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Poetry.

THE GATHERING TIME.

Exhibition of the Industry of all Nations, 1851.

They come! they come!
From the far-off isles, from the torrid plain,
They hasten to press o'er the billowy main,
They are borne along the deep sea's foam,
By the wild wind's sweep o'er the wrecked Jone's home,
By the fierce tornado in his pride,
Lashing the waves to a fiery tide.

With the might of lions on their brow,
With the wealth that hath taught the world to bow;
The wealth of the mind in its glorious might,
The spoils of a thousand thoughts of light,
The rainbow gleams of the spirit's wings,
As it revels in bliss amid glorious things.

They have gathered the spoils of the earth and sea;
They have pierced the shrines of their mystery,
Unveiled the glory of earth's bright things,
Hid music flow from her long-sealed springs,
Till the world doth start from human lips
To hear of the bright apocalypse.

They have been to the depths of ocean's caves,
Mid the murmuring resonance of waves;
And many a pearl and jewel bright
Flash out in pride on the wondrous sight,
And the circling coronet hath caught
Its light from the gifts the waves have brought.

They have been to the depths of nature's shrines,
Where gleam rich treasures in hoary mines;
And the shapeless block as a human word,
Hath scattered its dross as a moulted bird,
And sprang up in beauty, and strength, and might,
As a spirit-wind had evoked its light.

They have trod the shores of a sunny land,
Where the feathery palm trees clustering stand,
And the bright coronet of the pale worm gleam
On the mulberry boughs, as a starry stream;
And a thousand fabrics rich and rare,
From the golden threads grow brightly fair.

They have been wandering o'er the
In their lofty pride, to Italian skies;
And the sculptor's hand hath wrought its might
On the polished marble's stamless white,
Till the soul could see in its spirit's gleam,
The life of his dearest, proudest dreams.

And the forests have yielded their lordly dower,
And the isles that afar their fragrance shower,
Earth, air, and sea hath their tribute brought
To swell the stream of the wondrous thought,
That seeks in our own loved land to shine
The world's great soul, as a thing divine.

And hail to the workers on land and sea!
All hail as they meet in the land of the free!
The voice's gifts on the shrine be laid
Of the holiest One, in the mercy shade;
And earth's hoariness to Him be given,
Who on human souls sheds powers of heaven.

Literature.

WHY IS THE SEA SALT? FROM CHAMBERS JOURNAL.

Why is the sea salt?

What a question!—and what a time and place for it! You never before sat on turf so green as this, Marion—bordering the yellow sands of a bay so small, so delicately curved, so beautiful, so lonely. See, on one hand, but too far off to disturb the idea of solitude—yet near enough to leave unbroken the ties that connect us with the humanities of life—is a little, rustic, old-fashioned town, clustering itself upon a peninsula which stretches eagerly out into the sea, as if determined to obtain by right the name of an island, which it only enjoys by courtesy. On the other hand are the green, swelling shoulders of the bay, behind which we see rising in the clear

air some flimsy smoke, which tells of the noisling place of that beautiful village, with the most beautiful of names—Aberdour. Behind us, secluded and hemming in our little bay from the world, solemn and austere, as the convent walls that enclose some charming nun, is a broad belt of forest, traversed by hermit paths, leading to hidden fountains, holy enough to wash away from the soul the foulest stains of the world. And before us, Marion, look at that expanse of calm blue water, whose ripples kiss the yellow sand at our feet, but whose farther edge is lost in a silvery haze, above which rise dim towers and castled steeples, and beyond them shadowy precipices, and a towering seat where King Arthur himself may seem to look down from his throne upon the world of romance!

But why is the sea salt? Tush! Because it licks up the saline particles of the earth it washes; or because there are mountains of rock-salt resembling colossal lumps of sugarcandy in its depths, which melt so gradually that they and the world will be used up together; or for any other nonsensical reason which the ignorance of science pleases. This is not a time or place for such fables. But if you will have knowledge, let us take it from the men of old, to whom truth was handed down by tradition. How should we know so well as they who were born so much nearer the event? The venerable Edda tells everything in a page that modern philosophy is breaking its heart to get at. It does not the light, and boil it, and evaporate it, and pretend to discover the secret from the dregs, like an old woman reading a teacup. It relates the circumstances historically, naming distinctly the individuals and the places, and explaining the reasons and the results. What more would you have? Nothing is wanted on the part of the learner but faith. Listen believingly, and you will understand in five minutes how it came to pass that the water of the sea turned salt.

Before the reign of Frodi, a near descendant of Odin, the ocean was fresh; but that powerful King of Gotland (called in modern times Denmark) was fond of novelties and experiments. In his dominions there were two millstones, the upper and the nether, forming an engine of extraordinary power, if it had been only possible to set it going. No man, however, was strong enough to turn it; and steam being not yet invented, nor even water or wind power, they stood where they were—vast, ponderous, and motionless, a marvel to the country.

The owner of this mill, whose name was Hengikiapt, which signifies Hanging-Chops, presented it to King Frodi, telling him that it possessed the property of grinding out—grist or no grist—anything and everything ordered by the grinder. But the gift was a mere curiosity, only fit to be put up in some public place to be looked at, and wondered at gratis; for nations had not got the length of charging themselves so much a head for seeing their own monuments. So Frodi was little the

better for his acquisition, till he had the good fortune to stumble upon the only individuals in the world who could act as millers to these extraordinary stones. This occurred when he was on a visit to the king of Sweden, at whose court he obtained two female slaves, Femia and Menia by name, who could do,—nobody could tell what they could do.

As soon as he got home he tried them at the mill, and, lo! round went the huge stones, as if by a hundred horse power.

'Grand Gold!' cried he, and Gotland was at once a California.

'Grind tranquility,' and every man took the pledge, and subscribed to the Peace Society.

'Grind good-luck,' and Frodi might have been taken for a colonial minister, so prudent, so rational, so prosperous did he become all on a sudden. But, alas! the more he got out of his charmed mill, the more he wanted, 'Grind this! grind that, grind the other thing!' was his constant cry. 'Grind, grind!' when he lay down to rest at night; 'Grind, grind!' when he rose in the morning. He made a rule at last that the female slaves should never rest at one time longer than a cuckoo does between his notes. When sang the female slaves the famous Grotto song which is still known in Scandinavia. It described the services they performed, the ceaseless fatigue they endured, the sleep that every now and then overpowered them at their task, the pain with which they started from a the cuckoo's song.

But Frodi was inexorable in his covetousness. 'Grind this! grind that! grind the other thing!' cried he. 'Grind—grind!' And at length the female slaves, finding remonstrance vain, and warning unheeded, ground war and distress. That very night there landed in Gotland a sea-king whose name was Geysing, who marched direct upon the palace of Frodi, plundered it of its treasures, slew the unhappy king himself, and carrying off the mill and its slaves, set sail with his booty.

Served him right? True, Marion. The lessons of history are never to be despised. For my part I would have been satisfied with grinding gold, peace, good luck—

Beauty, fashion, power? True; and health, strength, swiftness—

Polkas, operas, dress? Yes; and love, smiles, kisses—

But why is the sea salt? We are just coming to that. Geysing was not satisfied with his treasures any more than Frodi; and he bethought himself of a very valuable commodity which the Phœnicians—who probably dug it out of the earth—were accustomed to exchange with the British islanders for the produce of their country. 'Grand white salt!' cried he. And the slaves laboured, and the mill turned, and the stream of white salt filled the hold. At midnight they asked their taskmaster whether he had enough: but he ordered them to go on grind—grind—grinding; and by the time they reached the Pent! i