

## A FEW DAYS.

Just a few days! Ah, such a few  
Since the summer moon watched me and you,  
As we loitered along the golden sand,  
Heart in hand and hand in hand;  
And the waves in eternal ebb and flow  
Chimed to your sweet words, soft and low  
Ah me! such a few little days ago.

Just a few days! The wooing breeze  
Swept softly over the sleeping seas,  
Whispering, whispering hope and truth,  
In the happy language love teaches youth;  
Which the tiny wavelets seemed to know,  
As they broke at the feet that lingered slow  
At their marge a few little days ago.

Just a few days! And to-night I stood  
Alone at the edge of the rising flood;  
There was not a murmur of joy for me  
In the angry moan of the rising sea;  
There was but a menace, stern and low,  
Speaking of treachery, loss, and woe,  
All wrought since a few little days ago.

S. K. PHILLIPS.

(For the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.)

## LUCREZIA BORGIA.

A REMINISCENCE OF GRAND OPERA.

I

It is the palace of the Grimani at Venice, beautiful Venice, the Bride of the Sea. A gorgeous festival is going on by night. The terrace and the palace are illuminated. Masks flit among the shrubbery. At the back, gleams the canal of the Giudecca, on which gondolas skin darkling at intervals. A number of young cavaliers in the service of the Republic, Gazella, Petrucci, Vitellozzo, Liverotto, Orsini and Gennaro, are attached to the suite of Grimani who is about to start on an embassy to the court of Ferrara, and who gives this festival at his palace to celebrate his departure. The reigning Duke of Ferrara is Don Alfonso d'Este, and his Duchess is the famed Lucrezia Borgia. The young cavaliers are out upon the terrace. They descend on the glories of their country, on the pleasures of their embassy. But while praising the splendors of the court of Ferrara to which they are repairing, they all unite in horror and dread of the Borgia. Orsini is particularly eloquent on this theme. All listen to him intently except Gennaro, who wraps his mantle round him, turns on his side and falls asleep. The music of the dance strikes upon the ear. The young men retire, leaving Gennaro alone.

A gondola passes, and lands at the foot of the terrace. A masked lady steps out of it. She advances cautiously, sees Gennaro asleep, approaches and remains gazing upon him with pleasure and awe. It is Lucrezia Borgia! She has just arrived on a secret visit to Venice, accompanied only by one Gubetta, a Spaniard. Standing over the slumbering form of Gennaro, she bursts out in that immortal song *Com'è bello*. The beauty of the sleeping cavalier fills her soul, she wants to awaken him, to speak to him, but she dares not. At length, however, driven by her passion, she stoops and kisses the hand of Gennaro. He awakes and detains her by the arm. Frightened, she endeavors to break from him, but he holds her fervidly and pours his love into her ear, for he too is fascinated by her transcendent beauty. They converse. But in the course of their dialogue, Gennaro confesses that, before everything else, his heart is set upon his mother whom he never knew and about whose history there lies the shadow of a great mystery. Lucrezia, more and more interested, entreats him to relate the sad story. He does so in the beautiful song, *Di pescatore ignobile*, so well-known in English as: *Make me no Gaudy Chaplet*. The burden is as follows: "I believed I was born of fishermen parents, and I lived with them in the lowly huts of the Neapolitan shore, during the first years of my childhood. But one day, an unknown knight drew me out of my error. He gave me arms and a steed and left a screech in my hands. It was penned by my mother. She told me of the fate to which she had fallen a victim, said she trembled, day and night, for herself and for me and begged me never to reveal her name. I have obeyed her." Lucrezia is deeply moved at the recital, and passionately urges him to love that mother; *ami tua madre*.

O, with the fervent soul of youth,  
Ever adore thy mother,  
Pray that her fate may be averted  
And changed into another;  
Pray for the day her longing kiss  
Welcomes thee on her breast.

The tender interview is interrupted. Ladies and cavaliers in masks approach from different parts. Among them is Orsini, who recognizes Lucrezia Borgia. And no wonder. At a banquet, she stabbed the brother of his mother and poisoned his own brother Vitelli while he was sleeping. The scene of revelation that follows is terrible. Lucrezia is cowed under the accusation of Orsini, not so much through dread of him, but because she fears to lose the love of Gennaro. She tears off her mask, throws herself at the latter's feet, and with the cry of horror from the lips of all the throng, she faints away.

II.

It is a public place in Ferrara. On one side, a palace with a gallery, and under it an escutcheon of marble, on which is written, in visible characters of gilt metal, the one word BORGIA. On the other side, a small house, the windows of which are illuminated from within. The time is night. The Duke of Ferrara and his attendant, Rustighello, walk up and down in front of the palace. Jealousy gnaws the heart of the Duke. He believes that the Duchess is in love with Gennaro. Shaking his sword at the lighted windows of the

small house opposite, where Gennaro resides, he proclaims his vengeance in a tempest of song. Rustighello goads his wrath, and their plans are all prepared when the lights are suddenly extinguished in the house of Gennaro, and the young cavaliers issue gaily into the square. Then the Duke and Rustighello retire. The youths fill the square with their badinage. Noticing that Gennaro is a little thoughtful, they make him the butt of their merriment. At length, Liverotto goes so far as to say that Gennaro is in love with Lucrezia. The latter flares up at once.

"Signors," he exclaims, "I swear to heaven that I will endure no bantering. The man does not live who abhors the she fiend more than I do."

"Be silent," whispered Petrucci; "yonder stands her palace."

"In that case my action will suit my words."

Gennaro then ascends a flight of stairs leading to the escutcheon and with his dagger strikes out the first letter of the name BORGIA.

"Now read the inscription," he cries.

And they read ORGIA!

After which escapade Gennaro retires to his dwelling and his companions disperse.

Outraged beyond measure at the insult offered to her name, the Duchess of Ferrara extorts an oath from her husband promising the immediate capital punishment of the culprit. The culprit is produced at once, having been already arrested by the minions of the Duke for his supposed attachment to the Duchess. The Duke and Lucrezia mount the chair of judgment, the criminal is ushered into their presence, and, when the Duchess recognizes him, she is seized with consternation. She pleads for him, thus increasing her husband's suspicions, but she pleads in vain, because, upon being interrogated, Gennaro bravely confesses having mutilated the Ducal escutcheon. He is led into a guard room while the deliberations proceed, and Lucrezia seizes the opportunity to press his suit with her Lord, but it is in vain. The beautiful tigress then turns to threats.

Aye, 'tho' the fourth of my husbands ye lord it,  
Don Alfonso, too stercorally, I tell thee  
They that have wronged me have ever deplored it.  
And they that will slight me can ne'er shun my fury.  
All thy malice I scorn with derision,  
Know that thou hast with the Borgia to deal,  
Wary, wary, Alfonso, be wary  
Know that thou hast with the Borgia to deal.

But the Duke is inexorable. He leaves her the dread alternative of seeing Gennaro die by the sword of his agent Rustighello at once before her eyes, or of administering with her own hand the famous Borgia wine, a fearful and most deadly poison. Driven to despair, Lucrezia accepts the latter proposition. The prisoner is brought back into the presence and is made to believe that he is to drink a parting cup with the Duke and then be liberated. A silver is fetched on which are two vessels, one of silver, the other of gold, and two cups. The Duke helps himself out of the silver vessel, Lucrezia pours out to Gennaro from the golden vase. Sure of his victim, the Duke then leaves Lucrezia to reveal to him the horrible snare into which he has fallen, when, in her agony, she remembers having upon her person the only known antidote to the fatal draught. This she forces the half-maddened Gennaro to drink, and gives him means to escape from the palace.

III.

It is the Negroni Palace at Ferrara, brilliantly illuminated and decorated. On a table covered with rare luxuries and flowers, the Princess Negroni is seated, surrounded by her ladies of honor. All the young Venetian envoys are present and Gennaro among them. It was a fatal imprudence on his part. Restored to life and health again, he should have left the city forthwith, being pursued by the Duke, but he allows himself to be persuaded by his friend Orsini to accept an engagement at the banquet of the young and wealthy Princess Negroni. He, therefore, consents to postpone his departure till the morrow, not, however, without many misgivings and forebodings. The festival is splendid, but it is doomed to have a terrible termination. In the midst of the general merriment a quarrel arises between Orsini and Gubetta; rapiers and daggers are brandished aloft. The ladies fly like frightened doves. A temporary lull ensues, during which Orsini sings the rollicking song which Alboni has made memorable for ever. Holding his goblet in air, he intones *Il segreto per esser felice*.

O the secret of bliss in perfection  
Is never to raise an objection  
Whether winter hangs tears on the bushes,  
Or the summer kiss decks them in blushes;  
Drink and pity the fool who on sorrow  
Ever wastes the pale shade of a thought,  
Never hope for one jot from the morrow,  
Save a new day of joy by it brought.

All drink, except the spy Gubetta, who empties his goblet over his shoulder, but the bout is suddenly interrupted by the distant sound of a funeral bell and voices chanting in a doleful tone:

La gioja de' profani  
E un fumo passegger.

The joy of the sinner  
Is a smoke that passes.

The lights of the banquet-hall begin to turn blue and gradually pale, and a procession of Capucin monks files in. The revellers begin to tremble, but their horror is at its height when, on the threshold of the hall, attended by armed men, they behold—Lucrezia Borgia.

"We are lost!" is the general cry.

"Yes, I am the Borgia!"

un ballo, un tristo ballo  
Voi mi deste in Venezia; io rendo a voi  
Una oena in Ferrara.

"A ball, a sorry ball you gave me in Venice. In return I give you a supper in Ferrara.—You are all poisoned!" The monks draw aside, and in an inner room five coffins are seen standing ready against the wall for Orsini and his four companions.

"A sixth for me!" exclaims Gennaro.

To her horror and amazement, Lucrezia discovers that he whom she had once saved, and whom she believed safely away from Ferrara, had fallen again a victim to her arts. Clearing the room, she remains alone with him and offers him the antidote once more. He refuses it because he cannot divide it with his friends. He, therefore, determines to die, first bidding the lovely woman before him to prepare for immediate death at his hands. Horror-stricken, Lucrezia warns him off with the words:

"Thou art a Borgia. My fathers are thy fathers!"

Gennaro is astounded and asks for more revelations. As life is fast ebbing, Lucrezia confesses that she is his mother. The work of the poison is culminating. Gennaro cowers his face and sobbing in grief and love, expires. Lucrezia throws herself upon his prostrate form and when the Duke Alfonso, followed by his guards, appears at the central door, he finds mother and son clasped in each other's embrace—dead!

J. L.

## FOOT NOTES.

EVERY species of snake may be permanently driven away from an infested place by planting geraniums.

MOUNTAINEERING is rapidly becoming fashionable in France. The French Alpine Club now comprises 850 members.

Albert Smith's famed talking-fish has been equalled by one of the elephants in the Paris Jardin des Plantes, which has been taught to articulate "Papa" most distinctly with its trunk.

THE Duchess of Edinburgh is an accomplished linguist. It is said that at her imperial father's court, she was able to speak with all the foreign ambassadors, except the Turkish, in their own language.

A REGATTA by electric light formed part of the rejoicings on the occasion of the late visit of the Emperor of Austria to one of the Italian sea-coast towns. The idea might be brought into use in British and Canadian waters.

THE prospects of the Volunteer season in England, this year are, it is stated, financially rosy. There is estimated to be something over £30,000 offered in prizes at the various metropolitan and provincial meetings. How about Canada?

RECENTLY in an English theatre, the stage manager struck a supernumerary who had exasperated him behind the scenes, whereupon the supernumerary came before the footlights and formally announced to the audience that he had resigned.

APPROPOS of the Pope's pungent sayings at an audience, a few days ago, when some persons remained silent when he addressed them, and standing when they should have knelt, he said, smiling, "The last addition of statues to the Vatican collection," and passed on.

THE closing of the Café Procope, in the Rue de l'Ancienne-Comédie, the oldest establishment of the kind in Paris, and once the resort of Voltaire and the literary celebrities of his day, was announced some months since. The Café has just been reopened, however, in a very brilliant condition.

THE sensation among the fashionable loungers of Cheltenham this season is a young German lady of tender years, who drives in a toy dog-cart a pair of very handsome and spirited ponies, tandem. This little lady is a most accomplished whip, and her noval equipage excites much attention.

THE death is announced of the father of English Chess players, Mr. Samuel Newham, who expired some days ago at his residence in Nottingham, at the ripe age of 83. The deceased gentleman was at one time the strongest provincial player, and in 1851 he took part in the great International Tournament, where he had the ill-luck of meeting in the first round one of the strongest opponents, the great Hungarian Szent, by whom he was thrown out from further competition.

A DISCOVERY of treasure has just been made at Courbevoie, near Paris. A labourer, while digging the foundation of a wall in Avenue de St. Denis, near the site of a former convent of Ursulines, found at the depth of about a foot below the floor of a cellar, two small boxes, one containing 79 gold pieces of 48 livres, bearing the image of Louis XV., and the other 587 silver coins of six livres, of the same and following reigns, the whole forming a value of about 7,000 francs, to the half of which the finder is entitled.

ANGLO-INDIANS are generally exercised about the kind of reception which they ought to give to the Prince of Wales. They are saying that it would be awkward if he were to go out as the representative of the Queen, since in that case he would take precedence of the Viceroy, and that this, so far as politics and the administration of Government are concerned, would be hardly desirable. The truth is, he will go out as a Prince, just as the Duke of Edinburgh did before, as naturally the future Emperor of Hindostan.

## RACHEL AND THE QUEEN.

Lucy Hooper, in a Paris letter to *Appleton's Journal*, says: I was recently presented to a gentleman who was for years the French tutor of the Prince of Wales, and who is still held in great friendship and affection by his quondam pupil, who never comes to Paris without inviting him to dinner or to pass the day with him. This gentleman, whom I shall call M. X—, owed his appointment to his post as tutor to the prince to a rather curious circumstance. When Rachel first made her appearance in London it was in the days of her youth, when she was as renowned for the purity of her conduct as for the greatness of her genius. Consequently Queen Victoria, who in those days was young and gay, and very fond of the theatre, not only appeared continually in her box at the French Theatre, and commanded a private representation of one of Mademoiselle Rachel's leading characters at the palace, but invited the gifted tragedienne to one of her private entertainments, and presented her with a bracelet bearing the inscription, "Victoria to Rachel." The next season, when the French company returned, the Queen, who, meanwhile, had heard sundry reports derogatory to the private reputation of Mademoiselle Rachel, no longer bestowed upon her such marked favor, nor did she invite her to any of the royal entertainments. She commanded, however, a private reading, at which one of Racine's tragedies was to be declaimed by Mademoiselle Rachel. Piqued and indignant, the haughty actress took her revenge by sending word, and at the last moment, when all the guests were assembled, that she was too ill and hoarse to read. What was to be done? Everything was ready for the reading save the reader, and who could supply her place? In this dilemma a lady came forward who informed the Queen that she was acquainted with a French gentleman who was a professor in one of the London colleges, who read beautifully, and who would be happy to take the place of the recalcitrant actress. M. X— was sent for; he came, read the play to perfection, and so charmed her Majesty by the purity of his French, the graces of his diction, and the charm of his manners, that he was at once appointed French tutor to the Prince of Wales and Prince Alfred, the present Duke of Edinburgh. M. X— is a perfect specimen of an old French gentleman, refined, courteous, and agreeable, and (rare accomplishment for a Frenchman) he speaks English almost as well as he does his native tongue.

## LITERARY.

THE *Temps* announces that another batch of letters by Mérimée to a second "Inconnue" has been discovered, and will shortly be published.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON attends Boston receptions, at which he reads his lectures and answers questions put by his admirers.

THE Emperor William has conferred the order of Civil Merit on Hon. Geo. Bancroft, historian, and Hy. W. Lounfellow, poet.

IN June will appear General Ducrot's book, "La Défense de Paris," which is likely to produce a considerable sensation, as it will give the causes of the capitulation of 1871.

THE proprietor of the Paris *Figaro*, bankrupt in 1835 and in 1844, has just paid his debts with interest to all the creditors he can find, and is advertising for the others.

PRINCE AMADEO of Italy is occupied in writing the history of his reign in Spain. The title of his work will be "Recollections of a King." The Princess Marie is assisting her husband.

MR. TENNYSON has, at last, sent to the press the drama which he has had so long on hand. It will be published shortly by Messrs. H. K. King and Co. It is entitled "Queen Mary: a drama," and embraces the life of Mary Tudor from her accession to her death, together with the chief scenes in her reign.

A CORRESPONDENT, writing from Paris, states that all the copies of the first edition of the French translation, published by Messrs. Hachette, of "Young Brown" ("Le Jeune Brown"), a novel published in London some months ago, have been bought up by order of Prince Bismarck, and despatched to Germany.

IN the Royal Library at Berlin a collection has been formed of books, newspapers, paintings, sketches, and sculpture relating to the Franco-Prussian war. It is amusing to learn that a place has been found among the volumes included in the collection for "The Battle of Dorking."

IT is proposed to calendar and publish the records of the Scotch Privy Council from the beginning of Queen Mary's reign down to the union. These records have hitherto been practically inaccessible, and it is expected that their publication will throw much new light on some of the most interesting periods of Scotch history.

A LITERARY treasure is to be seen at Scribner's store, N.Y.: the Hon. Wm. B. Reed's own copy of their print of his *Blackwood's* memorial of the Thackerays, "Haud Immemor." It includes the originals of the letters there given—which readers will remember from the Bric-a-brac book—including Thackeray's amusing "blubbing" letter on his sudden departure for home, a long epistle on the margin of which is one of the most characteristic sketches, the letter of Miss Anne Thackeray to Mr. Reed, and others.

MR. J. W. BOUTON, a book importer of New York, has recently sold a Bible, in the preparation of which Mr. James Gibbs of London, passed the greater part of his lifetime. This remarkable book contains the entire text of three or four rare editions of the Bible, and consists of sixty volumes. The text is carefully inlaid and illustrated by the insertion of upwards of thirty thousand plates, original drawings in oil, water colour, and pencil, specimens of early printed, rare, or curious Bible etchings, engravings on steel and copper, and mezzotints. The book, which is a library in itself, was sold for ten thousand dollars to a private collector in that State.