

# HALIFAX PEARL,

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For the Pearl.

## THE ACCEPTED SACRIFICE.

The Sun in gorgeous splendour rolled  
Towards the western gates of gold,  
His last rays thrown on Carmel's hill  
When Baal's prophets lingered still—  
Long had they called but no reply  
Murmured or thundered through the sky.  
Long had they prayed but to their prayer  
No answer struck the listening ear;  
The Sacrifice upon the pyre  
Waited the touch of holy fire;  
But midday passed and evening came  
Without the heaven-approving flame,  
And doubt sat pictured in their eyes  
As light in heaven they saw the token—  
The star of evening Sacrifice  
And all their trust in Baal broken.

Then rose the Prophet of the Lord,  
And silence waited for his word.  
The people his commands obeyed  
And circled round with hearts dismayed.  
The altar of the Lord is reared,  
The victim slain—the wood prepared.  
He lifts his hands—his features glowing  
With hallowed zeal—with holy fire  
His thoughts by inspiration flowing  
Down to the advent of Messiah!  
Then rose the interceding prayer—  
"Thou God of our forefathers hear  
Let it be now to Israel shown  
That thou art God—and thou alone,  
Hear me oh Lord—that these may know  
Thy power—and to thy sceptre bow."  
Then darkness round the altar fell  
And rapture shook the prophets frame;  
He knew the signs infallible,  
And thrilled with gratitude divine.  
He bowed his head upon the ground,  
While Baal's prophets caught the sign  
And all were instant prostrate round,  
One shout of acclamation given  
Like incense fumes, ascends to heaven:  
"The Lord is God—his sign we own  
The Lord is God and God alone."

## WINNING THE GLOVES;

OR, THE WIZARD GUEST.

By W. H. Harrison.

"Who are you?—whence come you? and what seek you here at this hour?" was the gruff address of the porter of the castle of Urbino, to a mounted traveller, whose loud and quickly repeated knocks at the gate, argued no slight impatience at being kept on the outside of it.

"I marvel," was the answer, "that you, whom, from the important post you hold, I take to be a man of discretion, should propound to me three questions,—two of which, had I an object in deceiving you, I could as easily answer by a lie as by the truth; while, as to what I seek, methinks the pelting shower, which is drenching me to the skin, should sufficiently explain."

"Nevertheless," rejoined the other, "I must needs report your arrival to my superior, before I can open the gate. By what style shall I announce you?"

"Rolandi, a merchant of Firenze, if you must needs know," returned the traveller. Leaving the traveller to endure the delay as he best may, we will follow the trusty janitor to an apartment, which, by virtue of a few shelves of worm-eaten folios and mouldy manuscripts, was dignified by the appellation of the library. It was a lofty, although, in comparison with other chambers in the building, somewhat small room; in which, on opposite sides of a blazing hearth, were seated two young females, whose personal attractions, though their styles of beauty were different, were of a superior order. The name of the elder lady was Bianca,—that of the younger, Emilia.

"Well, Matteo," inquired the latter, "to what are we indebted for a sight of your iron visage, at this hour of the evening?"

"An' it please you, lady," said the porter, addressing himself to Bianca, "there is a traveller at the gate, who asks shelter from the storm."

"Is he young or old?" inquired Emilia, not giving her cousin time to reply; "handsome or ugly—dark or fair?"

"This is scarcely a night in which to tell the complexion of a

man's beard, lady," was the reply; "but the impatience with which he met my refusal to admit him without orders, savoured somewhat of the hot blood of youth."

"How provoking!" exclaimed the fair querist; "one might as well have an owl or a bat for a janitor, as this!"

"By thee, Emilia, cease," interrupted her cousin; "while you are trifling, this benighted traveller is exposed to the fury of the storm;—mercy! how it rages! Does he come alone, Matteo?"

"So he says," was the reply; "and I have no reason to doubt it, for I reconnoitered him from the keep, and could perceive no one near him."

"We have nothing to fear from a single traveller," rejoined Bianca; "so admit him without delay."

"Beware, cousin," exclaimed Emilia; "remember the injunctions of our worthy guardian, who strictly charged, you to admit no one in his absence; and I suspect that his prohibition was especially levelled at single travellers."

"I care not," responded the other; "for although my uncle has chosen to establish himself in the castle of my ancestors, under the pretext of taking better care of it and me, I am mistress here; and will render an account of my actions to no one."

"A most commendable resolution, my dear coz," rejoined the other; "if you can but hold to it; and, credit me, Bianca, I am the last person in the world to counsel submission to an usurping guardian; but what can we poor weak women oppose to the will of an unscrupulous tyrant?"

"I know him, Emilia, for what he is," was the response; "and I know, also, that he will stop at nothing to compel me into a marriage with his ruffian and dissolute son; while I—friendless orphan that I am!—have no present means of appealing from his oppression. He little knows me, however, if he supposes that I would not perish in the deepest dungeon of my own castle, rather than be subjected to his natural rapacity, in perilous

The dialogue was interrupted by the entrance of a youth, who officiated as a sort of page, followed by the newly arrived guest. The latter, who had availed himself of an opportunity of throwing aside his travelling cloak, and arranging his toilet as well as circumstances would permit, was a man apparently about five-and-twenty, with features remarkable rather for intellectual expression than beauty. He was somewhat above the middle stature, slenderly, but compactly made. His dress, although plain for the custom of the day, was of the finest materials, and newest fashion.

He advanced towards the ladies, and with graceful, though somewhat grave courtesy, thanked them for the shelter which they had so hospitably afforded to him. There was a slight degree of lameness in his gait, which he accounted for by stating, that, in riding through the forest, on the skirts of which the castle was built, he had struck his foot against the trunk of a tree.

Bianca immediately ordered refreshments to be placed before the stranger, who partook of them sparingly. He evidently felt the restraint naturally imposed on him by the youth and beauty of his fair entertainers; but, nevertheless, in the few remarks in which he indulged, he displayed a mind of no ordinary cultivation, as well as an acquaintance with the customs and manners of other nations, which could only have been acquired by travel. The stranger took his leave for the night, immediately on finishing his repast, and was attended to his chamber by the page Alberto.

The door had scarcely closed upon their guest, when Emilia exclaimed, "So, Bianca, you have frozen him out at last!"

"What mean you, Emilia?" inquired her cousin.

"Mean?" was the rejoinder, "why that you have spoiled us a delightful evening. Here have we two forlorn damsels been shut up together, for seven mortal weeks, like a brace of nuns, and when, as if dropped from the clouds, there comes a handsome cavalier to break the monotony of our solitude, you receive him as stately as an empress, and reply to every sentence he utters with a bow or a monosyllable, which doubtless he interpreted rightly, and therefore availed himself of the first reasonable pretext to depart."

"You do not consider, Emilia," replied Bianca, "that my position is one of extreme delicacy."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed her volatile companion; "here have I, for the last half hour, been dying to hear the stranger's account of his travels in foreign lands—of dear heretic England, where the women have their own way; where, although every man's house, they say, is a castle, they do not shut up young

damsels because they will not marry griffins. Then, again, I was longing to ask our visitor about Egypt, and the pyramids, and Cleopatra's needle; the eye of which, they say, overlooks half the world; and to beg of him, when he goes there again, to bring me a pet ibis, or a tame crocodile."

"Thou art a silly girl," remarked her graver cousin, with a smile, however, which she could not forbear; "but to confess the truth, our guest has somewhat puzzled me. If there be aught in physiognomy, he is no ordinary man; I mean not in point of rank, for he may be what he professes himself—a merchant. Did you observe the expression of his eye? I marked him once when Alberto handed him the cup: the stripling, albeit of the boldest, and one whose modesty is not likely to stand in the way of his promotion, quailed beneath the glance of the stranger, and spilled the wine upon the slaver, before the other could take the goblet. I say it in no inhospitable spirit, but I wish we were well rid of him."

It is not easy to describe the feelings of the elder lady, when, on the following morning, the page entered the breakfast-room, with the intelligence that the accident which the stranger had met with in the forest, had proved more serious than was at first apprehended; and that his ankle had become so much swollen in the course of the night, that there was not the least chance of his being able to put his foot in the stirrup for some days.

Even Emilia, though she professed to be greatly rejoiced at an accident which promised her a better acquaintance with the agreeable stranger, could not shut her eyes to the inconvenience, and probable embarrassment which his prolonged sojourn threatened to entail upon them; especially in the event of the return of the marchese, their guardian; a more charitably disposed person than whom, might regard with some suspicion the presence of a young and well-favoured stranger at the castle, under existing circumstances.

On the following day, Emilia exclaimed, "Why do you not make a fuss about the man! He will not eat, and if his stay should be prolonged a few days, we can appoint your slip of a page to attend upon him; and if, on his being able to quit his chamber, the common decency of hospitality should compel us to any closer communication with him, we must summon old Teresa, the housekeeper, to play propriety on the occasion; and she is old and ugly enough in all conscience, for the duty."

Matters went on, for some days, without any occurrence to vary the monotony which usually prevailed at the castle: the lame guest kept, if not exactly to his chamber, at least to that angle of the building which had been assigned to him; while the ladies contented themselves by sending, every morning and evening, to inquire after his health.

They were, however, much struck with the altered demeanour of their page, on all occasions in which the stranger was concerned. Alberto was faithful and devotedly attached to his mistress; but he was high-spirited, somewhat overbearing, and moreover, disposed to hold exceedingly cheap all that bore not the stamp of nobility; and yet he never mentioned the merchant guest but in terms of respect, amounting almost to awe.

It was on the fourth day of the stranger's sojourn, that one of the female domestics rushed into the apartment in which Bianca and her cousin were conversing together, and proclaimed the unwelcome intelligence, that a band of free-booters, aware, probably, of the absence of the marchese and the majority of his followers, had presented themselves at the gate of the castle, and were demanding admittance. Their summons was backed by a threat, that, if they were driven to the alternative of forcing an entrance, they would put every inhabitant to the sword.

Bianca, although, as may easily be conceived, in no little alarm, did not altogether lose her presence of mind on the occasion. She sent for Alberto, who assured her that the robbers would have little difficulty in making a forcible entry, and still less in overcoming any resistance which could be opposed to them by the few male domestics whom the marchese had left in charge of the castle.

After a moment's deliberation, Bianca determined on requesting the presence of the stranger guest at their little council of war; reasonably enough arguing, that if he could not aid them by his advice, it was but right that he should be apprised of their common peril.

The merchant instantly obeyed the summons, though evidently still suffering from the effects of his accident. He presented himself before the ladies with the same calm, grave, but respectful bearing which had distinguished him in the first instance; nor, on