

## SONG ON SUNSHINE.

SING away, ye joyous birds,  
While the sun is o'er us!  
If I only knew your words,  
I would swell the chorus.  
Sing, ye warblers of the sky!  
Sing, ye happy thrushes!  
And ye little ones that lie  
Down among the rushes!

Softly as an angel's wing  
Comes an inspiration:  
Oh that my poor soul could sing  
Worthy of creation!  
Like the solemn chaunting tree—  
Nature in devotion:  
Like the merry harping bee,—  
Harmony in motion.

I would sound a note of joy  
Through the vales of Devon,  
Sweet as Love's, when he a boy  
Nowly came from heaven.  
Till the busy world beguiled  
With its echoes' ringing,  
Shouted, "Hark! for Nature's child  
Her own song is singing."

## HALF A MILLION OF MONEY

WRITTEN BY THE AUTHOR OF "BARBARA'S HISTORY,"  
FOR "ALL THE YEAR ROUND," EDITED BY  
CHARLES DICKENS.

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## CHAPTER IX. OLIMPIA COLONNA.

SAXON TREFALDEN did not fall in love at first sight, as Palamon fell in love with Emelie, walking in the garden "full of braunches grene." His heart beat none the faster, his cheek grew none the brighter, nor the paler, for that stolen contemplation. Nothing of the kind. He only admired her—admired her, and wondered at her, and delighted to look upon her; just as he would have admired, and wondered at, and looked upon a gorgeous sunrise among his own native Alps, or a splendid meteor in a summer sky. He did not attempt to analyse her features. He could not have described her to save his life. He had no idea whether her wondrous eyes were brown or black; or whether it was to them, or to the perfect mouth beneath, that her smile owed the magic of its sweetness. He had not the faintest suspicion that her hair was of the same hue and texture as the world-famed locks of Lucrezia Borgia; he only saw that it was tossed back from her brow like a cloud of burnt gold, crisp and wavy, and gathered into a coronet that a queen might have envied. He knew not how scornfully her lip could curl, and her delicate nostrils quiver; but he could not help seeing that there was something naughty in the very undulations of her tall and slender form, and something imperial in the character of her beauty. In short, Saxon was no connoisseur of female loveliness. The women of the Grisons are among the homeliest of their race, and till now he had seen no others. A really graceful, handsome, highly-bred woman was a phenomenon in his eyes, and he looked upon her with much the same kind of delightful awe that one experiences on first beholding the sea, or the southern stars. Indeed, had Mademoiselle Colonna been only a fine portrait by Titian, or a marble divinity by Phidias, he could hardly have admired her with a more dispassionate and simple wonder.

Presently Mr. Trefalden came back to his breakfast, leaving Signor Colonna and his daughter to theirs. He resumed his seat in silence. He looked graver. He pushed his plate aside with the air of one whose thoughts are too busy for hunger. Then he looked at Saxon; but Saxon's eyes were wandering to the further end of the saloon, and he knew nothing of the close and serious scrutiny to which he was being subjected. The young man would, perhaps, have been somewhat startled had he surprised that expression upon his cousin's face; and even more puzzled than startled by the strange, flitting, cynical smile into which it gradually faded.

"Come, Saxon," said Mr. Trefalden, "we must finish this bottle of Château Margaux before we go."

Saxon shook his head.

"You have had only one glass," remonstrated his cousin.

"Thank you, I do not wish for more."

"Then you don't really like it, after all?"

"Yes I do; but I am no longer thirsty. See—I have almost emptied the water-bottle."

Mr. Trefalden shrugged his shoulders.

"We are told," said he, "that primeval man passed through three preliminary stages before he reached the era of civilisation—namely, the stone period, the iron period, and the bronze. You, my dear Saxon, are still in the stone period; and Heaven only knows how long you might have stayed there, if I had not come to your aid. It is my mission to civilise you."

Saxon laughed aloud. It was his way to laugh on the smallest provocation, like a joyous child; which, in Mr. Trefalden's eyes, was another proof of barbarism.

"Civilise me as much as you please, cousin William," he said; "but don't ask me to drink without thirst, or eat without hunger."

Mr. Trefalden glanced uneasily towards the other table, where the father and daughter were breakfasting side by side, and conversing softly in Italian. Perhaps he did not wish them to hear Saxon call him "cousin." At all events, he rose abruptly, and said: "Come—shall we smoke a cigar in the garden before starting?"

But just as they were leaving the room, Mademoiselle Colonna rose and followed them.

"Mr. Trefalden," she said, eagerly. "Mr. Trefalden—we found letters awaiting us at this place, one of which demands an immediate answer. This answer must be conveyed to a certain spot, by a trusty messenger. It may not, for various reasons, be sent through the post. Can you help me? Do you know of any person whom it would be safe to employ?"

"Indeed I do not," replied the lawyer. "I am as great a stranger in Reichenau as yourself. Perhaps, however, the landlord can tell you—"

"No, no," interrupted she. "It would not be prudent to consult him."

"Then I fear I am powerless."

"It—it is not very far," hesitated the lady. "He would only have to go about a mile beyond Thusis, on the Splügen road."

"If I were not a man of law, Mademoiselle Colonna," said Mr. Trefalden, with his blandest smile, "I would myself volunteer to be your envoy, but—"

"But you have given us your name, Mr. Trefalden, and can do no more. I understand that. I understood it from the first. I am only sorry to have troubled you."

"Indeed you have not troubled me. I only regret that I cannot be of more service."

Wherewith Mr. Trefalden bowed to Mademoiselle Colonna, made a sign to his cousin to follow him, and left the room. But Saxon lingered, blushing and irresolute, and turned to the lady instead.

"I can take the letter," he said, shyly.

Mademoiselle Colonna paused, looked straight into his eyes, and said:

"It is an important letter. Can I trust you?"

"Yes."

"Can I rely upon you to give it into no other hands than those of the person whom I shall describe to you?"

"Yes."

"If any one else should try to take it from you, what would you do?"

"If a man tried to take it from me by force," replied Saxon, laughingly, "I should knock him down."

"But if he were stronger than you; or if there were several?"

He stopped to consider.

"I—I think I should take it out as if I were going to give it up," said he, "and I would swallow it."

"Good."

Mademoiselle Colonna paused again, and again looked at him steadfastly.

"Did you hear all that I said about this letter just now to Mr. Trefalden?" she said.

"Every word of it."

"You know that you must not repeat it."

"I suppose so."

"And you know that to convey this letter may be—though it is very unlikely—a service of some little danger!"

"I did not know that; but I know it was a service of responsibility."

"Well, then, are you equally willing to go?"

"Of course. Why not?"

Mademoiselle Colonna smiled, but somewhat doubtfully.

"I do not doubt your courage," she said; "but how am I to know that you will not betray my confidence?"

Saxon coloured up to the roots of his hair, and drew back a step.

"You must not give me the letter," said he, "if you are afraid to trust me. I can only promise to deliver it, and be silent."

Signor Colonna rose suddenly, and joined them. He had his purse in his hand.

"Will you swear this, young man?" he asked.

"Will you swear this?"

"No," said Saxon, proudly. "I will not swear it. It is forbidden to take God's name for trifles. I will give you my word of honour, but I will not take an oath."

"Humph! what reward do you expect?"

"Reward? What do you mean?"

"Will twenty francs satisfy you?"

Saxon drew back another step. He looked from Signor Colonna to his daughter, and from the lady's face to the gentleman's.

"Money?" he faltered. "You offer me money?"

"Is it not enough?"

Barbarian as he was, Saxon was quite sufficiently civilised to writhen under the sting of this affront. The tears started to his honest eyes. It was the first humiliation he had known in his life, and he felt it bitterly.

"I did not offer to carry your letter for hire," said he, in a hurried, quivering voice. "I would have gone twice the distance to—to please and serve the lady. Good morning."

And, turning abruptly on his heel, the young man strode out of the room.

"Oh, stay, monsieur, one moment—one moment only!" cried Mademoiselle Colonna.

But he was already gone.

"What is this? Who is he? What does it all mean?" asked Signor Colonna impatiently.

"It means that we have committed a grievous error," replied his daughter. "He is a gentleman—a gentleman, and I took him for a common guide! But see, there he goes, through the garden gate—go to him; pray go to him, and apologise in my name and your own."

"But, my child," said the Italian, nervously, "how can you be sure—"

"I am sure. I see it all now—I ought to have seen it from the first. But look yonder, and convince yourself! Mr. Trefalden has taken his arm—they go down through the trees! Pray go, go at once, or you will be too late."

Signor Colonna snatched up his hat and went at once; but he was too late for all that. The garden was a very perplexing place. It belonged, not to the hotel, but to the Château Planta close by, and was entered by a large wooden gate, some few yards down the road. It was laid out on a little picturesque peninsula just at the junction of the Hintert and Vorder Rhodas, and was traversed by all kinds of winding walks, some of which led down to the water-side, some up to shady nooks, or hidden summer-houses, or open lawns fragrant with violets, and musical with ever-playing fountains. Up and down, in and out of these paths, Signor Colonna wandered for nearly half an hour without meeting a living soul, or hearing any sound but the rushing of the rivers and the echoes of his own steps on the gravel. Saxon and his cousin had disappeared as utterly as if the green sward had opened and swallowed them, or the grey Rhine had swept them away in its eddying current.

## CHAPTER X. MENTOR TAKES TELEMACHUS IN HAND.

Pastor Martin never closed his eyes in sleep that night after William Trefalden paid his first visit at the Château Rotzberg. His anxieties had been increasing and multiplying of late, and this event brought them en masse to the surface. He scarcely knew whether to feel relieved or embarrassed by the arrival of his London kinsman. Harassed as his mind had been for some time past, he yet dreaded to lay the source of his troubles before an arbiter who might tell him that he had acted unwisely. Yet here was the arbiter, dropped, as it were, from the clouds; and, be his verdict what it might, the story of Saxon's education could not be withheld from him. The good priest shrunk from this confession. It was true that he had done all for the best. It was also true that he would have given his own life to make that boy a good and happy man. And yet—and yet there remained the fatal possibility which had so haunted him during these last few months. His own judgment might all this time have been at fault; and the fair edifice which