

KNITTING.

Knitting gaily in the sunshine,
While the fragrant roses blow,
And the light wind stirs the petals
Till they fall like daisies snow;
Laughing gladly, glancing shyly,
At the lover by her side—
Saucy dimples, coy confessions,
All the maiden's love and pride;
Weaving in with skilful fingers
Of pink fancies, pure desires,
While the brightness of the future
Flashes through the twinkling wires;
And a young heart's fond ambitions,
Ten-fold hopes and golden dreams,
Deepen as the sunlight deepens,
With its thousand darts and gleams.

Knitting silent in the shadows,
With a drooping, weary head,
Gazing out into the twilight,
Whence the life and light have fled;
Moving nerveless, languid fingers,
Striving to be bright in vain,
And to still the heart's wild flutter,
Throbbing in its mighty pain;
Working through the silky texture
All a woman's sighs and fears,
Looking out on past and future
Through a mist of burning tears.
Knitting patient in the twilight,
Quiet bearing all her woe,
While the roses shed their petals
In a fragrant summer snow.

Knitting fiercely, in the anguish
Of a burning, fiery strife;
Or quietly in the sunlight
Of a calm heart's happy life,
Knitting bravely and slowly,
In life's last fatal hours;
Or skilfully and gayly,
Among the summer flowers,
Weaving in a glorious future,
Or a soul's dumb aching pain,
With the memory of pleasures
That will never come again.

Thus a woman's life is bounded
By the humble daily task,
Mocking taking up her burden,
Tossing not to strive or ask,
Ah! how many hearts beside us,
Were we not so worldly-wise,
Might we see in gentle moments,
Looking out from wistful eyes,
And how often, did we listen,
To a gay and laughing tone,
Could we hear the bitter yearning
Of a strong heart's restless moan!

THE MISERERE.

A SPANISH LEGEND, FROM THE FRENCH OF G. BEQUER.

A short time ago I left the city of Seville to visit the celebrated monastery of Caserta. I was reading in the old library, when my attention was drawn to a number of sheets of music that lay in a corner of the room. Evidently the MS. was exceedingly old, for it was covered with dust and discolored and worn by the effects of dampness. On looking at it I discovered it was a *Miserere*. I am passionately fond of music, and, therefore, I examined the pages with great care. What especially struck me was the last page and the Latin word *Finis* written thereon, although the *Miserere* was not finished. My curiosity was still more excited from the strange fact that the Italian words which are always used to describe the manner in which a piece ought to be played, such as *andante*, *allegro*, *forte*, *ritardando*, etc., were not to be found, but in their stead strange annotations were placed, reading thus: "The bones rattled;" "cries of distress seemed to come out of the air;" "the strings shrieked without discord;" "bass trumpets sounded without deafening me;" "the instruments all played without confounding each other;" "it was humanity weeping." And stranger still were the following lines: "The species were bones covered with flesh—terrible flames—the harmony of heaven—strength and sweetness."

"What does this mean?" I asked a small old man who was accompanying me, as I finished reading the lines which had evidently been written by a madman. The old man then told me the following story:

Many years ago, on a dark and rainy night, a pilgrim came to the doors of this monastery, asking to be allowed to dry his clothes by the fire and for a piece of bread to still his hunger, and some place of shelter where he might await the dawn and then continue his way. A monk gave him food and a modest repast to the traveler, and then asked him whither he was bound and who he was.

"I am a musician," replied the pilgrim. "I was born far from here and I have enjoyed a great renown. In my youth I made of my art a powerful arm of fascination; it gave birth to passions which finally led me to crime. I now wish, in my old age, to consecrate to good things the talents I have hitherto used for evil, and thus obtain pardon."

The monk, having his curiosity excited, asked him several questions, and the musician continued thus:

"I wept in the bottom of my heart over the crime I had committed. I could find no words worthy to express my repentance or in which to implore God's mercy, when one day, as I was turning over a holy book, my eyes were held by that sublime cry of contrition—the psalm of David beginning *Miserere mei Deus*. From that moment my sole thought was to discover a musical composition in which I desired should be so magnificent and sublime that it alone would be able rightly to interpret the grand and majestic hymn, the sorrow of the prophet king. I have not been able to compose it yet, but if I ever succeed in expressing the feelings of my heart, the ideas that consume my brain, I am sure I will write so marvellous a *Miserere*, so heartbreaking a grief that its like has never been heard since the world began, and that the archangels will cry with me, their eyes filled with tears, 'Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me!'"

The pilgrim remained thoughtful for some moments, then heaving a profound sigh, con-

tinued his story. The old man and two or three shepherds belonging to the monks' farm listened silently, gathered around the fire-light.

"After having travelled," continued he, "through Germany and Italy and a great part of this country of classical religious music, I have never yet heard a *Miserere* capable of inspiring me, and I am almost sure that I have heard all that exists."

"All?" interrupted a shepherd; "that is impossible, for you have never heard the *Miserere* of the mountain."

"The *Miserere* of the mountain," exclaimed the astonished musician. "What is that?"

"The *Miserere*," continued the shepherd, with an air of mystery, "that is only heard by shepherds who wander day and night over the mountains and valleys with their flocks and which has a history as true as it is astonishing. At the extremity of this valley, whose horizon is bound by a chain of mountains, may still be seen the ruins of a monastery that was very celebrated many long years ago. A great seigneur disinherited his son on account of his crimes, and had the edifice built from the proceeds of the sale of his lands. The son, who was as wicked as the arch-fiend, if, indeed, he was not the demon himself, seeing his fortune in the hands of monks, and his castle transformed into a church, placed himself at the head of a troop of bandits. One Holy Thursday night, at the very hour when the monks were chanting the *Miserere*, the bandits penetrated into the church, pilaged the monastery and set it on fire. The monks were all massacred or thrown from the rocky height. After this horrible exploit the bandits disappeared. The ruins of the church still exist in the hollow of the rock where the waterfall has its source, which, falling from rock to rock, finally forms the little river that runs beneath the walls of this monastery."

"But tell me about the *Miserere*," interrupted the impatient musician.

"Listen, I will soon have finished," the shepherd said, and he continued thus: "The crime terrified all the people about, they repeated the tale of the tragedy, which has come down to us by tradition. Old men tell the story over in the long winter nights. But what preserves its souvenir more vividly, is that every year on the night of the anniversary of the crime, lights are seen glimmering through the broken windows of the church; and a strange sort of mysterious music is heard, like dreadful funeral chants mingled with the wind's moaning. No doubt it is the massacred monks come from purgatory to implore Divine mercy, and they sing the *Miserere*."

"Does this miracle still occur?" asked the traveler.

"Yes, it will begin without the slightest doubt in three hours from now, for this is Holy Thursday night, and 8 o'clock has just struck on the monastery clock."

"How far away are the ruins?"

"An hour and a half from here. But what are you about? Where are you going on such a night as this?" cried they all, seeing the pilgrim rise, take his staff and go towards the door.

"Where am I going? To hear this mysterious and marvellous music, the grand, the true *Miserere* of those who return to earth after death and who know what it is to die in sin."

Saying this, he disappeared, to the great surprise of the monk and shepherds.

The wind howled and shook the doors, as though a strong hand was trying to wrench them from their hinges. The rain fell in torrents, beating against the windows, and from time to time a streak of lightning illuminated the darkness. The first moment of surprise passed, the monks exclaimed: "He is mad!" "He is surely mad!" echoed the shepherds, drawing nearer to the fire.

After walking an hour or two, the mysterious pilgrim, following the river's course, reached the spot where rose the imposing and sombre ruins of the monastery. The rain had ceased, clouds floated over the heavens, and athwart their broken outlines a fugitive ray of pale and trembling light shone: the wind beating against massive pillars, moaned sadly as it lost itself in the deserted cloisters. However, nothing superhuman or unnatural troubled the mind of him, who having lain many a night for shelter in the ruins of some deserted tower or solitary castle, was familiar with such sounds. Drops of water filtering through the crevices of the arches, fell on the large square stones beneath, sounding like the ticking of a clock. An owl that had taken refuge in a dilapidated niche, began to hoot, and reptiles, whom the tempest had awakened from their long lethargy, thrust their hideous heads out from the rocks, or glided amid the stunted shrubs that grew at the foot of the altar, and disappeared in the broken tombs. The pilgrim listened to all the mysterious and strange murmurs of the solitude and of night, and seated on the mutilated statue of a tomb, awaited with feverish anxiety for the hour of mystery to arrive.

Time sped on and he heard nothing save the confused and mingled murmurs of the night, which repeated themselves, though in a different manner, from minute to minute.

"Have I made a mistake?" the musician asked himself. But just then he heard a new noise, an inexplicable one for the place. It was like that which a large clock makes a few seconds before it strikes the hour—a noise of wheels turning, of ropes lengthening, of a machine beginning to work slowly. A bell rang once, twice,

thrice, and there was neither a bell, nor clock, nor even a belfry in the ruined church. The last stroke of the bell, whose echoes grew fainter and fainter, had not died away, its ultimate vibrations could still be heard, when the granite dais, covered with carvings, the marble steps of the altar, the sculptured stones, the black columns, the walls, the wreath of trefoil on the cornices, the pavement, the arches, the entire church was suddenly illuminated without a torch or lamp being visible to produce the strange light. Everything became animated, but with a sudden movement, like the muscular contractions which electricity applied to a dead body produces—movements which imitate life, but which are far more horrible than the stillness of a corpse. Stones joined themselves to other stones; the altars arose intact from their broken frame as strewn around, and at the same time the demolished chapels and the immense number of arches interlaced themselves, forming with their columns a veritable labyrinth.

The church being reconstructed, a distant harmony which might have been taken for the moaning of the wind was heard, but it was in reality a mingling of distant voices, solemn and sad, that seemed to rise from the bosom of the earth, and which became more and more distinct little by little.

The courageous pilgrim began to be alarmed, but his fanaticism for the mysterious warred against his fear. Becoming more calm, he rose from the tomb on which he had been resting and leaned over the edge of the abyss, whence the torrent leaping from rock to rock fell at length with a noise of continuous and dreadful thunder. The pilgrim's hair stood on end with horror.

He saw the skeletons of the monks half enveloped in the torn fragments of their gowns. Under the folds of their cowls the dark cavities of the orbits in their skulls contrasted with their fleshless jaws and their white teeth. The skeletons clambered with the aid of their long white hands up to the fissures of the rocks, till they reached the summit of the precipice, murmuring the while in a low and sepulchral voice, but with an expression of heart-rending grief, the first verse of David's psalm:

Miserere mei Deus secundum magnam misericordiam tuam.

Have mercy on me, my God, according to Thy great mercy.

When the music reached the peristyle of the church they formed themselves into procession and knelt in the choir, continuing in a louder and more solemn voice to chant the succeeding verses of the psalm. Music seemed to re-echo the rhythm of their voices. It was the distant rumble of thunder as it passed away; the voice of the night-wind that moaned in the hollows of the mountains; the monotonous sound of the cascade falling on the rocks, and the drop of filtering water, the hoot of the hidden owl and the coiling and uncoiling of the noisome reptiles. All this produced the strange music, and something more besides, which one could not explain or even language, a something which seemed like the echo of a whirlwind, that accompanied the repentant hymn of the psalmist king, with notes and harmonies as tremendous as its words.

The ceremony continued. The musician who was witnessing it believed in his terror that he had been transported far from this real world into that fantastic one of dreams, where all things have strange and phenomenal forms.

A terrible shock aroused him from the stupor of a lethargy, which had possessed all the faculties of his mind. His nerves were strongly agitated, his teeth chattered and he shivered with cold in the marrow of his bones. The monks chanted just at the moment, in a thundering voice, these terrible words of the *Miserere*:

In iniquitatibus conceptus sum et in peccatis concepit me mater mea.

I was conceived in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me.

When the echoes of this verse had resounded from archway to ceiling, a tremendous cry burst forth, a cry that seemed torn from entire humanity in the consciousness of its crimes—a heart-breaking cry, composed of all the lamentations of distress: all the groans of despair, all the blasphemies of impiety; the monstrous cry of those who live in sin and were conceived in iniquity.

The chant continued. Sometimes sad and deep, sometimes like a ray of sunlight piercing the solemn darkness of the storm. The church by a sudden transformation became illumined with a celestial light. The bones of the skeletons clothed themselves again with flesh. A luminous aureole shone around their brows. The cupola of the church was rent asunder, and heaven appeared like an ocean of light spread out before the eyes of the just. Then the seraphs, the angels and archangels, all the heavenly hierarchy, sang this verse in a hymn of glory, which arose to the Lord's throne like a wave of harmony—like a gigantic spiral of sonorous incense:

Audite mei dabit gaudium et letitiam et exultabunt ossa humiliata.

Thou shalt make me hear of joy and gladness; and the bones that were humbled shall rejoice.

The shining light suddenly blinded the eyes of the unhappy mortal. His temples throbbed violently. His ears rang and he felt like one struck down by lightning.

The next day at sunrise, the monks of this monastery received the mysterious stranger,

who came pale, trembling and with haggard eyes.

"And the *Miserere*, did you hear it?" an old monk asked, smiling ironically.

"Yes," replied the musician.

"How did you like it?"

"I am going to write it. Give me," said he, addressing the superior, "shelter and bread for a few months, and I will leave you an immortal *chef d'œuvre* of my art—a *Miserere* that will efface my crimes before God's eyes, and which will render my name as old that of the monastery immortal."

The superior, thinking him mad, consented, and the musician was installed in a cell and began his task.

He worked day and night with an extraordinary anxiety. He would stop sometimes as though he were listening to sounds coming from invisible objects. His eyes would dilate and he would cry out: "That is it * * * thus * * * no longer any doubt * * * this, this is well;" and he would continue writing musical notes with a feverish rapidity. He wrote the first verses and the following ones, but when he came to the last verse he had heard he could go no further. He wrote for two, three, perhaps a hundred minutes; but all was useless. He could not repeat the marvellous heavenly music; and so sleep fled from his eyes, he lost all appetite, fever took possession of his brain and he became mad.

At last he expired without being able to finish the *Miserere*, which the monks kept after his death, and which still exists in the archives of the monastery, as you have seen to-day.

LITERARY.

THE historian, Francis Parkman, is on his way to Cape Breton to study the Louisbourg ruins. He is gathering materials for a life of Montcalm.

M. RENAN, the author, is not remarkable in appearance, except that he has a kind, genial smile, brilliant and sharp eyes, and an unaffected courtesy.

A RUSSIAN physician, M. Malarevsky, struck by the prevalence of shortsightedness among literary men, proposes that books should be printed in white ink on black paper, and he has made experiments with 50 persons, which tend to confirm his view.

ROBERT BURNS, grandson of the poet Burns, died in Moorhead's Hospital, Dumfries, recently. He resembled the poet in face and figure, and, curiously enough, was married to a Mary Campbell, the name of the poet's "Highland Mary." For many years he taught a humble school in Dumfries, and in the latter portion of his life was in the most straitened circumstances.

WHEN Longfellow visited Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle, the servants crowded on the stairways and in the lobbies to get a view of him. On the Queen asking them, next day, why this compliment was paid to the poet, she was told that they used to listen to Prince Albert reading "Evangeline" to the children, and knowing the lines nearly by heart, they longed to see the man who wrote them. The Queen is fond of telling this story.

ROUND THE DOMINION.

IN point of paid-up capital and reserve fund the Bank of Montreal is the third largest bank in the world.

MR. FORD, of the Canadian Geological Survey, is in Windsor, N.S., prospecting limestone quarries, and has secured some very fine specimens.

A JOINT stock company has just been formed at Liverpool, N.S., to engage in the boot, shoe and rubber business extensively, wholesale and retail, with a capital stock of \$40,000.

MESSRS. R. H. HAY & Co., the celebrated furniture manufacturers, have just completed a magnificent dining-room suite for Mr. M. T. Bass, M.P., of Burton-on-Trent, England.

PARTIES are actively at work on the Galena gold lead near Mill Village, Queen's County, N.S. It is said a quantity of ore has been tested and yielded an equivalent to \$12.65 per ton.

THE Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec took possession of Spencer Wood on the 1st September. Up to then he remained at the St. Louis Hotel, where he gave a series of dinners to the members of both Houses and the press.

THE inhabitants of Quebec have just had an opportunity of beholding a sight which has not been seen since the conquest of Canada—a French and British flagship and their attendant frigates in the harbour. At the epoch of the siege, the respective fleets were arrayed in hostile view. Now they meet on the river St. Lawrence as friends.

THE Philadelphia Presbyterian says:—"From Toronto to Montreal is the most interesting water-course on the continent. We hear the beauties of our own Hudson too-often dilated upon; but they are tame compared to the decorated boundary line between us and our neighbours of the Dominion."

THE present crop in Ontario is said to be the largest that has ever been reaped there, without any exception. In most cases the yield per acre is found to be between 30 and 40 bushels per acre, while in other cases it is even higher. An instance is given in a Hamilton paper in which the enormous yield of 47 bushels to the acre is reported.