

siderable literary finish, it is as broad as humanity in its sympathies, it shows a scholarly mind, it is free from pedantic learning, or dogmatic assertiveness, and is truly altruistic in its spirit.

T. G. MARQUIS.

* * *

Legends of Florence.*

FOLK-LORE is always interesting; but when we think of folk-lore we think of the legends, the tales that have grown from the soil, that have been inspired by the mysterious hills, or the strange voices of the forest, or the wondrous murmur of waters. In "Legends of Florence" by Charles Godfrey Leland we have, however, a very different kind of folk-lore. Here the stories have grown out of the stones of the city. They refer to its places and buildings, "to the Cathedral and Campanile, the Signoria, the Bargello, the different city gates, ancient towers and bridges, palaces, crosses, and fountains, noted corners, odd by-ways, and many churches."

The book is not intended for artists and art critics—for Florence always suggests art—or for scholarly folk-lorists, but for the general reader. The tales have not been wrested from musty parchment, but like Scott's tales and ballads have been culled from among the people. The writer's chief authority, indeed, was a fortune-teller skilled in witchcraft. "These tales," he says, "are Maddalena's every line—I pray thee, reader, not to make them mine. The spirit will always speak." The spirit does indeed speak. The tales are evidently not of Mr. Leland's invention. They are simple, direct; the children of wondering brains. The marvellous art, the strange buildings with their grotesque adornments, the monuments of great men have all weighed upon the minds of the people till a strangely supernatural explanation has been given for everything great, or beautiful, or odd in Florence. While these stories are not intended for the scholar, the student of Roman literature would find an interesting task in connecting many of them with the Latin myths and legends. Many of them will be found on careful examination to be as old as Ovid and Virgil.

The mediæval witch plays an important part in them, as does the monk. The poets and artists who have made Florence great in the eyes of the world have likewise their legends, and every story fascinates. There is, perhaps, a lack of arrangement in the material, and a crowding in parts. The best wine, too, has not been kept till the last, and the first dozen or so stories are by far the best; some of the later ones, indeed, read like mere padding. The book has one grave defect: the legends require but little setting, and the few introductory words concerning the objects about which they have grown is all that was needed, but Mr. Leland frequently adds stories (not Florentine—American stories) by way of illustration, and occasionally takes away from the strength of the legends by jocular remarks. The book itself is magnificently gotten up, the very cover suggesting Florence and art.

* * *

Prairie Pot-pourri.

AN interesting and bright North-West book is being issued through the Canadian booksellers. It is entitled "Prairie Pot-pourri," by Mary Markwell, which is the nom-de-plume of a clever writer who is already known under a different name and whom this book will assist in making her mark. It consists of tales and sketches racy of the soil and characters of the Territories, and, being published at Regina, takes a unique place as the first story-book ever written by a North-Wester and published in the North-West. In some respects it suggests the "Tales of Western Life," which the gifted H. R. A. Pocock published some years ago at Ottawa. Rich in wit and pathos, this author will, we think, be yet further heard of.

Here is an example from "The Lah-de-dah from London," a very original love sketch:

Face to face with his first real difficulty, the Lah-de-dah paused by his blighted acres, his "improvements" in bills and costs weighing like lead on his troubled mind, and his bank account badly on the wrong side.

* "Legends of Florence." By Charles Godfrey Leland. New York: Macmillan & Co. Toronto: The Copp, Clark Co.

All at once he felt conscious of some breath of contentment; something like balm stole over his senses and he turned to find a pair of blue-grey Irish eyes looking up at him, and misty with the heart's dew tears.

"Why Mollie," he exclaimed, taking off his hat and smiling down on her, "I'm looking over my failures you see—trying to figure myself out of this—hole." He swept an arm in the direction of his blackened acres.

"Ma sent me up, Mr. Periwinkle-Brown, to ask you to—come down—to supper—Mr. Binning brought the mail up too—and there are—some letters—Mr. Dick is there." Pretty Mollie's voice could keep its key no longer, "I'm—I mean we are all so sorry." Then little Mollie began to cry like the tender-hearted little soul she was, and right there, out on the open plain in full view of the trail, and above his blighted possessions the La-de-dah took Mollie in his arms and told her that he loved her.

Men are such oddly constructed beings that, finding themselves in one difficulty floundering, they blindly plunge into a greater.

Now Mollie O'Toole was a properly trained young woman; she immediately wriggled herself out of the awkward position of being caged in the arms of a handsome young man—in broad day. She knew that D. G. Periwinkle-Brown was a gentleman—she understood the relative positions of the descendant of conquering kings and heir to Aunt Toe's millions, and the daughter of a plain settler out West; so that when the La-de-dah surrounded by his losses, borne down by his crosses, contemplating nothing but disaster (why should he not make the final plunge and drag somebody down with him? Misery, especially male misery, likes company) proposed to pretty Mollie O'Toole and was—refused; it knocked D. G. Periwinkle-Brown—descendant of conquering kings and "busted" gentleman farmer—out. The vulgar frost might be blind to his value as "gentleman-farmer;" fate might treat him as an ordinary mortal, the whole North-West might ignore his importance, but to be refused by a chit of a Canadian bread-and-butter Miss out on the prairies of the unenlightened Territories,—it knocked D. G. Periwinkle-Brown out.

It isn't often a well-bred young man, with prospects, sees a pretty girl—especially a poor one—running away from him, and the La-de-dah lost none of the peculiar effect. Pretty Mollie, her black hair floating out, her tiny feet scarcely seeming to touch the earth as she ran, her pink gown like waving rose leaves clinging about her, passed out of sight, and the La-de-dah heaved a tremendous sigh—of relief: "Gad," he said, in one wordless breath, "Whatever would I have done if she'd said—yes? Fawney the little Kinajin refusing me? Of course she never dreamed I meant it; I rather half did—I believe? Fawney; she refused me? Oh well, I'll go back to Aunt Toe; this fawning isn't waht it's cracked up to be!"

"Farming's all right," broke in Dick suddenly, bringing a strong hand down on the La-de-dah's shoulder, "It's trying to farm *without farming*, that is the whole trouble."

"Now I say, Workman," said the La-de-dah, "havn't I spent ever so much? havn't I done?"

"You've spent too much—and done nothing," said Dick determinedly. "Look at all that fencing—useless; look at that lawn—useless; look at that artificial lake—useless. I tell you what, Brown (Dick had dropped the prefix and the hyphen), if you want to succeed out West you've got to roll up your sleeves and go at farming like a man."

"Now—you—you know, Workman, I—I—well you understand—I—I—of course I—well, you know that me Aunt Toe?"

"Oh," says Dick, suddenly plunging both hands into pockets, "I've got a letter for you—here it is, Binning brought it up—and yes, the Major, I mean Mrs. Major, wants you to come down to supper."

D. G. Periwinkle-Brown was making a slit in the large square envelope with a very handsome pearl-handled pen-knife he said:

"See here, Workman—I'm going to cut the whole thing; fawning may be all right—I don't say it isn't you know—but it requires—er—well, it requires special sawt of—er—education, you know—I've decided to cut the whole bloomin' thing; I'll cable me Aunt Toe for funds to square up the—the deficit, and I'll go back to London and"—

"What's wrong," shouted Dick. The La-de-dah suddenly widened his eyes, his jaw dropped, his hand clenched the page with spasmodic and trembling strength, he grew pale, white, ashen, then tumbled against the fence as one stricken to the soul.

"God bless you man," shouted Dick again, "Have you got bad news?" The La-de-dah turned his helpless glance upon Dick—caught the top rail with shaking hands, beads of sweat appeared on his head, his cheeks seemed to hollow with the pallor there. He fixed his wild eyes on Dick as if craving sympathy and moaned:

"Me—Aunt—Toe—is—is—go—ing to—he—married!"

Dick burst out laughing so sudden was the revolution of feeling. He had imagined for one awful moment that Aunt Toe had followed the conqueror and gone the way of all flesh.

"Married!" echoed Dick, smacking his leg and roaring out a hearty guffaw that struck his woe-begone companion painfully indeed.

"Married!" Dick rocked himself out of excess of humour. "Then, Brown," he shouted, "you're cake is dough old boy—and you'll succeed in spite of yourself."

Several other sketches, "The Light of Other Days," "Episode at Clarke's Crossing" and "How the End Came," are thrilling. Anyone interested in Canadian literature and good short stories ought to order his bookseller to obtain the volume.

ALCHEMIST.