

(For the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.)

FORSAKEN.

The pleasant shadows lightly move
Upon the grass the winds caress,
The happy birds rejoice of love
Amid the leafy loveliness;
All nature seems content and blest,
I only pray to God for rest.

The river trembles with its light!
And puris with many a peaceful smile,
Until its glances seem as bright
As happy looks devoid of guile,
I gaze upon its tranquil breast,
Yearning to heaven for peace and rest.

The shadows gather round my eyes,
The soft air kiss my weary face,
And nature's choral harmonies
In dreary sounds sweep o'er the place
To reach my soul, that cries oppress
To heaven to give it peace and rest.

Kiss me O winds—you calm my thought,
Carol O birds—you ease my soul,
You know not how my life has wrought
Its wretchedness upon time's scroll;
So now, its horror is confessed,
O let me pray to heaven for rest.

Tossed helpless on the sinful earth,
Unsheltered, homeless and alone,
With none to watch thought's early birth,
And none to claim me as their own;
No wonder that my footsteps prest
Where sin usurps the throne of rest.

Regulged and tempted, won and lost,
Diviner instincts crushed and torn,
Like a wretched flower by storm winds tossed,
Of all its perfect beauty shorn;
I stumbled in the frantic quest
Of maddening joys that give no rest.

I see beyond the river's banks,
The lightsome skiffs that dot the tide,
A child who laughs at its own pranks,
The stately-plumaged swans that glide
Demurely o'er its placid breast,
While I may only yearn for rest.

O could its waters wash the stain
From the dread past, that comes to me
To lacerate my aching brain,
To scare me with its misery,
Until its awful glooms infect
My life and rob it of its rest.

O let me pluck the tender grass;
The tufts are not so madly torn,
As the bruised hours that I could mass,
With all their wealth and beauty shorn;
For life is but a hollow jest,
Despoiled of love—unsought by rest.

O save me from the flaming street,
Where flaunting Vice disturbs the night!
And take me where the winds are sweet,
And let me watch the mellow light
Burning and fading in the west,
While I may pray to God for rest.

The rays that melt—the calms that hush—
The tints that gladden—the shades that fall—
Dear glimpses of the beautiful!
My spirit yearns to woo them all,
Until of all their peace possess
My burdened soul may cry for rest.

ISIDORE G. ASCHER.

London, May, 1876.

ESTELLE'S SLEEP WALK.

I.

The public of—cannot boast of much experience in Italian opera. The little that has been exhibited there has generally been of an inferior character—worn voices, grumpy stage machinery, and wholly inadequate resources of orchestration. Lovers of music, however—and they are very numerous in the city—have not failed to throng the theatres whenever the opportunity was offered of hearing the works of the great masters. They willingly overlooked the faultiness of details, for the sake of getting an idea of the whole, and being able to boast that they had spent a few hours under the spell of such geniuses as Rossini, Donizetti, or Bellini.

Some years ago, a company performed there with rather more than ordinary success. In their repertory was included *La Sonnambula*, in which the role of Amina was unusually well rendered by a charming young actress from Naples.

The master-piece of poor Bellini had already been represented a couple of times during the week, but the public insisted on a third repetition, for the benefit of the young cantatrice above mentioned. That night the theatre was crowded from pit to dome. I had secured a box entirely to myself, being on such occasions constitutionally averse to any company, however pleasant, that might distract me from an absorbing attention to the glorious music. I was not destined, however, to have this selfish enjoyment that evening, for a little before the performance began, my friend Frank Bowden entered my compartment and informed me that Estelle W., with her aged father and mother, had got as far as the corridor, but could not obtain seats anywhere. Under ordinary circumstances I should not have budged from my place for anybody, but on the present occasion, I arose and offered my whole box to the W—family. My reasons for so doing were that Frank was a very particular friend of mine, that Estelle was my cousin, and the most charming of my many female cousins, and also, because Frank and Estelle were dead in love with one another. I made Frank take a seat beside his *inamorata*, while I retreated to the back-ground of the box, where I enjoyed something of my coveted solitude.

There is no need here to enter into an analysis of *La Sonnambula*. It must be heard and heard often to be justly appreciated. It bears the same relation to Bellini's *Norma* that Tasso's *Aminadab* does to his *Jerusalem*. It is a delicious *hél*, redolent of spring-time and the dawn, resonant with the song of birds and the jubilation of happy *estates*, pulsating with the freshness, the ingenuousness, the purity of pastoral loves.

As I said before, the performance was remarkably good for the theatre. The beautiful role of Amina was especially well represented by the Neapolitan actress. Her voice was not of vast power or range, but it was rich in the lower notes, and very sweet in the upper register. Though I had heard the opera before by some of the best artists of Europe, I was completely absorbed in the present representation, and discovered beauties in it which I had never yet perceived. Indeed, my attention was so concentrated on the stage, that I took no notice of my companions in the box, nor of the crowd in the pit and galleries. I did not even experience any fatigue from standing upright for nearly three hours.

The last and principal act came on. The young Neapolitan appeared on the thatched roof of her cabin, and descended thence across the slender bridge over the mill-dam. Her eyes were closed, her hair was dishevelled, she was clad in her white night-dress, and in that melancholy plight the somnambulist traversed the perilous foot-path over the dashing water—dreaming of love. She had a bouquet of wild flowers in her hand, which she plucked, petal by petal, and threw into the flood, while her pale lips murmured the ravishing song:

"Ah! non credea mirarti,
Si presto estinto, O fiore!"

A pin might have been heard to drop in the vast building. Why, I cannot tell, but just then I happened to glance at my friends before me and perceived that Estelle was a prey to the most violent emotion. Neither her old parents nor Frank noticed it. She was sobbing silently, and from the convulsive movement of her shoulders, I could see was making vain efforts to contain herself. My attention was, however, soon withdrawn from her by the orchestra working itself up for the grand finale, which I would not have missed for the world. Yes! there it was again that famous rondo, so full of love, of pathos and of melancholy. Our artist seemed to excel herself in singing it. I too wept when I heard:

"Ah! non giunge uman pensiero."

The last note had been played, the curtain had already fallen, and yet the audience were still under the spell of the somnambulist's apparition. Suddenly a cry and acclamation arose demanding the favourite actress before the footlights. In the confusion and noise which ensued, I noticed that the W—family precipitately left the box.

"What's the matter?" I inquired of Frank.

"Miss Estelle is very ill," he replied.

I followed them to the main entrance and called up their carriage. Frank offered to accompany them home, but old Mr. W. gruffly refused.

II.

Estelle's father was the representative of a class that sorely tries the patience of a hot youth lover. He was rude, unmannerly, bearish, and though wealthy, his affluence had only increased his imperiousness without improving his manners. He was sternly opposed to a match between his daughter and Frank, but why, no one could tell. The young man was every way worthy of the girl. They were of the same station in life, and they had loved each other for years.

Estelle was a pale, delicate creature whose health was always fluttering on the borders of consumption. Medical art had kept her aloof from this, so far, but any slight accident—whether physical, mental or moral—was enough to cast her into it without redemption. Her father loved her well, but, as we have seen, he was a self-willed old fool, who had the pretension to tyrannize her emotion at that critical period of a girl's life—first love. Estelle was a dutiful, good girl, and she tried hard to do her father's bidding, but she could not uproot her love, and the very effort to do it injured her health. It was her misfortune, too, to be of a very nervous temperament. The least excitement set her whole frame tingling, and her artistic predilections were often the occasion of acute pain, which marred her otherwise thorough enjoyment of poetry and music.

No one—not even myself—had gloated on the beauties of *La Sonnambula* as she had. The difference between us was, that 'being an unreclaimed and perhaps unreclaimable Bohemian, I had no objective love, but only an ideal one, to which I could adapt the situations of the opera, according to my phantasy; whereas she, living solely and wholly in Frank, made him the Elvino of Bellini's creation, and recognized her own yearnings in those of the adorable Amina. The consequence was that while every note of the immortal partition sank deep into my soul, soothing and tranquilizing it, it proved for Estelle a new language of passionate love, which unstrung her delicate nerves and plunged her into a tempest of emotions which she had neither the physical nor moral strength to contain. Hence, it was no wonder that at the end of the representation she should be quite ill.

Frank was, of course, much affected at the roughness of old W— that night. Indeed, he took it so hard that he informed me he was tempted to leave the city forever in despair. I tried to console him, and we walked about the street for a long time, talking on a variety of subjects. Finally I persuaded him to put up at my rooms for the rest of the night.

"To-morrow morning," I said, "I will call on uncle W— myself, and argue the matter seriously with him. If he won't listen to me, I am sure my aunt will, for she is a kind and sensible woman."

With this assurance, we threw away our cigars and entered my bachelor quarters, which were situated nearly opposite the palatial residence of the W—s, on — Street.

III.

Not more than three hours had elapsed since we had left the theatre, when I fancied I heard some one pulling at my night bell. Frank was fast asleep in an adjoining room, and I had probably slept too, so that I was not quite certain whether I had heard ringing or not. A second pull at the wires, however, left me in no doubt. I ran to the window and inquired who was there.

"It's me, Master John."

I recognized the voice of Nancy, my uncle W—'s negro cook.

"Master and mistress wants you to come over right away, sir."

Remembering Estelle's illness, and fearing that something was wrong, I hastily slipped on my clothes and darted down the stair. Nancy was already gone, and I crossed the street at once. On coming to the front door, I found it opened by the cook, who exclaimed breathlessly:

"Run into the garden, sir; run."

I rushed in the direction indicated, and in a moment reached the scene of excitement. In the capacious garden there was a long bower erected for the propping of vines which my uncle was very fond of cultivating. This bower was terminated by a pavilion, some fourteen feet high, in a yet unfinished state. This he intended for a summer house, and for that purpose he was building stone tables and seats in it. On my coming up, what was my surprise to find that Estelle had climbed to the top of the pavilion and was slowly walking along its edge. She had a bouquet of flowers in her hand, the same that I had seen Frank give her at the theatre. Her eyes were closed; she was barefoot and had her night-clothes on.

"This is a case of somnambulism," I whispered to my uncle and aunt, who stood by in the most painful anxiety.

"Yes, and caused by that confounded opera," muttered the old man.

"Never mind the cause," exclaimed the excited mother. "John, you must help us to rescue our child from her perilous position. I am almost paralyzed with fear."

The position was indeed perilous. What was I to do? Estelle had already been called by name and had not answered. To call her too gruffly or loudly would frighten her and cause her to lose her footing. To apply a ladder to the framework of the pavilion was out of the question, for it scarcely held together. It swayed and cracked even under her gentle measured tread. If she awoke suddenly, she would certainly fall; if she awoke gradually, she could not possibly find her way down with safety. In either case, she would assuredly be precipitated on the fragments of stone and marble below, and from such a height, the fall would be fatal. The only hope of rescue was to have her descend in her somnambulist state. She would thus come down as securely, though unaccountably, as she had gone up. But how was this to be executed? I communicated my idea to the father and mother who eagerly grasped at it, but were also at a loss how to carry it out. And yet no time was to be lost. At last a bright thought struck me.

"Will you let me do just as I wish?" I asked.

"Oh! yes, yes," they both exclaimed. "Do what you like, so you save her."

Without saying more, I rushed out of the garden, right through the house and directly across the street to my rooms. My plan was made up and I did not hesitate. I pulled Frank out of bed and in a few words explained my notion to him.

"This is your providential opportunity, my boy," I said. "Take that guitar from the wall and come along."

In five minutes we were both back into the garden. I pushed Frank behind a large catalpa near by and then hastened up to the pavilion.

"Well?" said Mr. and Mrs. W— eagerly, seizing my arm.

"All is right," I answered.

"How?"

"Listen," I exclaimed.

Just then, the sweet sounds of a guitar were heard, preluding an air of *La Sonnambula*.

My uncle and aunt looked at me.

"Pat!" I whispered, placing my finger on my lips. Then, in a soft mellow voice—Frank was a very fair tenor—was repeated the enchanting

"Ah! non giunge....."

The effect was magical. Estelle dropped her flowers, raised her sweet face to the moonlight, and with an ineffable smile of happiness, came down slowly from the pavilion to the bower, and down along the shafts of the bower to a slanting beam that reached to the ground. Her father and mother rushed up to her.

"You are saved, my child!"

She fell upon their neck and embraced them, then turning quietly round, she asked:

"Whose voice was it that saved me?"

We need not dwell longer on this scene. Our readers can easily guess how it terminated and what came of it.

Of course, I am a favourite and ever welcome visitor at my cousin's, Estelle Bowden. On her wedding day I presented her a magnifi-

cently bound copy of *La Sonnambula*, and we often play it together. She has likewise read up in old quaint books the theories of hypnology and somnambulism and penetrated all their mysteries.

It was only last night, that having her little Mimi on my knee, I asked her:

"Will you be a dreamer like your mother, dear?"

And the mother answered for her:

"No! no! Such dreams are dreadful, and it is only once in a century that they come true."

JOHN LESPERANCE.

MR. RUSKIN ON FEMALE ATTIRE.

In his last *Fors Clavigera* Mr. Ruskin advises his girl readers as follows:—"Dress as plainly as your parents will allow you, but in bright colors (if they become you) and in the best materials—that is to say, in those which will wear longest. When you are really in want of a new dress, buy it (or make it) in the fashion; but never quit an old one merely because it has become unfashionable. And if the fashion be costly you must not follow it. You may wear broad stripes or narrow, bright colors or dark, short petticoats or long, (in moderation), as the public wish you; but you must not buy yards of useless stuff to make a knot or a flounce of, nor drag them behind you over the ground. And your walking dress must never touch the ground at all. I have lost much of the faith I once had in the common sense, and even in the personal delicacy of the present race of average English-women by seeing how they will allow their dresses to sweep the streets, if it is the fashion to be scavengers. If you can afford it, get your dresses made by a good dressmaker, with the utmost attainable precision and perfection; but let this good dressmaker be a poor person, living in the country; not a rich person living in a large house in London. Learn dress-making yourself, with pains and time, and use a part of every day in needlework, making as pretty dresses as you can for poor people who have not time nor taste to make them nicely for themselves. You are to show them in your own wearing what is most right and graceful, and to help them to choose what will be prettiest and most becoming in their own station. If they see that you never try to dress above yours, they will not try to dress above theirs."

LITERARY.

It is said George Eliot will realize \$80,000 from "Daniel Deronda."

ROBERT BUCHANAN has a new poem in press, said to be one of his most ambitious efforts.

A. M. HUTH, a fellow-traveller with Buckle, the historian, in his tour, is writing a life of the latter.

THE American Philological Society are making preparations to hold a convention at Philadelphia during the Centennial Exhibition, and they have also in view a world's convention of philologists in London, about June, 1878.

THERE will be great doings at the next Oxford Commemoration, for Prince Leopold will receive the honorary degrees of D. C. L. on the conclusion of his studies, and his royal brothers and sisters will be present to see him don the scarlet gown.

TURGENIEFF, the Russian story writer, is living in Paris, at the age of 65 years. He was long ago banished from Russia because he wrote against the titled classes, and when the edict was revoked he had grown to like France so well that he would not go back to his native country.

THE Christ of Paul is the title of a work by George Reber, which aims to explain the enigmas of Christianity, and prove that St. Paul was never in Asia Minor, that Irenaeus was the author of the fourth gospel, and to expose generally the frauds of the Churchmen of the second century.

IN Prof. Lassen, Germany has lost her most distinguished Sanskrit scholar. He spent all his life at Bonn, as Professor of Sanskrit, and was really the true founder of the critical and historical school of Sanskrit Philology in Germany. His editions of Sanskrit texts are executed according to the strict rules of critical criticism. He is best known by his work on Prakrit, and by his successful attempt at a truly scholarly decipherment of the Persian cuneiform inscriptions (1836 and 1845).

A literary fact which perhaps deserves to be recorded as a curiosity is the origin of the well-known line in *Ruy Blas*—

"Madame, il fait grand vent, et j'ai tué six loups." Victor Hugo is not the author, as it is to be found in the *Memoirs of the Count of Spain* by the Countess d'Aulnoy, just republished by Plon. It is in company with the famous expression of "Calambour wood," which puzzled the spectators on the first performance of the piece, when the Queen sends Count d'Onate to carry

"Une boîte en bois de calambour." A mon père, Monsieur l'Electeur de Neubourg." The Countess d'Aulnoy relates that King Charles II., having gone to pass a few days at the Escurial, the Queen wrote to him a very tender letter and sent him a diamond ring:—"The King in return sent back to her a chaplet of calambour wood set with diamonds, in a little box of gold filigree, and in which he had enclosed a note containing these words: 'Madame, il fait grand vent, et j'ai tué six loups.'" The chaplet in question was simply of aloeswood."

ROUND THE DOMINION.

DIPHTHERIA is very prevalent in Halifax.

At a baby show held in Montreal on the 9th inst. 100 babies were exhibited.

THE Sydney, C. B., rioters have been overawed, but coal shipments are at a standstill.

THE first session of the Supreme Court of Canada, opened at Ottawa, on the 5th June.

THE British Judges are to make the awards in the Canadian Department of the Centennial Exhibition.

FREIGHT trains on the Intercolonial, between Halifax and Quebec, were advertised to run on Monday last.

THE Magdalen Islands herring fishery has been very successful. The seal hunt has not been remunerative.

Prince Edward Island finds a good market for oats in France, to which country 90,000 bushels have already being shipped by two or three Charlottetown houses.