

ACADIA.

Acadia dear! my native land,
In loneliness I turn to thee,
Upon thy coast I long to stand,
And view again the foaming sea;
For this fair inland lake* but mocks
The heart of him who wandered o'er
The yellow sands and wave-worn rocks,
On Ocean's breaker-beaten shore.

How dull! to me seems all around:
These drowsy, turbid waters sleep—
Oh, for the strangely-mingled sound,
That issues from the boundless deep!
And, like some wildly-solemn strain,
Awakens in the pensive breast
A nameless feeling and a train
Of thoughts—too deep to be expressed.

Ye winged spirits! swift and free,
Oh! take me from this lifeless scene.
To that rude hamlet by the sea,
Where oft this restless heart hath been.
Fain would I see the lonely beach,
'Long which I roamed in thoughtful mood,
In Hope's full hour—beyond the reach
Of the loud, heartless multitude.

Dear is the land that gave me birth—
Ah! wherefore did I madly rove
So far from my paternal hearth,
And from the darling scenes I love?
Why did I leave the hills that lift
Their pine clad summits high in air,
Above dark rivers that flow swift
Through valleys living-green and fair?

Acadia! land of stormy mist,
Which morning robes in golden hues,
Thy gloomy grandeur shall enlist
The loftiest numbers of my Muse;
For in my waking dreams appear
Thy deep green vales and mountains hoar,
And oft in fancy's sounds I hear
The loud waves breaking on thy shore!

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ELEANOUR: A TALE OF NON-PERFORMERS.

Plain? Cecil fired at the word. Plain? She did not know what he meant. She had never promised him a common, everyday, pretty face; if he had expected a pink and white complexion and pencilled eyebrows, it was not her fault. Anthony's appearance was all that she wanted for her part; and she must beg to tell him that no woman liked dolly-faced men. Anthony's dark locks and swarthy, sunburnt brow would find admirers in plenty. If he was ugly, he was delightful. And so on, and so on, diverging to right and left of the argument, as Mrs. Cecil was apt to do.

However, she was too happy to be quarrelsome. The dear boys! She followed their grey figures with her eye until they were lost to view; and before night she was crowned with full content; for she had assured herself that her only source of anxiety was groundless. The master of Blatchworth had still a heart to offer.

He had actually arrived at her door, hale, hearty, and disengaged; and at the end of her solemn exhortation on the duty of remaining so no longer, professed himself inclined to see it in the same light.

And she had surely extended some of her sisterly cares to Noll! It was disgraceful if Noll did not turn into a Benedict, now that he had got that fifteen hundred pounds out of Aunt Maria. What could a fellow like Noll do with fifteen hundred pounds?

"For heaven's sake, Cis," cried the careful elder brother, "get him a wife, or he'll go to the devil with it!"

"Hush, hush! You must not talk like that."

"I didn't mean," said Anthony, penitently, "I say, one gets into a rough way of talking, knocking about the world; don't you mind, I'm going to stop it."

"And you are not going to knock about the world any more?"

Then she bargained that they should go over with her to call at the Castle on the following day. Two days after, shooting would begin and hours would be changed, and who could say when the acquaintance might be made if not at once; but once seen, she trusted to the fair sisterhood acting as their own magnet in the future. Oh, what a time that short intervening two miles took to get over with such companions, and how hot and tired was weary Cecil at the end! That they started late, that they kept her waiting for three-quarters of an hour, was nothing; she was good-humouredly disposed to lay the blame on the change of toilet which a morning's fishing rendered imperative; but why need they lounge, and saunter, turn aside at every opportunity and finally sit down to rest by the way—the two great hulking fellows? It was but too obvious that they were being driven against their will—that had it not been their first day, and there was no excuse handy, they would have evaded the expedition. Oliver scuds off after a rabbit, Anthony cheering him on; they investigate a well, they drink from a spring; finally both leave her to examine a blasted piece of rock half way up the hill.

At length, however, and by dint of patience and urgency combined, the entrance-gates are reached, and the toils of the journey are at an end. So she hopes fondly—but stay a bit.

"I say, Cis."

"Well?"

"Anthony and I are just going down to the shore to see about getting a fisherman for tonight. Anthony has never seen the sort of sea-fishing they have here. You go on, and we will overtake you."

* Lake Ontario.

"Overtake me? We are close at hand."

"Go in, then, and say we are coming."

And come they did,—after every one had gone out but Eleanour. The visit was a failure. After an hour's waiting, Eleanour, not without some sense of outraged dignity, had sent her sisters away, and entrenched herself in solitary state to receive the recusants. Her pretty goods should not remain for such tardy appreciation, should not have it supposed that the enforced civility of any guests of Cecil's—brothers or not—was grateful to them. She had the colour in her cheek and the sparkle in her eye when the drawing-room door opened at last; and her answer to Oliver's hasty quest round the room, was a grim smile of satisfaction.

For Oliver, now that he was actually there, was alive to the merits of the situation; and he had, moreover caught a view of an excellent croquet-lawn—the days of croquet were not yet ended—as he passed through the shrubbery; it was enough to kindle desire. He was a renowned player as he was everything else that was useful and captivating, and if he could have got Anthony even, for an antagonist, would have challenged him on the spot.

But it appeared that Anthony had not only never played, he had actually never seen the game.

This was insufferable. Oliver appealed to Eleanour, to Cecil, if it was not insufferable; and by dint of volubility, flattery, and persuasion, succeeded in disarming both, and inducing them to fix upon an early day for his brother's initiation. They must make it tomorrow. Why should it not take place tomorrow? Even Cecil was surprised to see the man who had been so loathe to come, so eager to return, not reflecting that it was in the passing moment the gay soldier lived, and that in the pursuit of pleasure he could even be industrious. It was chiefly to Anthony, indeed, that blame was due, and Anthony was at least consistent; he accepted the invitation, but he did nothing to extort it.

However the players kept him to his word. It is to be presumed that he tried to learn; that he did seriously incline his ear to the counsels of the wise; but he made sad hash of it nevertheless. So much was taken for granted; so many points was he expected to bear in mind at once; and such a number of rules and regulations were dinned into his ear at the same time, that he must be pardoned for giving up the attempt, and retreating in mortification to the old-fashioned sun-dial among the bushes, where Eleanour was mounting guard.

From this retreat he viewed the combatants with no very good will. They had speedily—and he fancied joyfully—re-arranged sides; and he could tell by the general alacrity and expectation, the preparatory collecting of balls and testing of hoops, the whole stir and bustle consequent on his departure, that a well-contested match was to be played. He was no loss—indeed he must have been an intolerable drag. His going admitted another sister to play, and enabled all to let out their strength and show their skill.

Altogether he was well out of it. Away went Oliver, carrying with him his partner Kate, from right to left, from centre to side, clearing the route of all opponents' balls, and placing them delicately for future use, in the style of a master of the craft. It seemed as though he were to walk the course; but he slipped, missed an easy stroke, and in a trice the tables were turned.

It was now his turn to be chased from hole to corner by an unsparing foe; and to find himself and his fair partner lodged at extreme ends of the lawn, hopelessly disunited. So much for Julia, but Kate could play too. A lucky shot regained, as by magic, the lost position, and cleared the coast. Why should her slender fingers have trembled at that critical moment? Pure eagerness, not even anxiety, made them; she was not nervous by nature, and she was confident in herself, but she was excited, and the mallet turned her hand. If it had not touched, no mischief would have been done; but oh, woe betide the tiresome thing! it moved the ball, and made the abortive attempt count as a stroke.

The adversaries shouted, and the striker stood still; but Oliver rushed to the rescue. By turns appealing, quoting, arguing, he maintained his position till all had gathered round; and the merry voices rose and fell by turns, interspersed with soft and pleasant laughter.

So gay they seemed that "It is a nuisance to be out of it altogether," reflected the elder brother, morosely. "Makes a fellow feel rather small."

Then he essayed to explain to Eleanour how it came to pass that he was so ignorant. "I have not been in this country for six years; and though I have heard of this, I never came across any people who played."

"You will find a rage for it everywhere this summer."

"Oh, I shall play, I suppose; I shall get into it by-and-by. Are you a great hand?"

"I? Oh no," said Eleanour, with a faint smile; "I know no more of it than you do."

Unexpected consolation; he raised himself on his elbow to look into her face. "You don't say so?"

"I like to come here while they are playing, and listen to their voices, and have them all about me," continued the elder sister, in her hen-motherly fashion, "It makes a pretty sight; and it is such good exercise for the girls, too."

"Meantime you read."

"Yes."

"May I look? Coleridge. That's odd."

"Odd!" said Eleanour, warmly. "Odd, to read Coleridge!"

"Odd that you should be reading the 'Ancient Mariner,' just when I was feeling myself to be like him."

"Oh—? Indeed—?"

"Behindhand with the world. Not 'in it,' as they say on the turf. Rather a fool, you know."

"Because you cannot play croquet?"

"Pshaw!" said Anthony, shortly. "You will find there are other things I cannot do besides that."

"And do you really mind?"

"I am not sure if I do, or not. I hate the thing; but you see if all the rest are at it—." She thought she understood, and was not ill-pleased.

Naturally he did not enjoy being left out in the cold; and she did her best to restore his self-complacency under the ordeal; and then at last Puss and Dot were tired of being umpires, and came to join the idlers. That did better, and they all went into the house shortly, and candles were brought, and there was music.

It was evident that Oliver was destined to shine as much at the piano as on the lawn. Cecil, who had enjoyed her croquet, being as good a player as any, now retreated to the sofa and the society of her father-in-law, but Oliver was again in the front ranks of the performers. He had a sweet, rich voice, the very voice to go with Kate's clear soprano, and duets were chosen.

"Awfully nice, is it not?" said Anthony, presently; but somehow he did not look as though he found it so; he was frowning and silent, and the cheek which he rested against the soft cushion of his chair, was turned from the singers.

"I say," called his brother, probably in obedience to a suggestion, "Anthony come and take a part."

"Take a part? No thank you, I can't."

Take a part indeed! He had never taken a part in his life! Talk of taking "a part" as coolly as though it were taking a header or a fence!

He laughed, but his laughter was rather unmirthful; and there was a momentary silence.

"It is a pity," said Cecil to herself; "but, to be sure he can listen;—and really one can enjoy and admire, too, a great deal better when one has nothing else to do, than when one has one's own business to attend to. Kate is in capital voice; and they are all four looking their best."

"Is it not delightful, Anthony?"

"Oh, delightful!"

"Don't you like being sung to?"

"Awfully."

But why, if he did, did he rise the next minute, and throw himself half out of the open window beside which Eleanour sat, just behind a silver streak of moonlight? He was not thinking that he liked being sung to. If fancy his meditations were rather of this sort: "What an ass a fellow makes of himself when he can't do anything to help of an evening! If it is to be always like this when I go anywhere, I had better stay at home. This girl, this widow, is laughing at me in her sleeve, I suppose. My ill-luck has sent me her way again. I did not see her till it was too late."

He was surprised that she did not address him; that he was let alone to choose his own entertainment; and by-and-by he could even feel inclined to enjoy the beauties of the scene without. A full moon was reflected in the water of the bay; was lighting up the innumerable her-ring-boats, whose brown sails were stretched motionless to dry; and was every now and then shedding its beams upon a rocky promontory or islet which would for the moment stand out from the darkness of the land shadow, and become the central glory of the picture.

It was beautiful, it was delightful. He bethought himself of other such scenes he had witnessed,—of nights beneath the starry skies of Egypt, or amid the gorgeous forests of Cashmere,—of the peace of great wildernesses, and the solemn stillness of mid-ocean. In a pause of his reverie came the clash of a chorus from within,—and it sounded a discord intolerable.

Involuntarily he turned to frown; so did Eleanour; and their eyes met. "Jove, she has a fine pair!" cried Anthony to himself. But as she was star-gazing also, they did not interrupt each other—they did not even exchange a passing comment.

By-and-by, however, Cecil took her naughty boy to task. "You might at least have paid the girls the compliment of thanking them, though you would not listen, my dear brother."

"What should I thank them for?"

"Their singing, of course?"

"They did not sing to please me;—and I would very much rather they had not sung at all. It spoils my evening."

"What did you want to do?"

"Nothing,—watch the moon."

"I saw you; but that is Eleanour's prerogative, poor dear. She won't be grateful to you for disturbing her."

"I did not disturb her;—and she did not disturb me."

"No; you appeared to hold no communication. But still, I do assure you, she would prefer your going off with the others."

"But if the others go off without me?"

"Oh, now," thought she, "I understand." But she must really find out something that he could do. Even of shooting he owned that he could have enough, and so far well; but it

was asked, that he should be absolutely unable to take part in anything else.

Oliver was so clever, so handy, such a favorite, that it really was almost a pity, that he should have no Blatchworth to make it possible for him to be come a favourite to any purpose. He would, to be sure, have been puzzled which fair one to besiege, such was his devotion to all; Kate sang his songs, Julia used his pencils, Puss wore his cricket-ribbon, and Dot played with his mallet; but that difficulty could have been overcome; and for a penniless younger son who could do no more, he was certainly right to mete out his attentions with such admirable impartiality. Why with half his susceptibility, was he not Anthony; or why could Anthony not catch a spark from the flame? So cold, or so cautious, which was it?

"Quite anti-matrimonial, any way," said Alexander, rubbing his hands in the plenitude of his satisfaction. "Your plans have come to naught, Cecil; and since it is so, I may say, I suppose, that I for one am not sorry. Not but what I like your brother. He is a queer fellow, and no trouble at all in a house; but I should not have cared for people to have had the chance of saying we had him here in order to knock up a match."

He had thought of this too late. Had it occurred to him sooner it would, he now reflected have been an unanswerable reason for excluding Anthony from Crichton. However, it was as well, perhaps, after all that the thing should have been got over. Cecil would have given him no peace; and, as matters had turned out, he was not sorry on the whole that she should be quieted so effectually. Nothing but this brother's presence and indifference would have knocked her care for his welfare on the head; but now she would, perhaps, see that he might be trusted to look after it for himself.

Neither did his guests annoy him. The rattle of Oliver was harmless; and so far from Anthony's engrossing the conversation, he needed to be drawn out to make him talk.

"Eleanour is the only one who can do it," continued Alexander, having remarked on this wise to his wife. "He shirks the others, I think. He is over there now,"—it was in the afternoon,—"and they are all four gone off riding with Noll."

"Where is he, then?"

"Reading to Eleanour under a tree."

"Reading to Eleanour," said Cecil, laughing.

"Well it is a good thing he has Eleanour to read to. The girls would not listen to that sort of thing for a moment. And what was he reading?"

"Oh, by George, you don't expect me to tell you that?"

"Did you not go to them?"

"Not I. I walked past, and they never saw me. I was right under their noses."

"They would think you very rude, I am afraid."

"Nonsense! How could they think me rude when I tell you they never saw me? Now, come out yourself; you and I won't waste so fine a day reading under trees, anyway."

Anthony had explained it all satisfactorily on his first appearance at the Castle. He never rode when he could walk; he had walked over to keep his brother company; and now, might he stay?

"Yes, I got him here," added Oliver, triumphantly; "but he is too lazy to go back. Pray be merciful, and don't turn him from the door."

It was quite a good thing that Eleanour was at home, for now they felt no difficulty about all the other sisters going for the ride; and all four were equipped and waiting, never having dreamed of Anthony's paying a visit that day.

Eleanour was going to sit under the oaks. He thought she would; he knew it was her favourite seat; and if he would not be in her way, if he would not disturb her, he had something in his pocket, he was very anxious to—to—. He was awfully ashamed of himself; he was afraid it would only bore her. She thought she was never to find out what was the meaning of such stammering and blushes.

At last, however, all was plain. A packet was produced, and it appeared that it contained an original manuscript; something he had once written, scarcely with a view to publication, more as a vent for his own ideas on the subject, than for any other purpose. Still he yearned for an opinion on its merits, and hers was the first he had ever been able to make up his mind to seek.

She could not but be flattered, interested, eager, now that she understood the honour bestowed on her. What would it prove? Would it be good? Would it be worthy her praise? Would it be worthy of more than hers?

All alacrity and expectation she gave her assent, and threw herself on the turf to listen. How now? Where is flown the austere, stately Eleanour, whose measured tread appeals the timid stranger, and whose calm serenity rebukes the frivolous? The abandon of the movement, the flash of her eye have transfigured Anthony's auditor; and none of this is lost on him. He finds in the moment a wondrous fascination. He experiences a strange charm in making this companion the first recipient of his hidden delights. They have soled him in his rough hut on the prairies, and accompanied him to his hammock on the broad ocean; escaped perils by sea and land; but never been submitted to mortal eye or ear, till now.

Of all people in the world, he is the least likely to be suspected of such pursuits. Why, he cannot even act a charade, or bellow a chorus? Why, Oliver has done more than one neat little