

THE CONCEPTION-BAY MAN.

SELECT POETRY.

NEW-YEAR'S DAY ODE.

Hail, infant year! Time's youngest child!
Storm-cradled hope! we welcome thee;
Born in the lap of winter wild,
The tempests howl thy lullaby.
In thy pale face we wish to see
No dark presage, no withering frown;
Even now, anticipation free
Adorns thee with a garland crown.

Away a few fleet months will wing,
And deck'd in nature's rockalay green,
Thou, blushing goddess of the Spring,
Shalt wanton 'mid the vernal sheen;
Wooing o'er dewy lawn at e'en
Unfetter'd innocence to play;
Rousing the lark through morning's screen,
To cheer the plough-boy's lengthening day.

Transition sweet! as Summer, now
A full-blown beauty thou dost move,
With rose-leaves braided round thy brow,
The queen of flowers—the queen of love.
'Daughter of dawn!' say, wilt thou rove
Among the flocks at purpling morn?
Or view, rejoiced, through whispering grove,
Throned pride of night! thy ripening corn?

More matron-like, thou, Autumn grave,
Rear'd in the breeze thy rustling band,
Beckoning thy yellow treasures wave,
'Come forth, my sprightly reaper band!
If on thy mellow features bland
An angry scowl may chance to rise,
'Twill livelier industry command;
So wins thy husbandman his prize.

Bereft of youth, of wealth, of charms,
The roseate robes of rich perfume,
Ling'ring and sad, with folded arms,
Thou Winter's coat at last assume.
Shivering in chill December's gloom
And surly blast, benumb'd and sore,
Thy mournful eye bent on the tomb,
Ours forward to—A GOOD NEW-YEAR!

THE FLIGHT OF TIME.

BY ALEXANDER SMART.

Why flies the time so fast?
Days, months, and years glide by,
And each looks shorter than the last,
And swifter seems to fly;
On wingless wing still rushing on,
To join the flight of ages gone,
Their silent course they ply.

It seem'd, when we were young,
Time linger'd on the way,
For Hope, like any syren, sung
The live-long summer day—
Oh! sweetly sung of promised bliss,
Too bright for such a world as this—
Too beautiful to stay.

And then the winter night,
So lively and so long,
When round the fireside, blazing bright,
Went merriment and song,
Long were the hours—for we were then
Impatient to be happy men,
And join the busy throng.

Hope's radiance in the heart,
In youth supremely blest,
Can transitory joys impart,
The brightest and the best:
The ills of life come all too soon;
And why should clouds obscure the noon
That warms the youthful breast?

When life's young dream is o'er,
And fancy's fires decay,
And hope's illusions charm no more,
Nor chide the ling'ring day;
Then time sweeps on with winged speed,
Or, like a thief, with noiseless tread,
Steals all our years away.

Fled like a dream the past,
The joyous banquet o'er,
Our longing looks we backward cast,
And think on days of yore,
Brood o'er each scene in joy or woe,
Till we grow old—before we know
That we are young no more.

LITERATURE.

ADVENTURE AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

Who does not remember the exquisite idea of Byron?

'The moon is up, and yet it is not night,
Sunset divides the sky with her.'

And it was upon such an evening, in one of the most beautifully retired spots to which Italy could venture a claim, that a young artist was reclining against the projecting portion of a hill, immediately above him. His left hand supported a portfolio, and on it lay a drawing, to which

he appeared to be giving the finishing touch; whilst a bystander might have observed, from the curl of a noble and expressive lip, that he was by no means dissatisfied with the effort of his pencil.

Having placed it in his portfolio, and drawn a cloak, which had hitherto rested on the ground, about his firm and muscular, though slight form, he prepared to leave—but a shadow which passed across his path caused him to start and look round. Seeing nothing calculated to excite his alarm, he again prepared to leave, and again did the shadow cross his path, as thrown there purposely. This induced a more cautious observance, and he discovered, immediately above him, a man dressed in a wild picturesque costume, his carbine slung carelessly on his arm, intently watching him. The young student, though startled, gave no sign or sound of fear, but walked with a firm step to the avenue that led to his own way. His purpose was stayed by the figure above hailing him in a brief and decided, though not a stern tone:—

"What would you here?"

"It is but one to one," he thought, as he answered, "I seek my own pleasure."

"Then stay for mine," retorted the other, touching his gun significantly, immediately before he leapt down the hill and faced his opponent, who asked him boldly, "What want you with me?" A brief conference told the student that it would be madness to oppose, and therefore he submitted, though it must be confessed with no very good grace, to be blindfolded and led he knew not where. A few moments carried them to their destination, and it required all his self-possession, when the bandage was removed, to prevent the appearance of alarm, as he saw by each side as ferocious and swarthy looking a being as ever figured in romance or melo-drama.

"Who are you? what are you? and how much ransom will you give?" were the short queries put.

"I am an artist, and having no friends, hope not for ransom. You have made but a sorry evening's work, if you are contented with me."

"It may be—but your name?"

"Salvator Rosa."

"What! the young student who won the prize, and beat a score of old grey-beards at their own weapons. You cannot lack ransom—a hundred friends would come forward."

"They shall not pay a crown for me. I have no claim upon them," replied Salvator, determinedly.

"No claim?" said the brigand, throwing aside his short manner; "why, you have already added to the lustre of the Roman painters! Come, sir, let me examine your designs; I am an artist—the mountains, with their free, open air, are my study."

Salvator opened his portfolio, and displayed to the admiring gaze of his companion several sketches; but one, which most attracted his attention, was the representation of a Roman villa, at the window of which, opening to a large extent of ground, sat a fair girl, her head leaning upon her hand, and her countenance expressive of some secret sorrow.

"Do you know this spot?" he asked hurriedly.

"In truth I do, and love it."

"This maiden—who—what is she?" and as he questioned his agitation increased.

Salvator, alarmed at the expression which the brow of his captor wore, and not knowing to what it might be a prelude, refused to reply.

The robber saw his doubts, and said, in a low, solemn voice, "Young man! I once knew that ground and yonder lady; and I loved them above all others: that time has passed, yet still do I bear the memory of my love so green within my heart, that if you tell me the owners of that mansion prize your welfare, by all that is most sacred, I promise you freedom."

"Alas! on the compassion of one alone can I rely; the old and proud possessor likes me not—for wealth is not mine. I know not whether your offer is jestingly or seriously made, but there is that in you which makes me trust you. Marie, the maiden whose countenance you see imperfectly represented, loves me: her father is proud and will not consent to our union, nay, has even forbidden her to see me."

The brigand listened attentively to the narrative, and said, "I thank you for your confidence: the man whom you call proud drove me from my home, and made me that which you now see me, the outlawed, the despised, but the feared brigand; yet, though he did this to me, I cannot return evil for evil to him; and least of all would I that any should fall upon Marie. The only ransom I would claim, and that I ask as a gift, is your picture; 'tis small, and perhaps of really little value—give it me and you are free. Nay, you are free without."

Salvator handed him the picture, and his singular companion taking from his finger a ring, said—

"Give this to my—, I mean to Marie; and tell her that the individual who once owned it is safe and well; tell her not what he is that gives it you, for her gentle soul would break to know I am—what I am. Come, sir, I will see you to the foot of the mountain; the moon is now up, and she will light us on our path. It is fortunate that there are no more of our band than these two here, the others might not bear our parting with so much equanimity as these gentlemen."

The brigands showed their white teeth from beneath their black and shaggy mustaches, and, as the student with their chief left, they waved an adieu.

A short time brought the two to their journey's end; the brigand gave a hearty shake of his hand to the young Salvator and departed.

The following evening saw Salvator watching the ground which enshrined the gem dearest to his heart; until the light of day had nearly faded he kept a respectful distance, but when the night had claimed the ascendance, and there was but the shadowy light of the moon to betray his movements, he was not long in drawing nearer.

Scaling walls appeared familiar to him, to judge from his agility in doing so, and the readiness with which he sought the least difficult place of access. A very short period brought him to a gate which was left open, and not apparently without cause, for, upon entering, it might easily be discovered that his was not the only form there—a girl, graceful as a young fawn bounding about its mother, was soon pressed in his arms, and kissing her fair forehead, which gleamed through a redundancy of clustering locks, he released her from his embrace, and they both sat down on a seat formed by the branching together of the arms of two trees.

The brow of Marie Gonzonelli was merrier than its wont, at least so thought her companion, for he asked "whether she was the bearer of good tidings, that her eye danced with such pleasure."

Marie's answer was a fit of most music-like laughter.

The student looked grave—the maiden smiled—and Salvator said, in a serious tone—

"I had not dreamed that our prospects were so brilliant as to cause such merriment."

"I must tell you all about it," said Marie. "You know my father, and what an enthusiastic favor he holds for youthful genius; he says—but you must not be vain—he says that he never gave you credit for half the power you have exhibited in the last painting of yours which won the prize; and he says also—" and here she paused.

"What says he, dear Marie?"

"Why, he says that if you can do my resemblance from memory to his satisfaction, he will—" and again she paused.

"Will—what, dear?"

"Be friends!" cried Marie, who thought she had hit on a famous plan of explaining her meaning delicately.

The student smiled, for he understood her.

"And now you must go," she continued. "A short period will bring you a message from him, and I would not that he should know of our secret meetings."

She held out her hand; Salvator pressed it to his lips; it was a round, plump, little hand; just such a one as causes the beholder to turn from it to the owner's mouth—so did our student, and imprinting one fervent kiss on her lips, he bounded away with a heart full of gladness.

Need more be said? Yes! for when the portrait of Marie was finished, every one remarked that it was almost as beautiful as the original.

Long after, when fame had brought wealth, and Salvator was the husband of the lovely Marie, he heard that a brother had left his home early in life, owing to an altercation with his father, and had never returned. Salvator said nothing—but he felt that he knew more of the fate of that brother than would be kind in him to impart to his wife.

MISCELLANEOUS.

SINGULAR COINCIDENCE.

A correspondent of the *Placer Herald* is responsible for the following: A marriage took place on the night of the 15th ultimo, at the Nevada Hotel, of a lady, not unknown to the California public, to a gentleman from Kentucky, now a citizen of this State, he being the fifth upon whom she had conferred Hymeneal honors, and the third whose heads are yet above the sod. By a strange concatenation of circumstances her two last husbands, between whom and herself all marital duties had ceased to exist by the operation of the divorce law, had put up at the Nevada House on the same evening, ignorant of the fact that their former *cara sposa* had rested under the same roof with themselves, and also that they had both, in former years, been wedded to the same lady. Next morning they occupied seats at the breakfast table opposite the bride party. Their eyes met with mute, but expressive astonishment. The ladybride did not faint, but bravely informed her newly acquired lord of her singular situation, and who their guests were. Influenced by the nobleness of his nature and the happy impulses of his heart, he summoned his predecessors to his bridal chamber, and the warmest greetings and congratulations were interchanged between the four in the most unreserved and friendly manner. The two ex-lords frankly declared that they ever found in the lady an excellent and faithful companion, and that they were the authors of the difficulties which produced their separation, the cause being traceable to a too free indulgence in the use of intoxicating drinks. The legal lord and master declared that his affection for his bride was strengthened by the coincidence, and that his happiness was increased, if possible, by what had

occurred. After a few presents of specimens from their well filled purses, the parties separated—the two ex-husbands for the Atlantic States, with the kindest regards of the lady for the future welfare of her former husbands.

Not the least singular circumstance attending the above, is that the three were all married on the 15th December.

ENGLISHMEN MADE OF GOLD.—The Beloches have a singular superstition that an Englishman is literally made of gold and by the proper kind of treatment can be resolved into his constituent elements. A story is told by M. Fernier which we would scarcely have thought credible; but, true or not, it is well worth extraction:—"A few years before the date at which I am writing Ali Khan received a visit at Sneik Nassor from an English doctor named Forbes. He had been warned of the consequences which would assuredly befall him if he ventured within the clutches of this monster, but it was of no use, he was bent upon undertaking the journey, and paid the penalty of his curiosity with his life. Ali Khan murdered him in his sleep and hung poor Forbes's body up in front of his own tent, which he ordered to be deluged with water during fifteen days consecutively. You will see, he said to his people, 'that this dog of an infidel will at last be transformed into good meats.' Finding however to his great amazement, that this proceeding did not produce the expected result, he thought he would boil the water with which the corpse had been washed, but with no better effect. It then occurred to him that the doctor to play him a trick, had before his death made the gold pass from his body into the clothes and books which filled his trunk. Instead of burning these importunities, which had been his original intention, he had them cut and torn up into little bits, and mixed with the mortar destined to plaster his house. He had not yet had occasion to use it, but he informed us, as he related the details of this disgusting tragedy, that when he did he expected to see his house covered with a layer of the precious metal. Nothing would ever have induced him to forgo this belief, and he did not disguise from me that he would have been happy if he could have added my poor corpse to the mortar in question."

INDIAN SAGACITY.—An Indian, upon his return home to his hut one day, discovered that his venison, which had been hung up to dry, had been stolen. After going a short distance, he met some persons, of whom he inquired if they had seen a little, old, white man, with a short gun, and accompanied by a small dog with a short tail. They replied in the affirmative; and upon the Indian's assuring them that the man thus described had stolen his venison, they desired to be informed how he was able to give such a minute description of a person whom he had not seen. The Indian answered thus: "The thief, I know, is a little man, by his having made a pile of stones in order to reach the venison, from the height I hung it, standing on the ground; that he is an old man, I know by his short steps, which I have traced over the dead leaves in the woods; that he is a white man, I know by his turning out his toes when he walks, which an Indian never does; his gun I know to be short, by the mark which the muzzle made by rubbing the bark of the tree on which it leaned; that the dog is small, I know by his tracks; and that he has a short tail, I discovered by the mark of it in the dust where he was sitting at the time his master was taking down the meat."

MERCY TWICE BLESSED.—Every effort to increase the happiness and heighten the character of the poor, will tell powerfully on the condition of those by whom it is made, seeing that the contentment and good order of the peasantry of a country give value to the revenue of its nobles and merchants. For our own part, we never look on a public hospital or infirmary—we never behold the slum-houses into which old age may be received, and the asylums which have been thrown up on all-sides for the widow and the orphan—without feeling that, however generously the rich come forward to the relief of the poor, they advantage themselves whilst providing for the suffering and destitute. These buildings, which are the best diadem of our country, not only bring blessings on the land by saving, it may be, as electrical conductors, which turn from us many flashes of the lightning of wrath; but, being as centres whence succours are sent through distressed portions of our community, they are fostering-places of kindly dispositions towards the wealthier ranks; and may, therefore, be so considered as structures in which a kingdom's prosperity is nursed, that the fittest inscription over their gateways would be this—'Whosoever a man soweth that also shall he reap.'

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Is Edited and Published every Wednesday morning, by GEORGE WEBBER, at his office, Wat-street, opposite the Premises of W. DONNELLY, Esq.
TERMS:—Fifteen Shillings per annum half in advance.

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