

BY MOONLIGHT.

O, melancholy woods! that lift
Your crownless foreheads to the Night,
Where, ghostly white, the moonbeams drift,
And fade beyond the windy height,
No more the joyous thrill and stir
Of green tumultuous leaves are heard,
Nor dimpling laugh, nor glance and whirr
Of sylvan brook or summer bird.

I weep, O crownless woods! but not
For your green glory passed away—
For bird and brooklet that forgot
Dull Autumn, in the arms of May;
For Nature's tender, wailing voice
Shall call her darlings back again,
And bid the wide green world rejoice
In glad sunshine and silver rain.

I mourn for the untimely blight
Of hopes that faded with the flower—
The stricken faith, the lost delight
That crowned the rosy summer hours;
For, sadder than the fallen leaf
And all the wintry winds that cry,
I mourn the friendship bright as brief,
Born, with the summer flowers, to die!

MY FREDERICA.

The eyes of my Frederica were as blue as the sky, or as the sash that bound her slim waist; her complexion was of lily purity; her lips were as rose-buds bursting into flower; her hair was the yellow gold of flax, intertwined with flaxen silk. I call her my Frederica by a sort of poetical license and in right of my love for her. She was, in truth, at this time, the Frederica of the Herr Professor Vanderguicht, the sub-rector of the university, for she was his daughter; and afterwards she became the Frederica of another. Still I ventured to call her mine—absurd as it may seem. I even call her mine now.

I was christened Hans, which showed, perhaps, that my family did not expect great things of me; for Hans has, somehow, come to signify a foolish sort of fellow all the world over. "Hans is slow, but he is sure," my father was wont to say of me. Slow? very likely. But sure? How and of what?

I did not distinguish myself as a student. I drank much beer and smoked many pipes, and, as mementoes of my Burschen life, I still carry about with me a scar on my cranium, which will stand forth exposed unpleasantly when I have grown bald, and an ugly seam across my left cheek, the result of a badly-stitched sabre-cut. I did not fight duels because I liked fighting, but because I could not well avoid it. Frederica had let fall, now her kerchief, now her bouquet. In my haste to gather up and restore these treasures I brushed abruptly against a fellow student. By mischance I even trod upon his toes. His feet were tender; his language was violent. Combat and bloodshed became unavoidable. He escaped without a hurt. I was less fortunate. It was owned, however, that I had comported myself becomingly.

I met my Frederica only now and then at the soirees and receptions of the Herr Professor, her father.

Did she know of my love? Yes; if she could read my glances, though, I admit, I have known eyes more expressive than my own, which are, indeed, of faint color and feeble power, needing help from concave glasses. Yes; if she could penetrate my thoughts or divine my dreams. Otherwise she would be less informed upon the subject.

For I could not precipitate my love into words. My Frederica did not invite speech or indulge therein herself. She was too beautiful to have need of language; she was a poem in herself. It was sufficient to look upon her. To address her, or to hope to hear her, would have been outrageous presumption. So I held. I have heard her silence imputed to her as a fault. But of what sinful folly will not some be guilty? There are men who would have the Venus of Medici fitted with the apparatus of a German doll, and made, upon pressure in the ribs, to speak "Pa-pa," "Ma-ma."

When I came to England I promised, to myself, that I would never forget Frederica. I planned to return some day and make her mine; meanwhile, I would grow rich. At present I was very ill supplied with money. My father could spare me none—his own wants were more than he could comfortably meet. He bestowed upon me his blessing however—all he had to give. I received it gratefully, if not without a wish that it had been a more marketable commodity.

I had resolved to become a famous painter, or rather, I should say, a wealthy one. I knew that England, if she gives artists nothing else, gives them money, at any rate. Perhaps that is all they really require of her.

I found myself in London, the tenant of a garret, which served me for studio, sitting-room, bedroom—all. I had made the acquaintance of a little group of fellow artists assembling at a cheap café—half Swiss, half German—in the Soho district. There were English, with a Frenchman among them, whose name was Alphonse, I think, or Adolphe; I am not sure which. But, when a Frenchman is not Alphonse, he is usually Adolphe.

They made me welcome, and were of service to me. One of them kindly introduced me to his pawbroker, from whom I derived much useful assistance; though, the more I sought his

aid, the more my wardrobe diminished. But, that could not be helped. I had to live.

We talked, and played dominoes, and smoked the Englishmen, cigars; the Frenchmen, cigarettes; I, my pipe with the china bowl, plated lid, and worsted tassels. They were kind to me, although they found me laughable, with my long hair, my spectacles, and my bad English. I did not mind. Indeed I did not understand them. Jokes as a rule are always thrown away upon me. As I have said, I am slow.

Of my art I soon discovered they did not think highly. I had brought with me from Germany a large unfinished picture. It was illustrative of a scene in the Minna Von Barnhelm of Lessing. I was informed to my chagrin that Lessing was almost unknown in England, and that my labor accordingly had been wasted.

I had been proud and hopeful of my picture, though I can admit now that it was a crude and clumsy performance. My friends criticised it very freely—they grew derisive over it. I thought this hard, because the work had really cost me much. I have not a ready hand. I could never design with adroitness. For one stroke that is correct I execute six that are all wrong; so my canvas comes to have a muddled blundering look. I am myself shocked at its ugliness. Yet I usually—with obstinate toil and severe persistency—get things right at last.

My friends had quick eyes and dexterous hands—they sketched with surprising facility and vivid effect. Alphonse, as I will call him, was in this way especially gifted. He could design as deftly as he could twist up a cigarette, or twist the end of his moustache into pin-points. A few movements of his pencil and the thing was done. Much more than this I think he could not accomplish. He was true to his origin; he was of a nation of sketchers—great at beginnings, leaving completeness and achievement to others—the Germans let us say.

He grinned wickedly, scoffing at my picture.

"My poor Hans," said an Englishman, kindly—he has grown famous since. I am glad to say, for he was a true artist, "this will not do. Turn Minna Von Barnhelm to the wall. That's my advice. Paint something smaller, simpler, or you will stand no chance with the dealers."

When we were alone, he proffered me help from his purse—though it was but poorly furnished, and he was, I knew, in debt. I would not borrow of him; but I thanked him till my voice failed me, and I could not see for my tears.

I had by this time quite a pack of pawn tickets. I was subsisting like a moth, on my clothes. A coat lasted me a week, a waistcoat three days, and so on. But soon I should have nothing more to pledge, and then—?

I was very miserable. I could see suspicion and mistrust on the face of my landlady, printed in deeper and plainer lines every day. She was afraid of losing her rent. She told me I must give up my garret, and find another home. Where? In the street—or the Thames?

I tried to live on as little as possible. I went out every day for an hour or so, that my landlady might think I was dining. I walked hither and thither, in retired streets, furtively devouring a penny loaf of bread—it was all I could afford. Then I returned, affecting a light step, singing or whistling, with the air of one refreshed and in good spirits. But I was an indifferent actor. Was she duped, that landlady, I wonder? Perhaps. My stomach was not, I know. There was no deceiving that.

What comfort was left me? Only my pipe and my love for the Frederica. And presently my pipe had to go—round the corner. My love, not being negotiable, alone remained.

I tried to paint—something, anything, a sketch, a study, that would bring money to buy food with. My English friend set up an easel for me in his studio. He had models coming to him; surely I could do something with them? Here was a Mulatto, of superb contour, muscular, sinewy, nobly proportioned, a Hercules in bronze. Here a lovely English girl, a bouquet of bright colors, roses and lilies, violets and gold. Here a Spanish gipsy, with blue-black hair, flashing eyes, ivory teeth and cheeks like russet apples, flushed with sunset.

It was in vain. My heavy heart weighed down my hand. It was duller, more awkward, and inert than ever. I could do nothing.

I retreated to my garret. I flung myself upon my trundle bed; not to sleep, but to torture myself with fears, memories, dreams, my head burning, my brain disordered.

Dusk came, and then night. The moonrays flooded the room, to fade gradually into the yellow twilight of morning. Another day was dawning to find me more wretched and forlorn and destitute than ever. I could not rise. I lay upon my bed, dressed as I was, thinking—thinking—in a confused, fevered way; not of the future; I did not dare to do that; but of the past and the miserable, most miserable present. And, now and then, the name of Frederica broke from my lips.

Suddenly there came the sound of some one moving in my studio. I started—I roused myself. It was a bright morning. A figure stood upon the little throne fronting my easel.

Frederica!

She was clothed in fluent draperies of white; her flaxen hair streamed, a very mantle, over her shoulders; her blue eyes were turned heavenward; her slender alabaster hands were crossed upon her bosom. She was a saint—an angel! The Frederica of my dreams, my hopes, my love was posing before me!

I flew to my palette and brushes and set to work. I sketched with a facility and rapidity I had never before and have never since accomplished. I talked on like one inspired. I trem-

bled with eagerness. I could hear my heart beat; fire seemed to be coursing through my veins. A picture was growing under my hand—a picture to be proud of. I dreaded each moment that the vision would vanish. But she remained—motionless as ever—with the same rapt air, divinely beautiful. She spoke no word; nor did I address her. I dreaded that speech might dissolve the spell. My blessed Frederica!

I had been thus engaged some hours; my task was nearly completed. For a moment I paused to breathe freely, and to close and rest my burning eyes. I was faint and sick with fatigue and excitement. Yes, and with hunger; I had not tasted food for twenty-four hours and more.

When I turned again to look at Frederica, she had departed? All was over. It was a dream, perhaps; but I had produced a picture. My strength failed me and I sank helplessly upon the floor of my studio.

Presently consciousness returned to me. I found my English friend and Alphonse beside me. They were inspecting my portrait of Frederica; for it was a portrait, although of that fact they had no suspicion.

"Come, cheer up Hans," said the Englishman. "This will do. This is by no means bad, don't you know?"

"C'est magnifique," said Alphonse. "Voilà un artiste qui peint de tête!"

He was pale with envy, it seemed to me. The picture was far beyond anything he could execute. Of that I felt assured. And he was jealous. I disliked him; that's the plain truth. And he did not like me. It may be that we did not understand each other.

I lost sight of him soon afterwards. Many years elapsed before I heard what had become of him. He was shot in the late war, it appeared. He had taken arms for his native land, and perished in an affair of outposts near Thionville—not a regular battle, but a mere sketch of one. So far, he had been faithful to himself to the last. He never had to do with anything beyond sketches. He could complete nothing—not even his life. That was but a fragment—an outline never filled in. But I digress.

The Englishman sent out for beer and bread and meat. He said cheering words, patting me on the back; he sat with me while I ate ravenously, like a wolf. I ceased to tremble; I grew warm and comfortable. Then he took away my painting. He returned later in the day, bringing me money for it. He had sold it advantageously to a dealer of his acquaintance. I was happy and hopeful once more. And, forthwith, I took my pipe out of pawn.

My luck had turned. Thenceforward I prospered—not too suddenly, or in an extraordinary measure, but after a gradual and modest fashion. I was content if I could but earn a subsistence; and this came to be more and more a matter of certainty with me. I was enabled to sell my pictures, upon terms that were moderate, but still sufficient. Only I could produce but few pictures; not that I lacked industry, for indeed I labored incessantly; but my constitutional slowness could not be wholly overcome. In time there arose a certain steady demand for my works. I was not famous, but I was succeeding. I had even sold at last my illustration of the scene in Lessing's Minna Von Barnhelm: and for a considerable price.

All this had occupied some time, however. Years, indeed, had passed; for it is only very rarely that a name can be made in a day; and then, it is never such a name as Hans. I had, worked on steadily without quitting London; but I had removed from my garret-studio to more convenient and seemly premises. I was growing grey, and a look of age had come into my face. My figure was less erect than it had been, and was tending to ungracefulness of contour. All my waistcoats had been enlarged. I was, indeed, portly, from drinking much English beer, or from age and success, combined with constitutional indolence.

I had not forgotten my Frederica. Certainly not. But no such vision of her as I have described had again visited me. It was in my dire need that she had come to me; but my time of need was over. Still, she was often in my thoughts. Often I resolved to return to Germany, seek her out, and entreat her to be mine. I will go, I said when I have saved so much money; when I have completed this picture or that. Still I did not move. My natural slowness hindered me; and I postponed my departure from time to time. Yet I had fairly attained the end of my coming to England. I was generally recognised to be a successful painter in my peculiar and, perhaps, narrow path of art.

I was rich enough now both to love and to marry. Formerly I could only afford to love—an inexpensive pursuit as I had conducted it.

At length I was constrained to go; for news reached me from Germany of the serious illness of my father. The poor old man was dying. I was told. Alas! I arrived at his bedside only in time to close his eyes. Then I commenced my quest of the Fraulein Frederica.

It was with difficulty I could obtain any tidings of her. There was a new sub-rector at the university. The Herr Professor Vanderguicht was no more. He was almost forgotten.

Presently came news; but what news! I was doomed to hear that my Frederica had become the wife of Herr Schnellen, of the firm of Eisen-decken and Schnellen, merchants of Hamburg, trading largely in train oil, hides, and colonial produce.

I sought out Herr Schnellen, for I was determined that I would not quit Germany until I had seen once more my first and only love.

Herr Schnellen was an elderly gentleman, portly and bald, with very stiff curls; but his manners were gracious. I introduced myself to him, informing him that I had once enjoyed the acquaintance of his wife when she was the Fraulein Frederica, only daughter of the Herr Professor of my university.

"A long time ago, mein Herr," he said, with a laugh. "She was beautiful then."

"Wonderfully beautiful."

"One forgot her infirmity; at least, I did."

And he sighed.

What infirmity? I did not dare to ask. Had Frederica a temper? Well, it was to be excused; she was the wife of Herr Schnellen.

He invited me to his house. He led me into a spacious apartment handsomely furnished.

My Frederica! It was difficult to recognize her in the rotund lady, rubicund, white-haired, short-of-neck, and redundantly supplied with chins, who sat huddled in an easy chair by the stove, with a crowd of chubby children of both sexes and various ages gathered about her. She was regaling them with "thick milk"—a mess of sour cream, sugared, and mixed with bread crumbs. Yes, it must be she, and no other. I suppressed my amazement as best I could, and advanced towards her, bowing with my utmost politeness, when there suddenly occurred an alarming noise in the street without, a detonation—a violent explosion that shook the house to its very foundation.

"Ah! I had forgotten," said Herr Schnellen. "We must open the windows, or we shall have every pane of glass broken. You have not heard the news?"

"What news?"

"Paris has fallen. They are firing the salute in celebration of the great event."

Another roar from the guns.

"Come in," said Frederica, quietly, as though in answer to some one lightly tapping at the door.

"She hears!" cried Herr Schnellen, with a gratified air. "Yes, perceive that Frederica is not so deaf as people have said."

"Deaf?"

"You have forgotten, mein Herr. Frederica was held to be almost deaf since her youth."

No wonder that in addition to her other charms she had possessed that of silence—that her repose of manner had been so supreme—that she had shrunk from being troubled with speeches, of which she could not hear one word!

"It makes her very quiet," said Herr Schnellen. "But that is not, in a wife, such a drawback as you may think."

There was a slate before her, which was employed, as a means of conversation. She was informed, by its means, concerning me. But it was clear that she did not entertain the slightest recollection of me. There were so many students under the Herr Professor her father, she explained. And so many of them were named Hans. And they were all young; whereas I—but this she did not add—was middle-aged, to say the least of it.

Little more than this passed at our interview.

I took my leave, depressed and disturbed as to the present, but not as to the past; that could not be. I did not love the wife of Herr Schnellen. I am a moral character. But still I loved the Frederica who, though lost, was yet contained in the stout form of that matronly lady Frau Schnellen, like a sovereign secreted in a loaf of bread, or like the needle in the bottle of hay of your English proverb. It was true that my Frederica could not now be parted from the envelope which so substantialised and materialised her. That was a misfortune I had to endure as best I could. Altogether, I bore it pretty well.

Mine was still the ethereal Frederica. Herr Schnellen's the more material—I may even say the very material—Frederica from whom all ethereal properties had completely evaporated. Mine had been the spell; the disenchantment, possibly Herr Schnellen's.

She never knew of my love. I am not sure that she was ever thoroughly aware of my existence. But what did it matter? The genuineness of my passion was not thereby affected. The votary's offerings may not be received; his adoration may be unrequited. Still, his sincerity remains unquestionable—it may even be the more sublime.

My love was a dream, almost a folly, but not entirely so, for, remember, it sustained me in an hour of sore trouble, it was attended with solid advantages. To it I owed such success as I have obtained; and moreover it colored and influenced my life, weaving into its texture a thread of gold. It was romance—it was poetry, to my thinking; and have not these value, however seemingly fond and futile, vague of purpose, and vain of result?

I should have sought her sooner? It may be so. Perhaps things happened for the best. I still call her my Frederica, thinking of her ever as she was in my Burschen days—as she appeared in that vision in my studio, when she like an angel released me from despair and destitution, and led me back to life and well-being.

I returned to London to my art and to my pipe. Art, at any rate, is always faithful; and, perhaps to one of my years, a pipe is the best of wives. It is silent as Frederica; but what comfort it exhales! how it bears with one! how it even encourages one's dreamings, and hopes, and flights of fancy! How companionable! how enduring! how consoling! And it never disagrees with one; unless, of course, it is very much abused.