



"'Tis home where'er the heart is,
Where'er its living treasures dwell,
In cabin, or in princely hall,
In forest haunt or hermit's cell.
'Tis bright where'er the heart is,
Its fairy spells have power to bring
Fresh fountains to the wilderness,
And to the desert vernal spring."

The Taking of Laurella.

"Please leave them thar dishes alone,
Laurelly, and come and set down."
"Did you want to talk to me?"

The girl turned a face of lovely surprise over her shoulder as she gave a great yellow bowl an extra vigorous shove back upon the high shelf.

Did he want to talk to her? Her lover looked at her in helpless irritation. This was the history of their courtship; when he met her at quarterly or grove meetings he fancied that if he were alone with her he might make headway. When they had the great kitchen all to themselves, as to-night, with the firelight making gusty shadow and shine upon its crannied walls, he found that she slipped through his fingers like a mist-wreath or a moon-beam, and evaded his ardor by not recognizing it.

"Course I want to talk to you. What do you reckon I come all the way over from the Fur Cove fer?"

"I didn't know. I was a wonderin'. I thought maybe you wanted to see pappy or the boys."

The attitude of the mountain girl toward men and matrimony is primitive. She is not seeking the one nor admiring the other. She animadvert upon characteristics purely masculine as defects. Masculine size she professes to consider clumsiness; a bass voice is a "great coarse, rough voice." When she is finally wed, the countryside is to understand that it is an event which never entered into her calculations, which has been accomplished only by surprise and superior force.

Jason Bushares sat, hypnotized, watching how the firelight ran up Laurella's white throat, lingering in her eyelashes, throwing their shadow upward, adding an extra touch of surprised inquiry to her countenance, as she faced him and professed herself ready to hear the business upon which he had come. But was she? Would she listen?

"Don't you remember, Laurelly, when you an' me used to go to the hollerin' school together, an' I was always a writin' notes to you, just as soon as I learned how to write—or print, ruther?"

"Aw, law! Them days!" laughed Laurella with heightened color, ignoring the significance of his speech. "Didn't the teacher have big feet? I've studied about his feet many a time since, when I ought to have been thinkin' of somethin' sensible. Has your ma put in any o' them dice pattern counterpanes for to weave, Jason?"

The fate of nations might have hung upon Mother Bushares' weaving, if one could judge by the girl's face; but Jason ignored the question.

"Don't you remember, when I went down to Grayville and got me a job on the railroad, how I sent you a vollen-tine?" he pursued.

"No!" the girl cried, with sparkling eyes. "Was it a comic?"

"You know hit wasn't. My name was on it, an' it said—it said—"

Jason floundered helplessly before those laughing eyes. He sought desperately in

his mind for the exact words that had been in the valentine—they would have served his purpose well.

"Seems to me I do mind about a right pretty vollen-tine that had a name wrote so scratchy on it I couldn't tell who 'twas sent it. I jes' made it up in my own mind it was Bob Provine—he's always up to such foolishness—an' let it go at that. Did your folks put up as much meat as usual this fall? Looks like our hogs never would fatten, an' pappy won't kill till they're jes' so."

"Yes," choked Jason, "we killed last week. I guess we've got ruther more than usual—er perhaps considerable less."

The girl giggled. "You ain't thinkin' a word about what you're sayin'," she commented softly.

"I'm a thinkin' about somethin' I want to say," Jason burst out, and would have gone further; but the girl rose hastily.

"Well, this'll never do me," she began. "Ef you don't mind, I guess I'll weave a spell. I promised mammy I'd finish the jeans for Homer's coat."

Cruel Laurella! Tall and fresh and fair, pink and white as the mountain laurel for which she was named, she had already woven a spell; and Jason could not utter the rebellion that was in him, as she seated herself at the loom whose whirr and bang would be a ready reason for failing to hear anything that she chose not to recognize.

And so for half an hour the tormented swain stood at her shoulder.

"Laurelly, I jes' want you to listen a minute."

"All right, Jason, you holler right good an' loud, an' I can hear you even when the loom's a goin'."

But what man ever desired to "holler" such speeches right good and loud? Besides, if he did so his shouts would be audible in the loft above, where the boys slept, and in the room across the open porch, where the parents and the younger children were.

Finally Laurella's weaving came to an end, because she lacked a darning-needle to pull out an unwelcome knot. Jason was standing threateningly close.

"You jest get me that there poke off of the high-shelf, will you?" she asked, turning coquettishly over her shoulder.

"Tain't here."

"Oh, yes, 'tis—all eyes an' no eyes—hit's right beside the yaller bowl. No—no! Don't take the yaller bowl down! You, Jate Bushares—I'll never speak to you again!"

But she was too late. She sprang up and ran across the room to where Jason Bushares set the yellow bowl upon the table, tilted it over, and emptied out all her girlish treasures: the little smudgy printed letter he had first written to her, on a dog-eared fly-leaf of his second reader; the "vollen-tine" she had laughed about and denied knowledge of; a tintype taken at Grayville, and penciled across in her handwriting, "My own true love."

This last item settled it.

"Ye said ye wouldn't have that picture," Jason murmured, as he caught her in his arms and held her fast. "Ye said it was too ugly. Ye said ye was jes' carryin' it home to give it to your brother."

Laurella looked up with blue eyes drowned in tears, thus permitting the enemy an advantage which he was not slow in taking.

"What do you expect a girl to do?" she finally murmured gently.

"Why, jest like you did," answered her lover, happily. "I wouldn't have a single hair o' your head changed—now I've got ye at last!"—[Grace MacGowan Cooke, in Munsey's.]

Travelling Notes.

By Eleanor.

PISA, GENOA, THE RIVIERA.

From Rome we travelled to Pisa, where we had an afternoon and spent one night. Our afternoon, of course, was taken up with seeing the cathedral, its famous leaning Tower, and the Baptistry. They are all very beautiful, and the tower very quaint with its marked incline from the perpendicular. The Baptistry is noted for its marvellous echo, as well as its beautifully sculptured marble pulpit. The human voice is reflected like the tones of a beautiful organ. The next morning saw us in the train, skirting the Mediterranean on the Italian Riviera. We passed through miles and miles of tunnels in the solid rocky coast to rush out upon beautiful views overlooking the sea, lovely orangeries, olive groves, and little white towns that dot the shores. It was a glorious sunny day, and we thoroughly enjoyed the journey to Genoa, where we again spent another afternoon and night. After coffee and a wash, we took the train to the Campo Santo, which lies some little distance from the town. It had great fascinations for me when I visited it ten years ago. Many of its marble monuments are very fine, but after seeing the statuary of Rome and Florence they did not appear in the same way. The scenery of the French Riviera is even more beautiful than that of the Italian, greater wealth being displayed in the houses and gardens, which contain luxuriant date palms, masses of carnations and violets. We travelled to Nice by a slow train, so we had a better opportunity of seeing the country and the little towns at which we stopped every few miles, whose occupants gain a livelihood by shipbuilding, olive-oil making, fruit-growing, etc. A great feature along the coast was the washing, taking place in the streams just where they ran into the ocean. The articles were then set out to dry on the pebbly beach, being held firmly at the corners by good solid pieces of stone. Our fortnight's stay at Nice was marred by unfortunate weather—cold and damp, with snow on the surrounding hills—a most unusual weather freak. We had only about four sunny days, and these were oppressively warm. We all did less and felt more tired here than at any other place we had visited during the winter. Nell and I, it is true, attempted some French conversation for an hour daily with an exceedingly nice French girl, but that was about the limit of work. We made a few excursions to the surrounding places. Monte Carlo we visited three times, twice by day and once by night. It is a charming spot, beautifully situated on a rocky prominence overlooking a dear little blue bay. The Casino and its grounds, too, are very fine. It was a sight to see the gambling tables, with men and women three or four rows deep, watching keenly the little ball on the roulette tables. Most of the gamblers seemed cool, and apparently old hands at the game. I saw nothing more tragic than a heated dispute between a "croupier" and a disappointed loser. By night it was a very gay sight, with its well-lit rooms and the beautiful dresses of the ladies. Cannes is also a beautiful spot. It has a more countrified appearance than Nice, with its larger gardens. The Mimosæ were all in bloom all the time of our visit, and among them were some real "Australian" wattles, and the lovely yellow that they gave the hills, and their sweet scent, were like a glimpse

and whiff of Australian spring. At Cannes we visited the dear little church erected by Queen Victoria to the memory of her son, the Duke of Albany. In it is a marble figure representing the Duke in Highland costume, recumbent on a mausoleum. For our journey here from Nice we had beautiful weather, and we were able to enjoy the scenes along the coast. We caused a little excitement in our railway carriage by making tea with our spirit lamp, one guarding the kettle while another kept watch lest the conductor should take it into his head to pay us a visit. He never came, and we thoroughly appreciated the cup that cheers but not inebriates. The patient is making steady progress, we are happy to say. Next time she will write herself; then we shall be probably miles away from each other.

ELEANOR.

Shakespeare and Nature.

When we turn to literature we find that our greatest men are those whose intimate knowledge of nature has been their bond with all humanity. Such training of the senses as Shakespeare received will go far toward bringing in the "Golden Age of Education." Creative power comes directly from experience. We tell best what we have seen ourselves, not what others have told us. Shakespeare's life in picturesque and richly storied Stratford, the dark forests of Arden, buds and the flowered meadows were his real educators, not the musty volumes in which scholars seek his inspiration. The spirit of the Midland country breathes through his pages, and much of his work is idealized pictures of what he saw with his own eyes. His reference to natural objects is exact and faultless, with but one exception, when he miscalled the color of the heart of one flower.

Shakespeare constantly strengthened his verse by reference to nature such as these:

"And this our life exempt from public haunt
Finds tongue in trees, books in running brooks,
Sermons in stones and good in everything,
I would not change it."

As a bird student he knew the ugly eye of the lark and the beautiful eye of the toad, and said:

"Some say the lark and loathed toad
changed eyes."

How many boys know positively the color of a swan's leg? Shakespeare tells us:

"For all the water in the ocean
Can never turn a swan's black legs to white
Altho' she lave them hourly in the flood."
—Mail.

An Englishman, an Irishman and a Scotchman walking along a country road on a summer's day talked of their favorite flowers: "Give me the red rose of old England," said the Englishman. "Give me the Shamrock of old Ireland," said the Irishman. "Na, na," said the Scotchman, "the flower of my country is the best. Ye may sit on the rose and the shamrock, but ye'll no sit lang on the thistle."