

DENMORE FENNO.

There is a portrait of Denmore Fenno, painted when he was in his twenty-fifth year. This portrait now hangs in the private gallery of Carl Werner, his life-long friend, in Vienna. This portrait has been pronounced a life-like resemblance of Mr. Fenno at that time. Apart from its extreme beauty, its expression rivets the attention of every beholder. It is the face of a man who does not notice the common things about him, but who questions earnestly, in the silence of his soul, the meaning of the riddle we call life—who seeks to unveil the secrets of the infinite. About the sensitive mouth there is a pensive sadness that approaches melancholy without touching it, and persons who have seen this portrait will find that it has accompanied them while reading these extracts from his journal, like the mournful undertone in a rapid musical movement, or the distant roar of the sea heard through all the sounds of a midsummer's day.

An entry in Mr. Fenno's journal about the time that he graduated at Yale, reads as follows:—

"Well, I have succeeded, if to be allowed to proclaim the valedictory is an indication of success. But what is success? To acquire distinction in public, and fail of obtaining happiness? If this is success, then I have succeeded. How eagerly I once looked forward to this day! Why can I not accept such favours as fortune offers, and be thankful? Why can I not cease to desire what she withholds?"

"I came here a year ago, determined to drown regret in hard study. Despondency and remorse are like the canker-worm and mildew: they eat into a man's life and spoil it. I crushed them resolutely before they had time to destroy me. Life has surely something pleasant to offer to every man, whether he be merry or sad. There are flowers to be plucked, music that waits for a listener, poetry to be eaged in rhyme, and songs to be sung. I will not be false to every earnest instinct in my nature, because a woman could not be true to me."

Under a later date he writes:

"I went to a ball last night, and danced with Miss Ellery. I made her acquaintance last winter, and studied her awhile in order to discover, if possible, the secret of her attraction for Elmer. I confess myself baffled. She is undeniably handsome, graceful, a trifle haughty, and cold. Beauty is a law in itself. Men instinctively honour beauty, and how much more deeply when to it is added wealth and social position! She is neither witty nor very wise. She appears to lack the little charms and fascinations that many plainer women employ to secure attention. She is not a flirt, and yet she is a belle; half the men in her 'set' walk, talk, and drive with her. I should as soon think of making love to a marble statue of propriety. Elmer may have her, if he can win her; perhaps he can find fire enough in her heart to warm the little he has left of his own, after a hundred flirtations."

"There is but one woman—there never was but one—in all the world for me, and I have lost her. I am going home in a few days, and we shall meet again. I have avoided her for a year: I can do so no longer without turning away from many old friends."

"July 2.—Well, I can imagine what Satan's sensations must have been when he found himself where he could think, after being thrown from heaven, and realized that his downfall was the result of his own folly."

"I saw my little love last night, and discovered too late that I have thrown away my life's happiness. I write in language cold enough, but the night has been like brain fever to me. The love that I have been stamping out, as men fight fire, has flamed up again with the old heat and strength. I can never extinguish it, I fear. We met as common acquaintances meet. I believe I betrayed some emotion, but if she felt any she concealed it perfectly; she has always possessed unlimited self-control. An hour later I enquired of a friend why the man she had promised to marry was not present."

"The answer came in a surprised tone: 'I am not certain that she is engaged; at least, no such engagement has been made public.' 'A mistake, probably,' I said to my friend; but to myself I said, 'I will know the truth at once.' Heaven help me if I have been the victim of a plot!"

"A little later, when I had contrived to see her alone, I showed her the note that I had always believed to be in her handwriting, forbidding me ever to write to her, or speak to her again. Most women would have fainted, but she did not. She stood for a moment as rigid as a marble statue, and as colourless, and the hand I held in mine was as cold. I was alarmed, and would have called assistance, but her womanly delicacy brought the colour to her cheeks."

"Don't go, Denmore; I shall be better soon. This note—it is a forgery. Some one has stolen my paper and imitated my writing."

"I made an effort to speak, but no words came. I would have taken her hand again, but she drew back."

"Why did you not show me this paper before, a year ago? Do you know what you have done? The explanation of your long silence comes too late."

"Forgive me, and listen."

"I have no right to listen."

"I understood her emotion then. Neither spoke for a few moments. Shame and despair kept me silent. She was the first to speak."

"Denmore, that you could have believed me capable of writing such a note as this seems im-

possible to me! Whether it was wrong or not for me to listen to you, you have a right to offer such excuses as you can find for yourself."

"Her voice was very gentle, although the words seemed harsh to me until I remembered that she too must have suffered as well as myself. All this might have been avoided if I had only trusted her as I ought to have done—as I promised to do. I said to her—

"My own experience tells me what you have endured, but have I sinned past forgiveness?"

"I can forgive you; but can I trust you? That you could give me up without a struggle argues little for your strength of purpose. How can I tell that you will not repeat the offence?"

"She looked steadily into my face while she was speaking, and I shrank from her gaze. The belief that she had lost confidence in me prevented me from pleading my own cause with her, and I believe at that moment she thought that I did not care to take up the broken threads of our lives and try to unite them again. When I did not reply, she continued—

"If you had wished to destroy all my affection for you, you could not have taken a more effectual method than the one you employed. You wanted my whole heart. I gave you my love without stint or measure. I gave it because I liked to do it—because I was certain of measure for measure. I could not understand your silence. I believed you to be incapable of jealousy; and, Denmore, in your heart I believed that you were true to me; that you had not ceased to love me. But I thought that your father had discovered our attachment, and that he had persuaded you not to see me, or write to me again. I know how easily you are influenced by those you love. How much do you suppose my life was worth to me when I believed that?"

"Her eyes were clear and bright, but there were tears in her voice."

"Tell me," I found voice at last to say, "that my coldness and desertion has not destroyed all your love for me; that you have not cast me off forever, and put another in my place."

"I have promised to marry another, but he has not taken your place. He came to me when a cloud had suddenly risen between me and my happiness. Soon it deepened and shut out everything that made my life worth possessing. Perhaps, when struggling up from a great blow, I was ready to catch at any support. But, in truth, I find it very hard, even now, to say why I have accepted another man's affection. The belief that a great deal of love on one side only was better than none at all anywhere may have had a value for me. One thing is only too certain, Denmore; I dare not break my promise to him, given, as it was, only a few weeks ago."

"I had no strength to combat her decision. She had a sad, perplexed face, and I read, plainly stamped upon it, this fact—that she was suffering what all must endure who snatch at fortune from mere weariness, rather than wait until events resolve themselves into the harmony that may perhaps result sooner or later."

"After a moment's pause she added, as if speaking to herself, for she did not look at me—

"Will this last, that I cling to now? Will anything last?"

"My little love," I said, trying to gain her attention, for she seemed lost in thought, and only half aware of my presence, "you have not lost my love, as you seem to think. What has come to me, that I can find no words to-night? This new blow has petrified me, I believe. Come away now. I will see you again in a day or two, if you will allow me, and perhaps—"

"No, Denmore, it is too late."

"July 6.—I have made one more effort, but she has recovered her usual self-control, and no words of mine can shake her resolution. I watched her closely as her thoughts ran back through the vista of days, each one of which was lighted by the love that I know—heaven help me!—was life itself to her. She is right; it is too late. I wonder how, with a merciful and loving Father above us, we have ever drifted so far apart as this!"

Two years later we find Mr. Fenno in Germany, a student in the University at Bonn. He afterward went to Berlin. Of his life during the two years that he lived in Germany little is known, and his journal reveals but little. His chief amusement, apart from study, which was always a pleasure to him, seems to have been found in music, of which he was passionately fond. Verdi was his favourite; this composer's stormy music found an echo in his turbulent nature. Said a friend to him one day—

"How do you contrive, with your fiery temperament, to show always a serene exterior?"

"My friend," he replied, "smooth sailing, with me, comes only from keeping a firm hand on the tiller."

A short time after his return home in the summer of 1856, he writes:

"This girl, Harry Irving's sister, attracted me from the first. She is exquisitely fair, with an innocent expression on her face like that of a child. She has blue eyes, and hair of the same golden brown as that of my lost love's. Except in the colour of her hair, there is no resemblance in either mind or person. She is not very intellectual, but she is graceful and refined. Her nature is not deep; so much the better for me, if I can win her. She will be satisfied with the little that I shall be able to give her. I begin to understand why men sometimes marry women possessing the very qualities they once despised. I might find rest here if my heart will only hold. Here is the difficulty. I like her society, but when I am away from her, try as I will, I can only feel a pleasant friendship for her. I begin

to think there is not enough fuel in my nature to start another fire. It is an exhausted volcano. I will never marry a woman that I cannot feel some sort of affection for, stronger than friendship."

"June 11.—I wandered in her garden with Eva yesterday. The heat was intense, and there were indications of a thunder-storm in the atmosphere. I remembered another day that had ended in a tempest."

"I will cut some roses for you," I said, turning toward some lovely pink moss buds."

"I like these climbing white ones better," she remarked."

"I recollected another who liked white roses. Was fate conspiring against me to rob me of this girl?"

"I will cut some for you," I said."

"They grew at the top of a high trellis, and I stooped to arrange a step-ladder. In some way, perhaps accidentally, but I believe intentionally, her fingers swept the hair on my forehead. The light touch thrilled every nerve in my overstrung brain into jangling discord. I started violently, exclaiming, involuntarily: 'I cannot do it! I will never make another effort—never, never while I live!'"

"The girl looked at me with surprise not unminged with irritation."

"You can certainly reach them with the ladder! Well, I will cut them for myself," she added, petulantly, like a spoiled child."

"How could I tell her the truth—that I had forgotten her existence for a moment! Her touch on my head had extinguished every spark of affection that I had ever felt for her, and fanned into flame the old smothered fire."

"Wait a little while, Eva," I said, "and I will cut as many as you like. Let us walk now." And I turned toward the river, and walked on in silence until we reached the bridge. Here I paused and said: 'I am going away in a few days, and shall not return for a long time.'

"It was a sudden resolution, but I did not tell her so."

"Going away? Where will you go?"

"Well, I may accept the professorship that has been offered me in New York, that I have told you about. I may go further—to Prussia, perhaps. I like the life I led there."

"I looked keenly into her face, but, except that she showed a slight regret at the loss of a friend, I could discover no emotion."

"We shall be very sorry. I shall have no one to sing with me; no one ever plays and sings as you do."

"You will find some one; vacant places are easily filled."

"I thought, bitterly, how soon another had been put in my place, years ago."

"I had never given this girl the slightest reason to suppose that she could ever be anything more than a friend; I waited to be certain of myself."

"An hour later, I was on my way to the city. A thunder shower had flooded the streets, and a soft wind was blowing under the summer moon when I rang the bell at the door of my little love. She opened it herself, flushing slightly as she discovered who was her visitor. We had not met but once for four years. She was slightly changed; a little thinner, paler, more womanly; but her old sweet self spoke in the quiet tones of her voice as she gave me a cordial welcome in her old careless manner. She told me that she was alone—that the other members of the family were at church. The book she had been reading—Longfellow's 'Kavanagh'—lay open on the table."

"Well, Denmore," she said, "you told me the last time we met that when you had found peace and rest, then you would come to me and accept my friendship. Am I to congratulate you?"

"She spoke in a steady tone, but I was aware that she possessed the power to veil any emotion that she might feel to a degree that I would have given years of a lifetime to possess. Her quiet tone acted upon my sensitive nerves like a charm, as it had always done. Her mere presence had the effect of an opiate."

"I will tell you what I have come to say, and then you shall decide whether I am a fit subject for congratulation." I told her my mental experience since we parted years before. "Happiness seldom comes to the man who seeks it—never at his bidding," I said, in conclusion."

"I believe it is true," she said in reply. "We may, perhaps, find it in the effort to do our duty to God and our fellow-creatures."

"You say 'perhaps'; have you found it in that way?"

"She looked up suddenly, and there was something more than pity in her eyes. It swept away all my resolution, all the barriers I had been building so untiringly for years. I took her in my arms as in the old days, and asked questions that I had no right to ask."

"Tell me if you love the man you promised to marry when my desertion made his affection of value to you! Tell me that you love him better than you love me, and I will believe you and go away. I will never cross your path again in all the long years to come."

"The hot blood mounted to her very temples, and she made an effort to free herself from my embrace; but I would not let her go. I had been her willing slave in years gone by. I was her master to-night. I know now that it had been better for us both if I had always been. Her rule had been so gentle, that I had not felt the silken chains. She turned to me as in the old time; and her voice was very gentle as she said—

"It is useless for me to try to deceive you,

Dentie; I knew that years ago. But you are mistaken if you think I feel only friendship for my lover. He came to me when I was starving in the desert, and he gave me as true and earnest a love as any man has ever offered to woman. That I could not return it measure for measure is surely no fault of his. He knows nothing of my old-time love for you, and whether concealment is best or not, I shall never tell him now. He has been unfortunate, and his business is ruined. He is struggling up from a heavy blow, and his health, always delicate, has been undermined by losses, worry, false friends, and insinuations against his honesty. I know him to be a just man—the soul of honour. He has gone away to attempt to regain his usual health and spirits. How can I add another, and I believe, a heavier blow, to those he has already received? Do you believe that our Father in heaven would bless our own lives if I should do this thing? I believe that a certain and speedy retribution follows a ruptured engagement. If a promise is not binding, what shall we say of a marriage vow? What is that but a promise?"

"I was softened by her words, and the tone of conviction in which they were uttered."

"You are right—as you always have been. If I had trusted you as I ought to have done, I know you would never have cast me off. I must go away. I must keep you so far out of my reach that I shall never have it in my power again to do what I have done to-night. There is no other way. Good-bye, my darling! And unclasping my arms, I let her go forever. The dream was over."

"BERLIN, Sept. 2.—I have buried the old life forever. Many a man has won fame and fortune without a woman's affection. Some one has written, truthfully perhaps, that 'Love is but the embellishment of our earlier years—a song piped between the acts in the drama of life, on a shifting stage.' I have handled fire, and it has scorched my soul. I will have no more of it."

OUR CHESS COLUMN.

Solutions to Problems sent in by Correspondents will be duly acknowledged.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. W. S. Montreal.—Many thanks for several valuable communications.

M. J. M. Quebec.—Letter received. Many thanks. Will answer by post.

Student, Montreal.—Correct solution received of Problem No. 216.

G. A. K. Ottawa.—Correct solution received of Problem No. 216. Shall be glad to hear from you again.

R. F. M. Sherbrooke, P.Q.—Solution received of Problem for Young Players, No. 214. Correct.

H. and J. McGill, Cote des Neiges.—Correct solutions received of Problem for Young Players, No. 214.

E. H. Montreal.—Correct solution received of Problem for Young Players, No. 213.

We are very glad to insert in our Column the following extract from an English paper. As was remarked by one of our correspondents, who read the paragraph, every member of the Montreal Chess Club will most heartily give his assent to that part of it which refers to our former visitor, Mr. Bird. It was generally remarked during his stay in Montreal that his general manner set every one at ease who had the privilege of playing a game of chess with him.

(From the Croydon (Eng.) Guardian, Feb. 22, 1879.)

On Thursday last, Mr. Bird, who was one of the competitors in the Paris Tourney, paid a visit to the Croydon Chess Club, and, with his usual good nature, played the members simultaneously, winning nearly all the games; Mr. Brown, being a cautious player, won the only game against his powerful antagonist.

Leading men in all callings are too apt to allow their better feelings to be warped in estimating the abilities of others, and chess masters are no exception to this rule, but Mr. Bird is happy in being able to avoid giving offence to anyone.

We have been informed by an obliging correspondent that a meeting of the members of the Quebec Chess Club took place in that city, on the 15th inst., and that the following officers were elected for the term ending 15th January next:—Honorary President, Mr. T. E. Fletcher; President, Mr. T. LeDroit; Vice-Presidents, Mr. C. P. Champion and Mr. J. Green; Secretary, Mr. D. C. Mackenzie; Committee: Messrs. E. Pope, F. H. Andrews, R. Blackiston, M. J. Murphy, and E. B. Holt.

MEPHISTO.

(From Land and Water.)

On Saturday last we visited "Mephisto," the now celebrated mechanical chessplayer, who has removed from the Aquarium and taken up his abode in the Strand, where he holds sittings daily. During our visit Mephisto played two games, beating his opponents on each occasion, and it was very interesting to watch his movements, which are most perfect, while the sardonic smile with which he greets his adversary when taking a piece is not easily forgotten. As he is not yet endowed with the power of speech, he is compelled to give check by touching his opponent's king, and when check-mate is pronounced he quietly removes the king from the board, and thus shows that the game is over. It is impossible for the most Lilliputian Tom Thumb to get inside the figure, which we examined thoroughly, and visitors can do the same for themselves. Those who have not seen this marvellous piece of mechanism would do well to attend one of Mephisto's sittings, and play a game of chess with his satanic majesty, who, if we except his cloven foot and wicked smile, appears most quiet and courteous in manner.

(From Hartford, Conn., Times.)

New York is going to have a game of chess with living figures sometime next month. Captain McKenzie and Mr. Eugene Delmar are to manœuvre the forces.

We are sorry to see it stated in the news from the other side of the Atlantic that Anderssen, the great chessplayer, is dead. If such should prove to be the case, it will be a great loss to the lovers of the game, and the termination of one of the most brilliant chess careers on record.