

REMEMBRANCE.

(TRANSLATED FROM ALFRED DE MUSSET.)

"It was in the beginning of this period of silence that he wrote one of the most beautiful of his poems, 'Le Souvenir.' He had visited the forest of Fontainebleau in the month of September, 1840, and a few months later he put into verse the reminiscences, which were recalled by the scene of his old love for George Sand. The whole poem is most touching. But after it was published, he was filled with regret that he had given it to the world."—*North American Review*, September, 1878.

O sacred ground, in wandering back to thee
I thought to suffer, though I hoped to weep;
Thou dearest grave, unnumbered save by me,
Where hallowed memories sleep.

What fled ye in this solitude to dread,
My friends! Why draw me by the hand away
When habit, grown so old and sweet, hath led
My footsteps here to stray.

I see the uplands and the blooming heath,
The silvery pathway o'er the Silent Land.
The walks, still redolent of loves' breath,
Where hand was clasped in hand.

The mountain gorge's careless tracks I mark.
Familiar murmurs once again I hear
From ancient pine-trees, crowned with verdure dark,
That soothed my boyhood's ear.

Here is the greenwood, where my youth once more
Sings like a choir of birds upon a tree;
Fair meadowland, where my mistress strayed of yore,
Didst thou not look for me?

Nay, let them flow, these welcome, blissful tears.
That from a heart still bleeding take their rise,
And let the mist that veils long-buried years
Refresh my aching eyes.

These woods are witness that I once was blest,
Through them no echoes of a dirge shall roll;
Proud is this forest in its peaceful rest,
And proud, too, is my soul.

With bitter cries let some bereaved ones rave,
Who kneels despairing by a comrade's tomb,
Here all breathes life—the dowerets of the grave
Here cannot bud or bloom.

Behold! the moon is rising o'er the glade,
Thy glance still trembles, lovely queen of night,
But soon, dispelling the horizon's shade,
Thine orb shall glow with light.

As all the perfumes of the vanished day
Rise from the earth, still moistened with the dew
So from my chastened soul, beneath thy ray,
Old love is born anew.

Where are the sorrows gone that made me pale,
And left me prematurely old with pain?
I grow, while gazing on this friendly vale,
A joyous child again.

Oh! tender night of Time—oh! fleeting years,
Ye staunch each tear, and stifle each regret,
And, in your pity, on our faded flowers
Your feet are never set.

Is bliss thee, Time, kind angel of relief?
I had not thought love's wound e'er conceal
Anguish so keen, or that a victim's grief
Could be so sweet to feel.

Far be from me each time-worn thought and phrase
That oft in heartless epigrams are read,
Where with the man who never loved, displays
His feelings for the dead.

Dante, thou saidst that in the hour of woe
Remembered happiness is sorrow's curse;
What spleen dictated thee that bitter moan,
That sorrow-sounding verse?

Must we forget that ever in the skies,
E'en when our night is darkest, light appears?
Didst thou spurn sorrow, thou, whose mournful eyes
Poured forth immortal tears?

No! by you moon whose beams illumine my glance,
Thou vaunted blasphemy was not thy creed;
Memories of happiness on earth perchance
May happiness exceed.

Heav'n on my head its lightnings now may ding
This memory cannot from my heart be torn;
To this, though wrecked by tempests, I will cling
Like mariner forlorn.

And oft I murmur: "At this time and place
I loved one day, and I was loved again;
Time has no power the picture to efface,
While life and thought remain."

Montreal.

GEO. MURRAY.

"WITH A SILVER LINING."

I.

A girl came singing through a field of poppies
As the sunset gilded the western sky.

Everywhere around her glowed the deep intense
Scarlet of the brilliant blossoms. Above
Her head were depths of purple shadow and amber
Light, and over all brooded the dreamy stillness
And tender hush that so often fill the day's
Last hour.

The girl made a fair living picture amidst the
Glow and fervour of that sunset scene, as she
Moved through it all with a certain deer-like
Grace peculiarly her own, while her lips sang for
Very gladness, as a bird carols its matin praises
In the dawn of a spring day. The song rang out
Sweet and clear over the quiet fields; it reached
The ears of a group of farm labourers returning
Home from their work, and made them pause a
Moment to listen, saying, smiling to one another
As they stood, "Tis Miss Vera, sure eno'. God
Bless her!"

It came in its fresh young melody to a man
Who stood on the white level road beyond the
Corn fields—a man old, and bent, and withered
With age, with a hard cold face and dreary eyes,
Who leaned on his stick, and shaded his sight
From the sun-rays, and watched the girl coming
Swiftly and joyously toward him, as he seldom
Had watched any human thing.

As she saw him the music left her tongue.
Her step grew slower, and as his keen eyes swept
Over her face she half paused, apparently doubt-
ing whether to speak or not. She knew him well
by sight, but hitherto he had always avoided
her.

"Singing again!" he said, in a voice as harsh
and cold as his face. "Are you so glad? One
never sees you without a smile on your lips—a
song on your tongue."

She flushed slightly.
"Yes, I am glad," she answered, simply.
"And why?—Can you tell me that? Have
you so much to make you so?"

"I have health, youth, love. Are they not
life's fairest gifts?"

"So fools say."
"And wise men, too, I fancy," the girl said,
gently. "But whether or no, if they make one
glad, should they not be valued? The old seem
so often to think that the light-heartedness of
youth is a reproach to themselves. I wonder
why."

"Do you mean that I think so?" he asked,
with a contemptuous smile. "I envy none their
youth—not even their gladness. I know how
swiftly the one flies, the other fades. There is
nothing good in life; the illusions of youth are
the veriest vanity. Some day you too will say
with me, 'There is nothing left; let me curse
Heaven and die!'"

The girl's face grew very pale.
"Oh, never that!" she said, sorrowfully.
"Never words so despairing, or so—wrong!"

The last word was spoken gently and humbly.
It was so daring of her, she felt, to upbraid one
so far beyond her in years, in knowledge, in ex-
perience.

"Wrong!" he said, bitterly, as he stood and
looked across the flaming scarlet of the poppies
to where the last sun-rays lingered in the west.

"What do you know of wrong or right—of life—
of the future—of any one of the things that lie
hidden in the heart of unfolded years, as the
color and fragrance of the flower lie in the closed
bud? Listen!" And he laid his withered hand
on her arm, and turned her bright young face
toward him. "Listen, child! I was young once,
and glad and trustful as you are. To me too
there seemed never a cloud in the sky; never a
pain in the heart; never an evil or a sin that
could turn life to hell, and love to hate, and joy
to sorrow. But even as that cloud above us
creeps over the sky's radiance and covers the
sunset's gold, so surely did a cloud of shame and
suffering darken my fate, destroy my illusions.
So surely will a like cloud throw its gloom over
you, and every creature like you who goes forth
on life's journey with blind eyes and credulous
heart, to learn, as I have learned, that of all
things life holds, the only thing that lives, and
enjoys, and prospers, is—Evil."

She looked at him sorrowfully. He was so
old, and sad, and desolate. His words hurt her;
their chill darkened her simple joyousness even
at the cloud to which he had pointed darkened
the glowing colours of the sky. For a moment
she was silent.

"To say such words, and believe them," she
said, gently, "one must have known great sor-
row. I do not understand them quite. God is
too good to let mankind suffer more than they
can bear, more than He deems just. But for you
I am sorry. It must be so terrible to know life
has no joy left, to turn from the sunshine and
dwell forever in the shadows."

A smile of terrible irony curved his lips.
"One would look for no worse hell hereafter.
Do I frighten you? You look quite scared and
white. I can not help it. I don't know why I
have broken my word and spoke even gently to
a human thing. I vowed once never to do it. I
have seen you so often, and almost hated you
for your fair face and light step, and your voice
that is always happy; and as you came across
the fields just now, some impulse prompted me
to stay you. Is your gladness less?"

She smiled wistfully, and her eyes rested on
his face with infinite pity.
"Not less," she said, gently. "Only if I could
but give you back yours—ever so little!"

"It lies in no man's power, still less in any
woman's. The clouds are with me forever now.
Go you forth with the sun; our paths lie wide
apart; for you, life begins—the joys it may hold
are illimitable; for me, it ends—the joys it has
held are vanity and vexation of spirit. Fare-
well."

He turned abruptly away—a lean, bent, aged
figure, leaning heavily on his stick, with the
evening light touching his scanty silvered hair
and brown trembling form. The girl, moved by
some sudden impulse, followed him.

"Do not shun me again," she said, implor-
ingly. "I have seen you so often, and I live so
near; and they say you are always alone. It
must be so sad."
"It is my own wish," he said, almost fiercely.
"As for being sad, one need not come to eighty
years to find life that."

Half proudly, half regretfully, she turned
away. As she did so her eyes rested on the pale
soft tints of the evening sky, from whence the
glow and fervor of sunset had faded.

"Look!" she cried, eagerly, as her out-
stretched hand pointed upward. "Look! the
cloud is still there, but it has a silver lining."

The old man went on his way. The girl moved
silently and sadly along the quiet fields, and
through a narrow shady road, and across a wood-
en bridge which brought her to her home.

A very simple little place it was; a mere cot-
tage, rented from a miller near by, and just large
enough for her father and herself. He was an old
and studious recluse, and she was his only child.

He had lived here in this quiet world-forgotten
village for a score of years, with only his books
for companions since his wife had died and left
his married life like a dream-memory to him ever
afterward—so short it was and sweet.

The tiny home was very dear to him, and to
his child also. She loved to think of the fair
young mother who had gladdened it for those
two brief sunny years—to trace her footsteps in
the garden paths, her presence in the dainty
rooms, her taste in the arrangement of the in-
terior, and her skill in the miniature garden
which she had planned and cultured, and where
pure white lily cups, and gloire de Dijon roses,
and the scarlet glow of geraniums, and the flush
of flowering creepers coloured and embowered
the tiny dwelling. To the girl the whole place
was always beautiful in a simple, quiet, dreamy
way, which had grown with her growth, and
had altered itself to her fancies, whether it lay
like a fairy bride-cake in winter, or a fragrant
garden-world in summer, with azure and purple
winged butterflies sporting in the flower bells,
and the velvet-coated bees humming their en-
dless song in the hearts of honey blossoms.

She and her father were always together; al-
ways companions and friends to each other; al-
ways united in interest as in heart; always
inseparable in pursuits both learned and simple.

As she crossed the wooden bridge now, she
stood for an instant to listen to the rush and
music of the deep mill water, and to watch it
break over the rocks, and dash in a million foam
bells against the huge wheel; then turning her
eyes in the other direction, she saw a figure sit-
ting at some distance up the bank, fishing.

The sight was not an uncommon one; tourists
and anglers often found their way here, and the
deep river was full of pike and other smaller fish.
Her eyes rested carelessly enough on this man,
sitting motionless and attentively there, with
his rod clasped in his hands, and his gaze fixed
on the river before him. While she watched
she saw him suddenly rise, retreat a few steps,
and then, with a short quick run, take a flying
leap to a rock in the middle of the water, evi-
dently intending to take his seat there instead of
fishing from the bank. Whether he had mea-
sured the distance falsely, or whether his foot
slipped on the slippery rock, she could not tell,
but in a second she saw him submerged in the
rushing depths, and whirled like a straw in her
own direction.

"Great Heaven! the mill-wheel!" she gasped,
standing paralyzed for an instant by the intense
horror of that thought.

The current set firm and strong in that direc-
tion. In a moment he would be beneath the
bridge on which she stood, and whirled onward
till the fierce waters would suck him into their
whirlpool, and the cruel wheel would hold him
in its grasp. The horror of the situation flashed
through her brain like lightning. Without a
moment's pause, a second's consideration, she
stooped under the railing of the bridge, which
was so low it was within two feet of the water.

Holding on to one of the beams for support,
she let herself drop, and as the water whirled
him beneath, she seized the collar of his coat and
held it fast.

The strain on her power was terrible. Her
wrists were wrenched like a pulley as they sup-
ported his weight below and her own weight
above. The sound of the water in her ears was
like the roar of a furious sea. She cried aloud
for help, with an agonized prayer in her heart
that it might reach the miller or some of the la-
borers returning home.

The man was quite stunned; he could see a
deep red gash on his forehead, which must have
struck against the rock in that fatal leap. A
moment more, and she feared her strength would
fail; a moment more, and the river would hold
two victims instead of one. A moment—

Oh, thank God! thank God! A shout in her
ears—a strong clasp—a helping hand which
seized the stiff and lifeless weight in her numbed
and straining grasp. A moment and she was
drawn back on the bridge, with a face white as
death, and limbs that trembled like a wind-
tossed leaf.

"Tis Miss Vera from the cottage, as I live,"
said a voice. "Bless us and save us! what a
thing for a young weak thing like her to go and
do. It's a mussy the two on 'em weren't drown-
ed like kittens together! Wasn't it plucky,
though, Bill?"

The girl opened her eyes, and nerved herself
against the deadly sickness and faintness creep-
ing over her.

"Thank you for your bravery," she said.
"How fortunate you were near! Is he safe?"

"He looks bad—nigh dead, I should say,"
answered one of the men.

"Oh, do take him to the cottage!" she cried,
eagerly, as she raised herself and staggered to
her feet. "My father will reward you for your
brave action. Where should we be now if it
were not for you?"

Her unconscious coupling of the man she had
saved with her own self, her anxious com-
passionate gaze at his white still face, her shudder
of terror at the river as its noise struck on her
ear, all spoke of a new and vivid interest—a life
roused from its quiet slumbers to an awakening
whose deeper import she had yet to learn.

The men touched their hats and bent down to
the prostrate, senseless figure at their feet.
They raised him in their arms, and bore him be-
fore her to the cottage, with its flush of summer
bloom and its calm of summer peace.

As they entered, the girl looked up at the
sky overhead. The cloud had floated onward,
and stood directly over her own home. There
was no silver lining to its sombre darkness now.

II

All night in the summer stillness came the
song of a nightingale from among the roses. All
night with a feverish restlessness a man tossed
on his couch of pain. All night in the silent
moonrays a girl lay awake and uneasy, with
throbbing veins still strained and aching from
that terrible weight, with sleepless eyes that
would not close, and a strange, dull foreboding
in her heart that had never chilled its glad
young beats before.

"Was life really so sad?" she wondered.
"Did it hold pain so great and woe so deep that
the heart turned to bitterness, and joy to grief,
and love to hate? Would the cloud shadow
her own life too, since the old man had told her
none could escape?"

Through all her dreams this one thought ran,
haunting her, saddening her, chilling her nat-
ural joyousness, disturbing her natural gaiety,
which had been hitherto the gaiety of a child
knowing naught of evil, dreading naught of
pain.

With the morning her father sought the
stranger's side, and dressed his wound with some
of the old medical skill that he had never for-
gotten, though he had long ceased to practice as
a physician. It was then that, for the first time,
the young man learned the story of his danger
and rescue, and heard with mingled wonder and
admiration of the heroism to which he owed his
life.

"What can I say?" he murmured, as the
story ended, and the old man's voice trembled
with emotion over the recital of his darling's
bravery and deadly peril. "No words, no acts,
can ever repay such a debt. I wonder you do
not hate me, seeing in my fool-hardiness such
risk to the life you love so well."

"She is my only child—my all," said the old
man, tenderly. "To have lost her—well, there
lives for me no word to paint the agony of that
thought. And yet, I would not have had her
act otherwise. In Heaven's sight are not all
lives equal?"

"There would have been none to mourn me,"
said his companion, sadly. "My existence is
of small value in comparison with what hers
seems to you."

"Ay, Heaven be praised, she was spared!"
was the fervent ejaculation. "But you are over
young to talk of being so little missed or cared
for."

"Nevertheless, it is quite true. I am utterly
friendless. My life has been hard, loveless,
toilsome: it is of small account to any one but
myself."

"I hope you do not follow the cant of the
day," rejoined the old man, somewhat sternly,
"and allow there is no good or desirable thing
in life now, and therefore waste its fairest and
freshest years in the exhaustion of folly—the
lawlessness of sin."

"No; I do not hold such views. But to ex-
haust the follies of life and to follow its law-
lessness one must be rich enough to reckon no
cost, or vicious enough to stay for no better im-
pulse. I am certainly not the one, for I am a
poor man, and live by my wits. I hope I am
not the other, since amidst a life that has always
been hard, and a youth that has always been
lonely, I have still kept faith in Heaven, and
pity for man, and reverence for woman."

"Have you a mother?"

A dark shade clouded the frank young face.
"She is dead," he said. "As for other rela-
tives, my father has disowned me. I do not
even bear or know his name. Brother or sister
I never possessed. I am quite alone. I believe
I am entitled to be called a gentleman. I gain
my bread by painting, or doing illustrations for
periodicals. I live most of the year in London,
and have come to this village for a month's rest,
as my health has not been strong of late. There
is my history, sir. It is all my introduction."

"And quite enough," said the old man,
heartily. "Your face is too frank and open to
deceive, and I am quite sure your heart is honest
too."

He shook hands cordially with the guest so
strangely brought beneath his roof, and then
bade him come to the little sitting-room when
he felt sufficiently rested.

"You will find Vera there," he said, in his
genial, kindly tones, that were so frank in their
cordiality, so trustful in their welcome. "My
daughter, I mean."

"May I ask the favour of your name?" said
the young man, smiling. "Mine is Keith Bran-
don. I do not know whom I have the honour
of addressing."

"My name is Ashford; it used to bear the
appendix 's Doctor, but I have dropped it long
since."

"I am not to use it, then?" questioned Keith.
"If you wish, certainly. But most of the
people here know me only as 'Mister,' or 'Maiter,'
as they pronounce it. Now I really must
be off. You are sure you are quite strong enough
to come down stairs?"

"Quite sure. Why, gratitude alone would
give me strength, were I not all curiosity to see
one who with a woman's weakness unites a man's
heroism."

"You must not spoil Vera's simplicity by
fine words and London manners," said the old
man, with a sudden gravity, as he stood at the
door and looked back at the handsome face and
strong erect young figure in the room beyond.

"Do not be alarmed," was the gentle re-
sponse. "I reverence the simplicity and guile-
lessness of a true woman beyond all earthly
things."

"You were no true man if you did not,"