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## POETRY.

### SOMETHING TO LOVE.

I have sought for the lessings  
That comfort the heart,  
And I've found that the fairest  
Take wings to depart.  
I have looked at the riches  
Men deem to be dear,  
And I proved them but troubles,  
Surrounded with fear.  
Then I cried to my soul,  
"Nath Heaven above  
The sweetest of joys  
Is something to love.  
I have watched the grim battles  
For honor and fame,  
Till I've heard people whisper  
Of ruin and shame.  
I have noticed the worldlings  
Successful and great,  
And their lives were cold-hearted,  
Embellished with hate.  
Then I vowed to my heart,  
"Nath Heaven above  
The first of man's joys  
Is something to love.  
I have seen dearest friendships  
Sundered for gold,  
And I've wonder'd how mortals  
To love could prove cold.  
I have tried to think blessings  
Full pockets and strife,  
But I found they were demons  
That robbed me of life.  
Then I said to my soul,  
Great Heaven above,  
Give me, oh, give me  
A something to love.

### THE PROFESSOR'S ADVENTURE.

Between eight and ten years ago, I engaged in a long vacation campaign among the Alps of Savoy. I was alone. My object was not recreation, but study. I occupied a Professor's Chair, and I was engaged in the collection of materials for the work on the Flora of the higher Alps; and, to this end, travelled chiefly on foot. My route lay from the beaten paths and passes. I often journeyed for days through regions where there were neither inns nor villages. I often wandered from dawn till dusk, among sterile steep slopes unknown even to the herdsmen of the upper pastures, and untrodden save by the chamois and the hunter. I thought myself very fortunate at those times, if, toward evening, I succeeded in steering my way to some chalet, where, in company with a half savage mountaineer and a herd of milch cows, I might find the shelter of a rafted roof, and a supper of black bread and whey. On one particular evening I had gone further than usual, in search of the senecio uniflora—a rare plant which I had hitherto believed indigenous to the southern valley of Monte Rosa, but of which I here succeeded in finding one or two indifferent specimens. It was a wild and barren district, difficult to distinguish with any degree of precision on the map, but lying in the upper defiles of the Val de Hagues, between the Mount Pléneur and the Grand Combin. On the waste of rock there was no sign of human habitation. Above me lay the greatest fields of Cortina, surrounded by the silver summits of the Graffeniere and Comin. To my left the sun was going down rapidly behind a forest of smaller peaks, the highest of which, as I could judge from Osterwald's map, was the Mont Blanc de Cheillon. In ten minutes more those peaks would be crimson; in one short half hour, it would be night. To be benighted on an Alpine plateau at the latter end of September is not a very desirable position. I knew it by recent experience. I therefore began retracing my route as rapidly as I could, descending in a north-westerly direction, and keeping a sharp lookout for any chalet that might offer a shelter for the night. Pushing forward thus, I found myself presently at the head of a little water, that ran, channelled, as it were, in the face of the plateau. I hesitated. It seemed that the gathering darkness, as if I could discern vague traces of a path fringed here and there in the deep grass. It also seemed as if the ravine tended down towards the upper pastures which were my destination. By following it I could scarcely go wrong—for where there is grass there are generally cattle and a chalet; and I might possibly find a nearer resting place than I had anticipated. At all events I resolved to try it. The ravine proved much shorter than I had expected, and instead of leading immediately downward, opened upon a second plateau, and through it passed a well worn footway abruptly to the left. Pursuing this footway with what speed I might, I came, in the course of a few minutes, to a sudden

slope, at the bottom of which, in a basin almost surrounded by gigantic limestone cliffs, lay a small dark lake, a few fields, and a chalet. The rose dints had by this time come and gone, and the snow had put on that ghostly gray which precedes the dark. Before I could descend the slope, skirt the lake and mount the little eminence on which the house stood, sheltered by its background of rocks, it was already night, and the stars were in the sky. I went up to the door and knocked, but no one answered. I opened the door, and all was dark. I paused—held my breath—listened—and fancied I could distinguish a low sound as of some one breathing. I knocked again, and was answered by a quick noise, like the pushing of a chair, and a man's voice said hoarsely: "Who is there?" "A traveller seeking shelter for the night," was my reply. A heavy footstep crossed the floor, a sharp flash shot through the darkness, and I saw by the flickering of tinder, a man's face bending over a lantern. Having lighted, he said, with scarcely a glance towards the door, "Enter, traveller," and went back to his seat beside the empty hearth. I entered. The chalet was of a better sort than those usually found at so great an altitude, consisting of a dairy and a storeplace, with a loft overhead. A table with three or four stools occupied the centre of the room. The rafters were hung with bunches of Indian Corn. A clock ticked in a corner, a kind of a rude pallet upon trestles stood in a recess beside the fireplace, and just through a door at the farthest end, I could hear the cows feeding in another apartment. Somewhat perplexed by the manner of my reception, I unstrapped my knapsack and box of specimens, took possession of the nearest stool, and asked if I could have supper. My host looked up with the air of a man intent on other things. I repeated the inquiry. "Yes," he said, wearily, "you can eat, traveller."

With this he crossed to the other side of the hearth, stooped over a dark object, which until now I had not observed, crouched down in one corner, and muttered a word or two of unintelligible patois. The object moaned, lifted up a bewildered woman's pale face, and rose slowly from the floor. The herdsmen pointed to the table, and went back to his stool and his former attitude. The woman after pausing, as if in the effort to remember something, went to the dairy, came back with a brown loaf and a pan of milk, and set them before me. As long as I live I shall never forget the expression of that woman's face. She was young and very pretty, but her beauty seemed turned to stone. Every feature bore the seal of an unpeppable terror. Every gesture was merely mechanical. In the lines that furrowed her brow, was a haggardness more terrible than the haggardness of age. In the locking of her lips there was an anguish beyond the utterance of words. This she served me I do not think she saw me. There was no recognition in her eyes, no apparent consciousness of any object or circumstance external to the secret of her own despair. All this I noticed during the few brief moments in which she brought my supper. That done, she crept away, as if into the same dark corner, and there sank down again, a mere budding heap of clothing. As for her husband there was something unnatural in the singular immobility of his attitude. There he sat, his body bent forward, his chin resting on his palms, his eyes staring fixedly at the blackened hearth, and not even the involuntary quiver of a nerve to show that he lived and breathed. I could not determine his age, analyze and observe his features as closely as I might. He looked old enough to be fifty and young enough to be forty; and was a fine muscular mountaineer, with that grave cast of countenance peculiar to the Valaisian peasant. I could not eat. The keenness of my mountain appetite was gone. I sat, as if fascinated, in the presence of the strange pair; observing both, and, apparently, by both as much forgotten as if I had never crossed their threshold. We remained thus, by the dim light of the lantern and the monotonous ticking of the clock, for some forty minutes or more, all profoundly silent. Sometimes the woman stirred as if in pain, sometimes the cows struck their horns against the manger in the outhouse. The herdsmen sat motionless, like a man cast in bronze. At length the clock struck nine, I had by this time become so nervous that I almost dreaded to hear my own voice interrupt the silence. However, I pushed my plate noisily aside, and said, with as much show of ease as I could muster: "Have you any place, friend, in which I can sleep to-night?" He shifted his position uneasily, and without looking round, replied in the same form

of words as he had previously used: "Yes, you can sleep, traveller." "Where?" In the loft above?" He nodded affirmatively, took the lantern from the table, and turned towards the dairy. As we passed, the light streamed for a moment over the crouching figure in the corner. "Is your wife ill?" I asked, pausing and looking back. "Yes, she is ill," he said with an effort. "I was about to ask what ailed her, but something in his face arrested the question on my lips; I knew not to this hour, what that something was. I could not define it then; I cannot describe it now; but I hope I may never see it in a living face again. I followed him to the foot of a ladder at the further end of the dairy. "Up there," he said; placed the lantern in my hand, and strode heavily back into the darkness. I went up, and found myself in a long, low granary, stored with corn sacks, hay, onions, rock-salt, cheeses, and farming implements. In one corner were the unusual luxuries of a mattress, a rug, and a three-legged stool. My first care was to make a systematic inspection of the loft and all that it contained; my next to open a little unglazed lattice with a sliding shutter, just opposite my bed. The night was brilliant, and a stream of fresh air and moonlight poured in. Oppressed by a strange undefined sense of trouble, I extinguished the lantern, and stood gazing out upon the solemn peaks and glaciers. Their solitude seemed to me more than usually profound. I could not help associating them in some vague way with the mystery in the house. I perplexed myself with all kinds of wild conjecture as to what the nature of that mystery might be. The woman's face haunted me like an evil dream. Again and again I went from the lattice, vainly listening for any sound in the room below. A long time went by thus, until at length, overpowered by the fatigues of the day, I stretched myself on the mattress, took my knapsack for a pillow, and fell fast asleep. I can guess neither how long my sleep lasted, nor from what cause I awoke. I only know that my sleep was dreamless and profound; and that I started from it suddenly, unaccountably trembling in every nerve, and possessed by an overwhelming sense of danger. Danger! Langer of what kind? From what? From whence? I looked around—was alone, and the quiet moon was shining in its serenely as when I fell asleep. I got up, walked to the door, reasoned with myself, all in vain. I could not stay the beatings of my heart. I could not master the horror that oppressed my brain. I felt that I dared not lie down again, that I must get out of the house somehow, and at once; that to stay would be death; that the instinct by which I was governed must at all costs be obeyed. I could not bear it. Resolved to escape, or at all events, to sell life dearly, I strapped on my knapsack, armed myself with my iron-headed alpen-stock, took my large clasp knife between my teeth, and began cautiously and noiselessly to descend the ladder. When I was about half way down, the alpen-stock, which I was so diously keeping clear of the ladder, encountered some dairy vessel and sent it chattering to the ground. Caution, after this, was useless. I sprang forward, reaching the outhouse at a bound, and found it to my amazement deserted, with the door wide open, and the moonlight streaming in. Suspecting a desperate defeat. All was silent, I could hear only the ticking of clock, and the heavy beating of my own heart. The pallet was empty. The bread and milk were still standing where I had left them on the table. The herdsmen's stool occupied the same spot on the desolate hearth. But he and his wife were gone—gone in the dead of night—leaving me, a stranger, in the sole occupation of their home. While I was yet irresolute whether to go or stay, and while I was wondering at the strangeness of my position, I heard, or fancied I heard something—something that might have been the wind, save that there was no air stirring—something that might have been the wailing of a human voice. I held my breath—heard it, again—followed it as it died away. I had not far to go. A line of light gleaming under the door of a shed at the back of the chalet, and a cry, bitter and more piercing than I had yet heard, guided me direct to the spot. I looked in—recoiled with horror—went back as if fascinated, and stood for some moments unable to move, to think, to do anything but stare helplessly upon the scene before me. To this day I cannot recall it without something of the same sickening sensation. Inside the hut, by the light of a pinetree thrust into an iron sconce against the wall, I saw the herdsmen kneeling by the

body of his wife, grieving over her, like another Othello, kissing her white lips, wiping blood stains from her yellow hair, raving out inarticulate cries of passionate remorse, and calling down all the curses of Heaven on his own head, and that of some other man who had brought this crime upon him! I understood it all now—all the mystery—the terror—the despair. She had sinned against him, and he had slain her. She was quite dead. The very knife, with its hideous testimony fresh upon the blade, lay near the door. I turned and fled—blindly, wildly, like a man with blood hounds on his track, now stumbling over stones, now torn by briars, now rushing forward faster than before, now halting upon hill with straining lungs and trembling limbs, now staggering across a level space, and casting never a glance behind. At length I reached the bare plateau above the line of vegetation, where I dropped exhausted. Here I lay for a long time, bent and stupefied until the intense cold of approaching dawn forced upon me a necessity of action. I arose and looked around upon a scene no feature of which was familiar to me. The snow peaks, though I knew they must be the same, looked unlike the peaks of yesterday. The very glaciers, seen from a different point of view, assumed new forms as if to baffle me. Thus perplexed, I had no recourse but to climb the nearest height from which it was probable that a general view might be obtained. I did so just as the last belt of purple mist turned golden in the east. A superb panorama lay stretched before me, peak beyond peak, glacier beyond glacier, valley and pine forest and pasture slope, vapors of the dawn. Here and there I could trace the foam of a waterfall, or the silver thread of a torrent; here and there the canopy of a faint blue smoke that waivered upward from some hamlet among the hills. Suddenly my eyes fell upon a little lake—a sullen pool—lying in the shade of an amphitheatre of rock, some eight hundred feet below. Until that moment the night and its terrors appeared to have passed away like a wicked vision, but now the very sky seemed to have darkened above me. Yes, there it lay at my feet. Yonder was the path by which I had descended to the plateau, and lower still the accursed chalet, with its background of rugged cliff and overhanging precipice. Well might they lie in shadow, well might the sunlight refuse to touch the ripples of that lake with gold, and to light up the windows of that house with an alluminating direct from heaven. Thus standing, thus looking down, I became aware of a strange sound—a sound singularly distinct, but far away—a sound sharper and hollower than the fall of an avalanche, and unlike anything that I remembered to have heard. While I was yet asking myself what it could be or whence it came, I saw a considerable fragment of rock detach itself from one of the heights overhanging the lake, bound rapidly from ledge to ledge, and fall with a heavy splash into the water below. It was followed by a cloud of dust, and a prolonged reverberation, like the rolling of distant thunder. Next moment a dark fissure sprang into sight all down the face of the precipice—the fissure became a chasm—the whole cliff waivered before my eyes—waivered, parted, sank up a cataract of earth and stones—and slid slowly down, down, into the valley. Defeated by the crash, and blinded by the dust, I covered my face with my hands, and anticipated instant destruction. The echoes, however, died away, and we succeeded by a solemn silence. The plateau on which I stood remained firm and unshaken. I looked up. The sun was shining as serenely, the landscape sleeping as peacefully as before. Nothing was changed, save that a wide white scar now denoted all on one side of the great limestone basin below, and a ghastly mound of ruin filled the valley at its foot. Beneath that mound lay buried all the record of the crime to which I had been unwitting witness. The very mountains had come down and covered it—nature had obliterated it from the face of the Alpine solitude. Lake and chalet, victim and executioner, had disappeared forever, and the place thereof knew them no more.

### Captain Speke, the Discoverer of the Sources of the Nile.

On Tuesday night, Dec. 22, a banquet in honour of Captain Speke was given in the Grand Jury Room at the Shire Hall, Taunton. In reply to the toast of his health, Captain J. H. Speke, who was received with vociferous cheers, spoke as follows:—You may depend upon it, gentlemen, that it was the pride both of my country and of my country that carried me through my under-

taking. Whatever I was I thought of home, and worked accordingly. You all know, gentlemen, that in 1859 I hit the Nile upon its head, and that in 1863 I drove it into the Mediterranean Sea. But while you are doing me this great honor, and while you are complimenting me as you have done on the success of my late career, I must not omit to do justice to those who went before me, and by whose immediate instrumentality the work commenced. \* \* \* It was two missionaries, named Rebmann and Edhardt, who first commenced the work. They heard from the natives of Africa that in the interior of the continent there was, as they imagined, an enormous piece of water, extending from the equator over the 14th degree of south latitude, and being about 300 miles in breadth. This occurred about the time of the Crimean war. One of these missionaries made a map of the country, and taking it to the Geographical Society of England, proposed to examine this piece of water, and see exactly in what position it lay. He also proposed to ascertain, I believe, whether it had any outlets, and whether it formed the headquarters of any rivers. The Geographical Society was then at the height of its prosperity, and was very desirous that some measure should be taken to open up that part of Africa, and especially the locality in which this great hypothetical lake was situated—Captain Burton happening to be in the company of Admiral Sir George Back, was accosted by him upon this subject. Having heard of Captain Burton, Admiral Sir George Back preferred him to the missionaries, thinking that the duties of the latter would interfere with their labors in a geographical point of view. I was a necessity to Captain Burton, for I had formerly served with him in Africa, and had learnt the use of surveying instruments. We went together from Zanzibar to Kigami, where I first heard from the natives that the Nyanza lay immediately to its northward, and that it was the largest piece of water in the country. They informed us that there were three lakes—namely, the Victoria Nyanza, the Tanganyika, and the Nyassa. Captain Burton expressed his intention of going to the Tanganyika lake. I went there with him, and navigated the lake, but our stores became exhausted, and it was necessary that we should send for a fresh supply or return. I proposed the former alternative, but that was negatived. I pointed out that we had done nothing, that the people of England would expect something from us, and that we should return only as far as Kigami; but my companion was ill, or, doubtless, he would have gone with me. At that time I had discovered the southern end of the Victoria Nyanza, and had proved that it was the source of the Nile, and as no one had anything to do with the discovery except the two missionaries, Captain Burton and Captain Grant, who went with me on my last journey, I think, having said this much, I have done justice to all parties. Your worthy chairman has hinted at my future prospects in Africa, but it could not be expected that he should know what I have in view. My object is no less than the regeneration of Africa. ("Hear, and applause") I believe—and I say I believe, because I have only been across the tract once—that I have discovered a zone of wonderful fertility in Africa. It stretches in a line with the equator from east to west, and is a fertility perfectly astonishing me. I have shown that the altitude of the country is between 3000 and 4000 feet, that in the very heart of the country is a great mountain group which are the rain-bearers for fertilizing the country, and the consequence is that throughout the whole duration of the twelve months there is a fall of rain on an average of two to three inches each day. There is a temperature as mild as that of this country in summer, and with the moisture, heat, and a rich soil combined, you can imagine what the result is. And although the climate is so temperate, it is the most healthy of all the regions in which I have travelled. It may be said that I am to some extent self-interested, but I don't judge from the effect of the climate upon myself alone. There are Arab merchants and others who say that there is no place so healthy as the equatorial regions. Now, gentlemen, as this country is so prolific, as its climate is so genial, as all facts tend to show that, properly developed, it is as fertile as any country in the world, I think, instead of devoting our attention to places more distant from the equator, where there are great rains, great droughts, and fearful famines, we should look to it. If means were taken to colonize it, there would I am sure, be ample repayment. ("Hear") And if missionaries should again enter Africa, I would say that this region is especially the spot to which they should direct their attention. ("Hear, hear")—and if they should do so they will meet there a people who are not purely heathen, but who, having emanated from the African stock, have the germ of Christianity