

POETRY

THE CAMPEADOR'S SPECTRE HOST

*This slight ballad is founded on a striking passage of the Chronicle of the Cid. The idea is certainly a beautiful one, of the patriotic retaining a regard for their country after death, and a zeal for its rescue from danger and oppression. At all events, it is sufficiently imaginative and romantic.*

*Ferrando the Great was buried in the royal Monastery of St. Isidro at Leon. The time of the occurrence is during the reign of King Alphonso, on the evening before the great battle of Navas de Tolosa, wherein it is reported 60,000 of the Mahometans were slain.*

*Cid Ray Diaz is a name consecrated in Spanish chivalrous song.—Pelayo is said to have carried an oaken cross in the van of his army, when he led them on to battle.—The Gonzalez mentioned is the count Fernan Gonzalez, so renowned in the ancient Spanish chronicles and one of the many ballads concerning whom is given in the splendid translations of Mr Lockhart. On St. Pelayo and the Campeador, see the admirable remarks of Dr. Southey.*

On the towers of Leon deep midnight lay  
Heavy clouds had blotted the stars away;  
By fits 'twas rain, and by fits the gale  
Swept through heaven like a funeral wail.

Hear ye that dismal—that distant hum?  
Now the dirge of trumpet, the roll of drum,  
Now the clash of cymbal; and now again,  
The sweep of the night-breeze, the rush of rain!

Hearken ye, now, 'tis more near more loud—  
Like the opening burst of the thunder cloud;  
Now sadder and softer,—like the shock  
Of flood o'erleaping its barrier rock.

List ye not now, on the echoing street,  
The trampling of horses, the tread of feet,  
And clashing of armour?—a host of might  
Rushing unseen through the starless night!

St. Isidro! to thy monastic gate,  
Who crowding throng? who knocking wait?  
The Frere from his midnight vigil there  
Upstarts, and scales the turret stair:

Then, aghast, he trembles—that knocking loud  
Might awake the dead man in his shroud;  
Thickens the blood in his veins through fear,  
As unearthly voices smite his ear.—

“Ho! brethren, wake!—ho! dead arise!  
Haste, gird the falchions on your thighs;  
Hauker and helm from red rust free:  
And rush to battle for Spain with me!”

“Hither—hither—and join our hosts,  
A mighty legion of stalwart ghosts;  
Cid Rudiez is marching there, and here  
Gonzalez couches in rest his spear!

“Pelayo is here—and who despairs  
When his oaken Cross in front he bears?  
And sure ye will list to my voice once more,  
’Tis I, your Cid, the Campeador!

“Ho! hither, hither—through our land,  
in arms,  
The host of the Miramolin swarms;  
Shall our Cross before their Crescent wane?  
Shall Moormen breathe in the vales of Spain?”

“Ho! burst your cerements—here we wait  
For thee, Ferrando, once the Great;  
Knock on the Gaoler Death, and he  
Will withdraw the bolts and turn the key!

“Prone to the earth their might must yield,  
When we the Dead Host sweep the field;  
Our vultures to gorge upon the slain,

Shall forsake the rocks, and seek the plain.

“Ho! hurry with us away—away—  
Night passes onwards, ’will soon be day:  
Ho! sound the trumpet: haste! strike the drum,  
And tell the Moormen, we come we come!”

The Frere into the dark gazed forth—  
The sounds went forwards towards the North;

The murmur of tongues, the tramp and tread  
Of a mighty army to battle led.

At midnight slumbering Leon through,  
To battle field throng’d that spectral crew:

By the morrow noon, red Tolosa show’d  
That more than men had fought for God!

GRACE BROWN.

A SKETCH FOR MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS.  
By Mrs. L. Clarke, late E. A. Graham

“Charity—  
Knows with just reins and gentle hand  
to guide.”—PRIOR

Grace Brown was the pet of the village—pretty, lively, and like all other pets, very self-willed; but the effects of this latter quality were softened down and rendered quite loveable by her open generous disposition, which would not allow her to injure another, even to gratify that ruling passion. Some said that Grace thought herself sufficiently handsome, and termed it vanity. True perhaps, when each Sabbath morning found her ready decked for the sunny walk to the parish church on the hill side, or the week day evening saw her in her little chamber window plying her needle,—yes, perhaps, then as she caught a sidelong glance on herself in the little mirror, she might think it no such great wonder that the young men gazed as they passed her, or that they looked so curiously at the bows and flowering geraniums perched on the sill of her casement,—perhaps, too, she might think they cast a glance beyond. But was this vanity? No; Grace was as free of that hateful quality as the bird which carolled so joyously in his bridle on the cottage wall.

Vanity cannot be justly attributed to those who are only conscious of possessing the qualities which are theirs in reality; but to those alone who boast to themselves of perfections which they can never hope to possess. Such was the case of those who termed Grace vain.

One fine autumn evening she sat as usual, beside her geraniums, over which was hung her little bird Pet; but the leaves of the former hung droopingly, as though to ask of their sweet mistress the usual drop of spring water, and poor Pet chirruped and hopped from perch to perch, and ruffled his yellow feathers to attract her attention, but in vain. No cooling drop greeted the sickly leaf—no tiny finger placed a bit of sugar between Pet’s cage wires. And how was this? Was Grace ill? No; but her thoughts were wandering, and although her eyes were fixed full on poor Pet and his companion plants, she neither saw one nor the other. And whither were her thoughts wandering? Only into a neighbouring lane, up which she strolled when the sun was beginning to dip his bright head beneath the blue tops of the neighbouring hill. It was a very pleasant lane, but as its sides were bounded by high Hawthorn and wild rose bushes, it may be supposed Grace did not go there for the sake of any beautiful prospect, for her whole height was not more than the top of the banks on which the bushes grew. For what then could it be? In truth it was that there generally accompanied her thither a very pleasant companion,—not her mother—not one of the neighbour’s daughters. No; but a young man, the son of a farmer not far distant.

Yes, the truth may as well be told. Grace had given, or thought she had given, her little heart to this companion of her strolls; and indeed any one to look on him might imagine a better choice could not be made. Tall, handsome, and athletic he was and his eye beamed when he looked on her. But they who knew him better than Grace knew he was fickle and wild. Neither did they scruple to warn her of that knowledge. But

Grace could not believe. How could she, when she saw that though they spoke against him, they were ever ready to welcome him to their own homes? Besides, there was an eloquence far more powerful to the heart and understanding of Grace,—more eloquent more easily believed than ought they could utter. Yes, the eye and tongue of William Clively were the monitors most eagerly sought and most willingly listened to when found. How could she think he was deceiving her? There was no falsehood in his deep gaze upon her—no harshness in his soft voice. But there was one who did not like him, to whom Grace had ever professed submission, because that humility had never been forced, but ever won from her by love. That being was her mother!

She had now been sitting in this deep reverie some ten minutes, from which she was roused by a light hand being laid on her shoulder. The blood mounted to her temples and cheek, for she knew that without raising her eyes it was her mother, and she felt conscious that her mother’s eye was reading her innermost heart. She also knew that she had nought to fear for though at this moment her little heart had been rebelling, her parent’s chiding was ever one of gentleness.

“Grace, love,” spoke her mother, gently placing her hand on the half-downcast head, “why do you not go forth this evening? See, the sun has almost lost his last bit of crimson in the deep gray. Come love; you have been sewing all day. Just throw your scarf around you and walk a little in our garden.”

“I would rather not mamma,” answered Grace in a low tone, turning her head from her parent, and then for the first time, casting her eyes on the drooping plants and now sulky little Pet. But she quickly added, “I will water my trees and chirrup to Pet a little, for he seems quite to have the mopes.”

“And how comes it that he has the mopes, love?” again spoke her mamma. “Ah! I see, mamma,” returned the half-fearful, half-smiling maiden: “I see you have been reading my heart, and that it is useless to keep anything from you. But though you have seen part that was passing there, you cannot tell all!”

“But I can guess, Grace, and that perchance will do as well. I doubt not your little heart thought me very cruel—very inconsiderate in not allowing you to have quite your own way; and I doubt not too, that you thought I knew very little about it; but sit down love and I will tell you a little passage in my own life and after that I shall leave you to judge for yourself, only first assuring you, that I have every proof William Clively is very wild, and his father quite unable to support him in his present extravagancies. See here love I have brought my knitting; so take up your work from the window sill, and thus while we are quite industrious, I will proceed to tell you that my sketch commences when I was about a twelvemonth older than you are now. At that time Grace, I was circumstanced too, somewhat as you are now.—You understand me love?” Grace blushed and smiled. I had a rebellious heart too; and there was one for whom it was rebellious—one whom it had set up as the idol of its idolatry, and one whom, unfortunately, neither of my parents approved. But yet, Grace, I own that I thought my knowledge of his habits far exceed theirs; and all I knew was fair Things continued thus for above eighteen months, at the end of which time my eyes were fearfully opened to his vices,—he committed a forgery and absconded; though it is probable had he staid, no injury would have awaited him, for his friends, who were wealthy and powerful made up the sum for which he had risked his all and paid it. Grace, it was some time even then, before I could perfectly win my heart from its idolatry; but it had seen its error and my mind was made up to overcome such perversity and I did. Yes, Grace, I knew what it was to feel cherished affections warring against my own convictions of right.—You will perhaps say, that he had deserted me, and it might be that pride rose superior to neglect and slight; but not so He did not desert me—he did not slight me; for though all others were ignorant

of his destination, I knew whether he had fled, and from thence received a letter full of affection and repentance for past follies. But Grace, had I forgiven, or rather overlooked his vice, for I did forgive, I never could have placed confidence in him again; so I wrote him once and that once was to discard him for ever. From that time I busied myself in work tending my garden, in assisting my neighbours, and indeed in various ways of which I had not thought before. I saw that people approved my conduct too; every eye greeted me, every tongue welcomed me in joyous tones; and in time my own heart grew joyous, and felt a lightness it had never known till then, even in its wildest moments of affection for the now unworthy. But I did not know the fulness of the happiness I was to reap from that one era of my life till five years had elapsed. During that period, love, your dear father had wooed me, and knowing from all that he loved and respected, he won me, although not a fifth part so handsome or so engaging in his manner as he of whom I have been speaking. But he soon taught me to love him,—I do not mean with the girlish wildness I had loved before—but with an affection which might last through sorrow, sickness, death—as it has done dear Grace!”

The tears started to the eyes of Grace, and fell thickly on the little border on which she was so busily plying her needle. The mother was also silent for a few moments.

“Well, love,” she at length resumed, “you were but a few months old when one day, I was sitting with you in a small harbour in the garden of the dwelling where we then resided. On a sudden I heard the latch of the garden gate raised, and a poor, emaciated-looking man toiled up the sunny walk. He appeared in the last stage of wretchedness. I rose with an intention of inquiring into his condition, and relieving him as far as my means would permit; and, taking you into my arms, I stood before him. But Grace, I suppose that time had not so changed me as it had done him, for he instantly ejaculated my maiden name!—Yes, love, you may well drop your work and raise your eyes. It was, indeed, him whom I had loved, and persisted in loving, in opposition to my parents’ judgment. At that moment your dear father appeared at the door, and, when I looked on you and him, contrasted with the wretched mass of filth that shrunk before me, my heart leaped with gratitude to God for teaching me to subdue my own evil passions. Your father had known, before our marriage, all circumstances concerning him and myself, so that a few words made known to him the cause of the surprise pictured in both our countenances; and, to make me love and reverence him still more, that good man relieved his present wants and provided for his future ones. Yes, Grace, your father fed, clothed, and lodged that repentant creature in a neighbouring cottage till he recovered health and strength,—nay, more—he concealed his name from all inquiring ears, and not an eye which had once known could now recognise George May!”

“George May! mamma!”

“Yes, love; George May! The same who used to pay us the yearly visit from London, to evince his gratitude for your father’s kindness. The same who died in our village, of decline, seven years after leaving you the bible, as the only legacy which could be left by poor, but repentant George May! But now, dear, it is growing dark; I will go and get tea prepared, and, when we have taken that, return to your rest, and pray to your Maker.” And so Grace did; the next morning she threw her arms round her mother’s neck, and said, mother you gained the victory; and I will try if my mind can overcome the sinful inclinations of heart.

Yes, and Grace succeeded; and twenty years after, when she saw a daughter of her own growing up, she remembered how mildly her own mother had won her from her folly; and she felt that to be obeyed by that daughter, she must remember that herself had once been a sordid and wilful being, and that it is only superior to neglect and slight; but not so He did not desert me—he did not slight me; for though all others were ignorant them by our precepts.