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Portry.

WINTER.

The winter's wreath has charms for me;
The barren heath, the leafless tree,
The holly hedge, the purling rill,
Retain a pledge of nature still
The fir, the laurel, box and yew,
Give freshness to the wintry view.

There the brown mead, the swollen mere,
The time-leoparded forest here,
Declare the wondrous Artist-hand
Which all this varied scene has planned.

Look on the crown of silvery snow
That rests for aye on mountain's brow,
While streams glide down the valley beneath,
Waters of life from the springs of death!
When my head, like his, is withered and hoar,
May my heart its fountains of love still pour!

And see the mantle of white that is spread
O'er the stiffened earth, like a sheet o'er the dead,
Now the golden days of Autumn have fled.

The Frost-kind binds with icy chain;
But Spring comes, queen-like, crowned with flowers,
And the tyrant yields to her gentle reign,
And melts at her feet into penitent showers;
And fair Nature, released from her prisoning tomb,
Comes wreathed divinely with odorous bloom!

Thus the shroud shall change its sad glimmer of white
For the rainbow hues of celestial light,
A garment meet for the honored guest
Whom the Master shall bid to His wedding feast!

Interesting Tale.

THE BRIDE AND GROOM.

A JEWISH LEGEND.

Among the most learned and pious Jews of the twelfth century, next to the great Maimon, or Mainmonides, of European fame, was a Rabbi, or as he was more properly called, Schimon ben Isaac. He wrote a commentary on Thora and on several of the books of the Prophets, and also one on the Talmud. He was a great mathematician, and among his own people was revered for his piety and asceticism.

His parents lived in Toulon, but Raschi was born in Troyes, and this is the reason why his father Isaac and his mother left Toulon. Shortly before the birth of the child the good woman walked down a narrow street. A cunning wagon was being drawn along it by four stout horses, and the wagon filled the street so as to make it impossible to pass. Seeing this, the woman turned to seek a side street, but at that moment the car of a young nobleman drove up the lane towards her. The timid woman ran from side to side in quest of a corner into which she might retreat from the two vehicles.

Look at the Jewess! exclaimed the driver of the nobleman's car; how frightened she is! Whip the horses and run her down, said his master.

The two vehicles approached, and the poor creature, finding no place of retreat, with a piteous cry struck against the wall. At that moment the huge wheel of the wagon rolled towards her almost grazing the horse's wall. Then, suddenly, the wall bowed inward and formed a little recess in which the Jewess stood secure.

Softer and more yielding are these stones than your hearts, ye Christians! she exclaimed. Now when this miracle was known, it was at once concluded that it was wrought by magic, and Isaac, fear it should be the cause of their being both brought to the stake, fled precipitately to Troyes, and there Raschi was born.

When Raschi was an old man, and was renowned everywhere for his vast learning and profound wisdom, and above all for his great holiness, the school wherein he taught was crowded with pupils, and his sayings were treasured as though they were precious like gold. He fasted continuously, only eating what was just sufficient to keep life in, and what he ate was of poor quality, and was mingled with ashes. He drank nothing save water, and of that only a little, once a day. He remained whole nights in prayer, and when not engaged in teaching during the day, he stood wrapt in meditation.

As he stood at his window one evening, two Jews passed, and they were speaking of him. On said to the other, "Was there ever in the days of the prophets a greater saint than this Rabbi Raschi?"

To which the other replied, "Surely for him there must be prepared one of the most exalted stations in Paradise."

Then the Rabbi fell to musing on the place that was to be his in the Kingdom of God, and he wondered who would be his companion in the Land of Light, and sit at his side in Paradise. With his thoughts fixed on this theme, he stood long at his window gazing out over the vineyard, towards the horizon where the sun had set, and where its rays shot upwards, kindling the fleecy attenuated vapour which hung in the air, and making the blue of heaven green as grass. Level bars of cloud burned like gold in a furnace, and small misty fragments glowed scarlet, like fiery lilies growing in a field of sunlit grass between strips of yellow crocuses.

As the old man stood with his eyes fixed on the west, and his mind revolving the thoughts suggested by the speakers, he saw the western sky undergo a sudden transformation; the golden clouds became steps of light in a pavement of emerald, and on these platforms were placed pairs of golden thrones with gorgeous robes of rich tissue cast over them, and in these robes diamonds were set, and as the light changed they twinkled like sparks that wander about the ashes of consumed paper. Upon each throne a name was written with lightning brilliancy. And the Rabbi saw on two of the highest—two that stood side by side on the same stage—Raschi ben Isaac, of Regensburg, and Abraham ben Gerson, of Barcelona. As soon as the old man had made out these names, the light faded, and he found that the sky was dark, that only a faint amber glow remained above the horizon, and that the stars were shining in the dark blue vault. So he shut his window, and he busied himself through the night in gathering together a few necessities for a journey, for he was resolved ere break of day, to start for Barcelona, and to make the acquaintance of Abraham ben Gerson, who was to be his companion in Paradise.

After a tedious journey, Raschi arrived in Barcelona, his feet sore with walking, and his palm fretted with the staff he held, and his shoulders galled with the straps of the little knapsack which held his clothes and provisions. As he entered the town he thought to himself, "I will not mention the holy man by name, but will see whether the Hebrews here know of his high merit and future exaltation." Then, meeting a Jewish wood-cutter, he stopped him, and said,

Friend, who is the most pious of the faithful in this city?

The wood-cutter replied, "Rabbi Jonathan." Who is the next greatest saint in the city? "Levi ben Nathan."

Have you other wise, just, and holy men here? "Certainly; there is Ismael Zulfik, there is Jehoshua ben Amnon, Samuel the Learned, Mordecai Cohen."

But stay, interrupted Raschi; the one I mean, I suppose must be a very old man, with pale face, bowed knees, a long white beard, eyes red with tears from much weeping for the transgressions of Israel; a man ever engaged in prayer, who maces his body and trains his soul.

"There is no such a man in Barcelona," answered the wood-cutter. "Farewell."

Stay, exclaimed the Rabbi, detaining him; can you tell me aught of Abraham ben Gerson?

"Abraham ben Gerson?" echoed the labourer; he is no saint. He is a rich man, a delicate liver, keeps much company, and is high in favour with the Gentiles."

Where does he live, friend?

"Follow me, and I will show you."

The Rabbi Raschi was brought by the wood-cutter before a marble palace. Gayly caparisoned horses stood at the door, held by pages in gallant liveries. He hastened up the flight of steps leading to the entrance, and entered the hall. It was paved with coloured marbles; the walls were encased with alabaster richly sculptured, and silk curtains hung before the doors. Noblemen waited there, lounging on velvet sofas, till the master of the house could attend to them. Servants glittering with gold lace hurried about, bearing silver goblets of ice wine, and plates with delicious confections, which they handed to the illustrious visitors.

Travel-stained, dust-begrimed, leaning on his rude staff, his gaberline in tatters, his long white beard untrimmed, and the white hair of his head in tangled locks, unattended to, the wondering Raschi stood entranced. A servant approached him with a golden salver, on which were wines. The old man raised his staff, and with flashing eyes indignantly signified him to retire.

Suddenly a silver bell tinkled. Instantly all the nobles rose, the servants started to the stairs leading to the upper portion of the house, drew back the broad curtains that screened the ascent, and ranged themselves in a line between the stairs and the entrance door.

In another moment a noble looking Jew, in a crimson velvet dress, with gold chains about his neck, appeared, accompanying a Spanish prince of royal blood, conversing with him familiarly as they descended the steps, and as he led him to his door.

Make way, said Rabbi Raschi, thrusting his staff before him, and the liveried servants, make way for me.

The master of the house stood still and, looked at him; then made a sign to the domestics, who fell back and allowed the old man to pass.

Raschi's cheeks grew crimson. His hand trembled as he thrust it forth and laid it on the arm of the wealthy Jew.

Are you Abraham, son of Gerson? he asked, in faltering tones.

I am. What do you want with me, father? I must speak with you. Lead on to a private chamber.

The merchant obeyed, and brought the Rabbi into a little room hung with blue silk, fretted with silver.

I am Raschi ben Isaac, said the old man, and I came here to seek you. I hoped to have found a pious Jew; I find one living in pomp and worldliness. I hoped to have found one fasting and praying; I find one eating and trafficking. I thought to have found one the favourite of God, and I find one the courtier of princes and nobles. Is this a house for a Jew—a child of a despised and outcast race? The temple loath waste, and shall we live in luxury and splendour?

I feel honoured in being visited by the illustrious Raschi, said Abraham.

Shamed, ashamed, exclaimed the Rabbi. Are you not ashamed before me to exhibit all this profusion?

God's blessing has been on my business, said the merchant.

And how do you recompense Him? cried the indignant Raschi. By neglecting the Giver, by squandering the gift. Do you fast long? Do you wear the stones with your knees?

My business occupies my time and demands my energies. I pray, but cannot pray for long. I cannot fast, or my business could not be attended to. Do you eat of meat, the flesh of beasts not slain by a Jewish butcher?

I have even done so.

Have you partaken of the accursed flesh of the swine?

I fear that I have.

Have you neglected regular daily attendance at the synagogue?

My attendance has been irregular.

Alas, alas, cried Raschi, throwing down his staff and raising his hands to heaven. Surely there is injustice in paradise as well as in earth. Here lives a wicked Jew, a breaker of the law, in splendour, as a king; in another place is a pious man, fearing God, macestrating his body, in want and nakedness, crushed by poverty, and the kingdom of Heaven receives both, and sets both on a level. Woe is me! and he would have rushed from the chamber, had not the merchant stayed him.

Raschi, he said; I know my duty to God and man, and I practice it as best I can.

Profane one! exclaimed the old man. Trust not your own strength. When the angels are green as the grass, and when all the workers of wickedness do flourish, then shall they be destroyed. But just then there flashed before the Rabbi's eyes that golden throne beside his own on which was written the name of the merchant.

Come with me, said Abraham, taking the old man's hand; to-morrow my daughter is to be married, and to-day I am going to make presents to the poor of our tribe. They are now assembled to receive my alms.

And to whom is your daughter to be married? asked Raschi. To a rich Gentile, may be?

No, answered the merchant, mildly. To my clerk. He is not wealthy, but he is up right and useful, and on his marriage I shall make him my heir.

They descended to the hall, in which the poor were assembled. The rich Jew gave them an alms, and as each received his gift he left. One old woman remained. She pressed forward, and Abraham extended to her a little purse.

No, she exclaimed, thrusting the money aside; I have not come here to beg, but for advice.

Speak, wherein can I advise you? Draw nearer to me.

The woman approached him and began: I am a poor widow, barely supporting four children. Al my hopes were fixed on the marriage of my eldest daughter, to him, to whom my dear husband, now no more, had betrothed her. He was an orphan, brought up in our house, and when he left us, he gained an honest and respectable livelihood; and I hoped when he married my Miriam, that we should have been raised from our poverty. But, alas! his eyes have been blinded by profligacy, and he is about to marry a rich wife and desert my daughter.

Woman! why do you come about this matter to me? asked the merchant; how can I give your Miriam back her betrothal?

You can do so, replied the widow, for that young man will be tomorrow your son in law. Don Abraham started back dismayed. For some moments he did not speak. After a

while however, he broke silence, and said to the old woman—

Did the young man love your Miriam? I am sure, very sure, he did.

I will inquire into this matter, said the merchant turning away.

Well now, spoke Raschi, as they ascended the stairs together. This is a bad business. However, I see what must be done. He gave the young woman, Miriam, a delicate sum of money.

Come here to-morrow, interrupted Abraham; be present at the wedding. By that time I shall have decided, for myself, what is best to be done.

On the morrow at the appointed hour having finished his morning prayers, the Rabbi Raschi betook himself to the palace of him who was to be his comrade in Paradise. There he found a throng of guests, of all ranks filling the rooms. Music played, and tables groined under viands of the richest and most rare descriptions. Raschi with difficulty pushed his way through the crowd to the chamber of the master. Don Abraham was dressed in a magnificent blue velvet robe, braided with gold pomegranates, of which the seeds were rubies. Around him were clustered the grandees of the town. On seeing Raschi he, how ever advanced toward him, and extended to him his hand.

The wedding ceremony soon began; in the court all was prepared; an awning was spread, the bride veiled, and in white, was led forward by two ladies. Then came the bridegroom accompanied by two gentlemen, and the guests followed each with a lighted taper in his hand. From a balcony a band played, and choirs sang. A Rabbi read aloud and distinct the contract, and the acceptance of the bridegroom into partnership with himself, as Abraham's dower, of the bride. Then the bridegroom took a gold ring and placed it on the bride's finger, with the words: "Be to me wed by means of this ring, according to the law of Moses and of Israel."

The Rabbi then gave the pair his blessing. A crystal goblet was raised in the air and then slivered to atoms on the pavement, and all the people shouted "Mazel-tob!" good luck.

Don Abraham, when this ceremony was concluded, stepped up to the bride and gently laid the veil from her face.

God of our fathers! cried the bridegroom, staggering backwards. It is Miriam!

The crowd remained silent, as though turned to stone, for the bride was not Abraham's daughter, but the child of the poor widow.

"I must explain this puzzle," said the merchant, smiling on the company; this girl was betrothed to this youth by her father on his death bed. They were brought up together and loved one another. I knew nothing of this; and when I found that the young man was worthy and useful in the business, I proposed to him that he should become my son-in-law. Out of gratitude for past favors, and in the hope of being able, as my partner, to assist his poor relatives, he yielded to my persuasion, and promised to marry my daughter. Only yesterday did I ascertain the circumstances of his previous engagements; I knew then the reason of his frequent fits of depression. His heart was elsewhere. Through me, however, shall two hearts never be addended. I have made him my partner and given him the widow's daughter to wife.

The newly married couple fell at his feet, thanking him with tears, and the people gave a great shout of applause.

Then Raschi, laying about him with his staff, beat himself a way through the multitude, and pressing up to the merchant, he burst into tears and throwing himself on his neck embraced him, and raising his hands, cried:—Yes! you are worthy to reach Gol Eden! (Paradise). Glory be to God, who has given me such a man as thou, to be my companion for eternity! Glory be to God, who has not made one rough road alone to Paradise, but has made many roads besides; who has prepared a throne, not for the fasting ascetic and contemplative alone, but also for him who can do what is right and just freely!

An Albany dispatch says rumors of charges to be preferred against Senators and Assemblymen, because of checks found among Mr. Tweed's papers, are flying in all directions. Five Senators and fourteen Assemblymen is the regular estimate at this writing. Of one general man, not unknown to military life, the report is circulated that two checks, one for \$15,000 and another for \$25,000, have been found in the boss's bank, properly indorsed. This story is considered to be untrue by many, but since it is known that Tweed's money carried dozens of doubtful measures through the House, it is not unlikely that it is founded on fact.

BRIEF.—A merchant of Frankfurt, who owned property in Chicago, received a characteristic telegram from his American agent there. It was couched in the following laconic terms: "All your houses are burned to the ground. Reply by telegraph if I am to commence rebuilding at once."

RAILROAD SIGNALS.—One whistle of the locomotive means "Down brakes;" two whistles "Off brakes;" three whistles, "Back up;" continued whistles, "Danger." A continued succession of short whistles is the cattle alarm.

The conductor's signal, given by a sweeping motion of the hand, "stop." A beckoning motion, "Go back." A lantern raised and lowered vertically signals starting, swung at right angles or across the track, to stop; swung in a circle, to back. A red flag waved on the track is a signal of danger, hoisted at a station is a signal for stopping, stuck up by the roadside is a signal of danger on the track ahead, carried unrolled on an engine is a signal that another engine or train is on its way.

GREASING WAGGONS.—Few people fully appreciate the importance of thoroughly lubricating the axles, etc., of wagons and the method of applying them. A well made wheel will endure common wear from ten to twenty-five years, if care is taken to use the right kind and proper amount of grease; but if this matter is not attended to, they will be used up in five or six years. Lard should never be used on a wagon, for it will penetrate the tenons of the spokes and spoil the wheel. Tallow is the best lubricator for axle-trees, and sperm oil for iron. Just grease enough should be applied to the spindle of a wagon to give it a light coating.

Josh Billings under Oath.

Josh Billings, being duly sworn, testifies as follows:—Eight went go into six and leave much over anything over. Meany a young fellow has found out this sum in Arithmetic by trying to get a number eight foot into a number six foot.

Virtue, in one respect, is like munny. That which we work the hardest for sticks to us the longest.

I have often heard there was men who knew more than they could tell, but I never met one. I have often met those who could tell a grate deal more than they knew and was willing to swear to it besides.

To be proof again flattery, a man must have no family, and such a man never existed. If he did he is now one of the lost arts.

Sum people are good because they are too lazy to be wicked, and others because they have got a good chance.

In munny, interest follows the "principal." In morals, principle often follows the interest.

In the time of peace prepare for war. This is the way sum families live all the time.

The vices which a man contrains in his youth, however much he may shake them off, will often call on him thru life and seek to renew his a acquaintance.

Every man has his phobias but there is this difference—in the poor man they look like crimes, while in the rich man they only appear to be eccentricities.

Old age increases us in wisdom, and also in rumination.

I know lots of phobias who are pious just because they was born so. They kant tell when they got religion, and if they should lose it they wouldn't know it.

Dr. Porter, of Yale, made a little personal stump speech to his young men the other day, and he said: "Don't drink, don't chew, don't deceive, don't read novels, don't marry until you can support a wife." These were the "don'ts." For the "do's," he told them to "be in earnest" and then he went on to say, "and be self-reliant." Good! "Be generous and be civil." Better! "Read the papers and advertise your business." Best! That last bit of advice is what we call beautiful! The need was there for the excellent and sagacious and learned gentleman to add, "Make money, and do good with it!" He meant, of course, that one who doesn't read the papers or advertise isn't likely to make much money, or to do much good with what little he may make.

Josh Billings says,—"I don't believe in bad luck being set for a man like a trap; but I have known lots of folks who, if there was any first rate bad luck lying around loose, would be sure to get one foot into it anyhow!"

A western paper thinks that women would not make good statesmen. "The question of the age" always troubles them.

It is surmised that Dickens, as a reporter, did his reporting on "Change—he has furnished so many stock quotations.

SMART.—Come, don't be timid, said a couple of foolish snobs to two mechanic; sit down and make yourselves our equals.

We'd have to blow our brains out to do that was the reply.

Five hundred and twenty-five thousand six hundred trains leave London in the course of one year.

A ton of straw makes eight hundred and fifty pounds of paper.