
With singed Sheep-heads and a Haggies,
And Seadlips to sup till you spew."

These are a few only of the wonderful dishes that were prepared, but when we consider the company that was to be present we lose all fear of the dishes not being eaten and properly digested. For among the guests the four following came in company, and form a good representation of the entire party:

"And there will be Juden Maeklawrie,
And blinken daff Barbara Mackleg,
Wi' flae-luged, sharny-fac'd Lawrie,
And Shaugy-mon'd halucket Meo."

Welsh-English is almost irresistibly funny. As a specimen we furnish a verse or two of that most famous song "Of noble race was Shinken."

"Of noble race was Shinken,
Of the line of Owen Tudor,
But hur renown is fled and gone,
Since cruel love pursu'd hur"

Here is what "hur" was before "cruel love pursu'd hur":

"Hur was the prettiest fellow
At foot-ball or at cricket,
At hunting, chace, or prison-base,
Cotsplut hur hur could kick it!"

But after being wounded beyond all cure by the fatal darts shooting from Winny's eyes:

"Hur heart so akes, hur quite forsakes
Hur herrings and hur leeks too!"

and—

"If love's sore smart one week more,
Adieu cream-cheese and Flummery."

It is almost needless to add that the last thing a Welshman gives up, previously to giving up the ghost, is flummery.

ECHOES FROM PARIS.

PARIS, Oct. 13.

M. DE LESSEPS has accepted the invitation to attend the Lord Mayor's banquet, and it is expected that he will make an important statement on the Suez Canal Question. It is not a business assemblage of political subjects, and national interests may be dwelt with: M. de Lesseps would simply allude to the Canal in his own commercial interest.

The marriage of Prince George Radzwill with Mlle. Branicka has attracted a very large circle of the French and foreign aristocracy to Paris. A grand dinner was given after the ceremony, and in the evening there was a concert, given by the Prince and Princess Constantine Radzwill at their hotel in the Avenue de la Tour Maubourg.

A so called American duel has just been concluded between two ladies at Grosswardein, in Hungary. A married actress who has attempted suicide in that city, wrote a letter saying that she had entered into an American duel concerning her husband with a lady in Vienna, and had drawn the fatal lot. The married actress, however, is still alive, though her condition is reported to be hopeless.

The colors most fashionable at the present moment are grey in every shade, which carries off the palm, then brick red, *de vin*, moss green, myrtle and navy blue. Satin duchesse in every tint, with large spots or raised velvet flowers, will be worn for dress occasions; woollen stuffs, with squares of plush, cashmeres with chenille flowers, and reps with tapestry designs will make pretty *costumes de ville*.

The greater part of the French female disciples of Saint Hubert follow the sport of shooting in a simple short costume and high boots, but some have adopted for the purpose a special attire which deserves success. It is composed of a blouse *à la Russe* in English waterproof serge, drawn in at the waist by a leather belt, studded with Egyptian *plaques*. Wide zouave trousers of the same stuff tucked into doeskin leggings complete this stylish costume. A great variety is permitted in these dresses to suit all tastes and fancies. They can be made with casaques and leggings, with calf padding when necessary to any dimensions, in either green or garnet velvet, with a short tartan poplin skirt, like a Highlander's kilt, and a cap to match with ornament of old silver.

A NEW style in jewelry has sprung up amongst the fashionable world of Paris. After having exhausted the whole scale of the animal

world as ornaments to enhance the charms of the aristocratic lady in the shape of birds, beasts, and fishes to adorn the hats and bonnets for the promenade, and beheld these gradually diminish from the life-size crowing cock and pheasant to the wren sitting on her nest and the field mouse peeping from her tiny abode on the top of the cornstalk, fashion ordains that the brooches and ear-rings worn in full dress should suddenly assume the most gigantic proportions. One of the most popular ornaments is now the elephant which, of disproportionate dimensions, is used to clasp the new Dominican cloaks, to finish the corsage in evening dress, to clasp the zone of beauty, or dangle from her ears. The ugly ornament is to be seen in every variety of material, and flourishes on every occasion.

The French women have of late become exceedingly muscular. We base the remark neither upon ocular demonstration nor the ordeal of touch, but upon reports of their doings in fencing, rowing, boxing, steeplechase-riding, shooting, lawn-tennis playing, &c. They are also latterly determined pedestrians, but for each of these pursuits the French lady must look the thing to be done, and have her distinguishing and *distinct* costume. Hence we hear of a very original walking dress in thick brown woollen stuff, trimmed with parti-colored bands, a pleated skirt, three square panels placed one above the other, a tight jacket forming a fourth panel, a garnet velvet waist-coat and *appliques* and frogs in parti-colored passementerie. The dress is not cut low but cut high, so that the wash-leather pants and Blucher boots, beautifully laced up the calf, may be fully seen.

VARIETIES.

MR. DE LESSEPS has had a panorama of the Isthmus of Panama constructed, which, it will be understood, includes his canal, and has invited interviewers to inspect it.

THE Municipal Council of Paris have voted forty-eight thousand pounds for the purchase of the site and remains of the old Roman arena in Rue Monge, which it is proposed to convert into a public garden.

THE immense collection of documents preserved in the archives of the Indies at Seville, are now being arranged and classified. A list has been found of the names of all the companions of Columbus in his first voyage, except two; and much new light has been thrown on the relations between Columbus and the brothers Pinzon.

At the Library Congress lately held at Liverpool, most appropriately, for nowhere is a free library more thoroughly appreciated, Mr. John Lovell, an eminent newspaper man, read a paper on "The Functions and Operations of the Free Library System," in which he said that the Act for England was passed in 1850. In 1853, the Irish and Scotch Acts were passed. All three Acts were amended in 1854-5. Yet by 1871 no fewer than thirty-six communities having an aggregate population of 3,528,974 had established free libraries. In Bradford, the library, though founded, was not opened. From the others, the records were incomplete. The remaining thirty-two libraries contained 613,110 volumes, and in a single year had supplied books to 3,802,443 readers. In other words, the annual issues were over one per head for the whole population covered by the system. Instead of thirty six, there were now one hundred and thirteen communities which possessed free libraries. The aggregate population of these communities was 7,719,759. Striking out the places from which returns were incomplete or from which there were no returns at all, the number of communities was reduced to seventy-nine, with an aggregate population of 5,755,615. These seventy-nine possessed among them 3,344,735 volumes, and their annual issues ran up to 2,024,983, so that since 1871 the population covered by the free library system had more than doubled; the books contained in a little under two-thirds of the libraries had been quadrupled. The issues gave nearly two per head of the population, instead of slightly over one. It would be interesting to learn from the experience of every individual reader in what way and to what extent his mind and his life had been affected by the books which the free library system placed at his disposal. No doubt, the literature most in demand was fiction. He had a little table in which he had appended to twelve fairly representative towns the percentage which the issue of novels bore to the gross issue of books of all other kinds. The lowest gave fifty-six, the highest seventy-seven per cent. The largest town and the smallest manufacturing, agricultural, cathedral and university towns had all been drawn into the net of the Free Libraries Act. Acts like these showed that the free library system had already met a universal and public want.

JOHN BILLINGS HEARD FROM.

NEWPORT, R.I., Aug. 11, 1880.

Dear Bitters—I am here trying to breathe in all the salt air of the ocean, and having been a sufferer for more than a year with a refractory liver, I was induced to mix Hop Bitters with the sea gale, and have found the tincture a glorious result. I have been greatly helped by the Bitters, and am not afraid to say so.

Yours without a struggle,
JOHN BILLINGS.