

something I heard as I came from *Partners* the other night, which strikes me as being one of the most curious of the many curious facts which are ready and waiting for any one attentive enough to listen to them, in every street through which we pass, at every corner at which we cross. About forty years ago, a Mrs. Munroe, a childless widow with a large fortune, took a house in Curzon Street for the season, and, wanting a companion, bethought her of her niece Jessie, the eldest daughter of a clergyman in Scotland, a young lady only just out. The girl was written for, came, and proved a great success; for she was an excellent dancer, exceedingly pretty, and blessed with a good digestion, and consequently with a good temper. It was after the May Drawing-room at which she had been presented, and at the ball at S. House that Captain—shall we call him Nemo?—meeting her for the first time fell desperately in love before the end of the evening. A few rides in the early mornings by the Serpentine, a few “drums” in Arlington Street or Park Lane, the opera twice, the theatre once, endless dinners, routs, and balls, and then, just at the end of the season, he proposed and was accepted. The lover having little money, Mrs. Munroe generously agreed to give her niece an allowance, and insisted on the marriage taking place in town, instead of upsetting the quiet little manse close to the loch on the West Coast. So St. James', Piccadilly, was filled with the *élite* to view the ceremony one early autumn morning, and Miss Jessie in orange blossoms and Brussels lace sat in the old barbaric fashion through the long wedding breakfast, afterwards, in flounced gown and round curtained bonnet, going with her bridegroom for their honeymoon to the Italian lakes. Captain Nemo was a sailor, and soon had to start with his ship for a cruise of fifteen months. I think there was a talk of his wife joining him, but the station selected was an unhealthy one, so after all she remained in England with her aunt to look after her. Letters were to be very regular, and the time would soon pass. When the letters were all written and received, and the very last of the fifteen months had dragged itself away, the day arrived on which Jessie was to meet her husband at the railway station: no one was on the platform but Mrs. Munroe, looking white and strange, who gave him a note to read, and then took him to his pretty little empty house from which the inmate had flown only that morning to Paris. The poor lady wept, asked that her carelessness might be forgiven; she had been duped, deceived, and would never see the wretched girl again. Captain Nemo was quite gentle. Yes, he would try to dine with her that night, and they would talk over what was best to be done: had this—this man a wife already? Well, matters should be arranged somehow, and now, would she be good enough to leave him alone? Then he went into the morning room where Jessie's miniature still hung on the wall: and an hour afterwards when they went to call him he was found dead with a bullet through his heart, clasping her portrait and her cruel letter in his cold fingers. There being no *World* or *Truth* in those days the scandal was quietly hushed up. After a time Mrs. Nemo appeared again in London, but none of her old friends noticed her; her own people sternly cast her off. Mrs. Munroe answered no appeal, and formally refused any communication, and finally when she died left not a penny of her fortune to the erring niece who had so grossly deceived her. So year after year, year after year, came and went, and matters grew from bad to worse. A woman educated so long ago was not so likely to be able to help herself as is the Girton-trained girl of to-day with her practical common sense, and it became more and more difficult for her to keep her head above water. Within the last ten years she has found occupation, however, and if you like to come with me some afternoon I can show you where a small spare woman in neat bonnet and shawl, with fine China blue eyes and lint-white hair, diligently sweeps a crossing in the very heart of her old neighbourhood, which small woman is Mrs. Munroe's niece, the girl who was presented to the Queen, who danced at S. House, who was married at St. James', Piccadilly, and had an Italian honeymoon. She refuses all help now from any one. How do I know this? I was told the story by a connection of her husband's. Do I think it's true? Emphatically, yes. There are as queer skeletons in every cupboard, almost of every house where one calls, and behind the brick walls of an ordinary commonplace street terrible tragedies are acted every day, every hour, the plots of which are to the full as distressing as those of any melodramas you like to name; with this exception, that on the boards the wicked are punished, the innocent are rewarded, while in real life too often it is *vice versa*.

Acting, I take it, is the rarest art of any. I could count on the fingers of one hand the genuine actors and actresses I have ever seen—and this because, I suppose, it requires such a combination of gifts: so at Lady Freahe's we were certainly not astonished to find no budding genius among the ladies and gentlemen who made such effort to entertain us at her theatricals arranged in aid of an excellent charity. First Mr. Gilmour (of *Amber Heart* fame) gave us his graceful little play, *Cupid's Messenger*, and was obliging enough to act in it himself, taking the part of Sir Philip Sydney, and reciting the blank verse with the oddest American accent. A daughter of Terris', of the Adelphi, spoke her lines prettily, and Miss Freahe helped considerably with her vigorous, bright tones and characteristic action, with no trace of nervousness, the amateur's bugbear. And then we had *The Scrap of Paper*, in which Suzanne was excellent, Anatole being good, and the rest nowhere: and as we left the great saloon I thought—ungratefully, I own—that first, it would be better if inexperienced players did not choose a piece now being admirably performed by the St. James' company, as such a proceeding is apt to invite comparison; and secondly, if they feel they *must* act, why there should not be a law compelling all amateurs to perform only in the country, where, I am given to understand, such entertainments are not only well received but appreciated.

WALTER POWELL.

THE PIONEERS.

A BALLAD.

ALL you who, in your acres broad,
Know Nature in its charms,
With pictured dale and fruitful sod
And herds on verdant farms,
Remember those who fought the trees
And early hardships braved,
And so for us of all degrees
All from the forest saved.

And you who stroll in leisured ease
Along your city squares,
Thank those who there have fought the trees,
And dared the wolves and bears.
They met the great woods in the face,
Those gloomy shades and stern;
Withstood and conquered, and your race
Supplants the pine and fern.

Where'er we look, their work is there;
Now land and man are free:
On every side the view grows fair
And Eden yet shall be.
The credit's theirs who all day fought
The stubborn giant host,
We have but built on what they wrought;
Theirs were the honour-posts.

Though plain their lives and rude their dress,
No common men were they:
Some came for scorn of slavishness
That ruled lands far away;
And some came here for conscience' sake,
For Empire and the King;
And some for Love a home to make,
Their dear ones here to bring.

First staunch men left, for Britain's name,
The South's prosperity;
And Highland clans from Scotland came—
Their sires had aye been free;
And England oft her legions gave
To found a race of pluck;
And ever came the poor and brave
And took the axe and struck.

Each hewed, and saw a dream-like home!—
Hewed on—a settlement!
Struck hard: through mists the spire and dome
The distance rim indent!—
So honoured be they midst your ease
And give them well their due:
Honour to those who fought the trees,
And made a land for you!

W. D. LIGHTHALL.

Montreal, 16th February, 1888.

NOTE.—The writer was astonished, just as these lines were being sent, to find a passage in his morning newspaper (February 20) stating that at a banquet “on Wednesday evening last,” i.e., February 15, when these verses were first thought and begun, a speech had been made containing the passage: “I was glad to hear our chairman refer in such fine terms to the pioneers of the country. There is one sentence of Goldwin Smith's which shows a true appreciation of the work done by the young settlers . . . but there is a history—if it were recorded, or able to be recorded—which would be interesting indeed, and would be to us a religion of gratitude, and that is the history of the pioneer in all his lines. A monument of that history is the fair land in which we live!”

MONTREAL LETTER.

MONSIEUR SOULÉ has come all the way from Paris to preach the Lenten Sermons in Notre Dame. Judging from the dense crowd that packed the parish church this morning—a crowd by the way, in which the men seemed far to outnumber the women, so long a journey, for a Frenchman, bids fair to receive a flattering reward. Monseigneur Soulé belongs to the Order of St. Sulpice. The St. Sulpicians, if I mistake not, were the first *seigneurs* of Montreal, and to this day seigneurial dues are paid to them by all holding lands not yet commuted. The large seminary adjoining the parish church is theirs. It was by those of this influential brotherhood living in Paris, that the distinguished prelate was asked to preach in the church of the brotherhood of Montreal.

One almost believes in predestination, at least as far as worldly matters are concerned, when examining a priestly physiognomy. Monseigneur Soulé's appearance forms no very marked exception to the generally accepted picture. However he showed certain qualities with which all his confrères are not equally endowed. In the exquisitely-turned phrases that opened his discourse, in his pronunciation, and in his musical voice, we found a pleasure that is not ours every day. Did it ever strike you how much more mellow English and French sound spoken by our brothers over the sea than spoken by us? We seem to have the shrill, rough voices of youth, and they the deep, clear tones of manhood. Monseigneur Soulé's