

GOUNOD'S LAST SONG.

"L'ABSENT."

O silence des nuits dont la voix seule est douce
Quand je n'ai plus sa voix;
Mystérieux rayon qui glisse sur la mousse
Dans l'ombre de ces bois,
Dites-moi si ses yeux, à l'heure où tout sommeille,
Se rouvrent doucement.
Et si ma bonne amie, alors que moi je veille,
Se souvient de l'absent.

Quand la lune est aux cieux, baignant de sa lumière
Les grands bois et l'azur,
Quand des cloches du soir qui tintent la prière
Vibre l'écho si pur,
Dites-moi si son âme un instant, recueillie,
S'élève avec leur chant,
Et si de leurs accords la paisible harmonie
Lui rappelle l'absent.

TRANSLATION.

O, silence of the night, whose voice alone is sweet
When hers is lost to me—
Mysterious ray that falls about the mossy feet
Of yonder shading tree—
Tell me if that her eye, when others soundly sleep,
Rekindles soft its sun,
And if my darling friend, while I my vigil keep,
Recalls the absent one!

When in the blue aloft the moon floods with her light
The forest and the sky—
What time the bells that to the vesper prayer invite,
Chime and vibrate and die—
Tell me if that her soul to their sweet harmony
Responds in unison,
And if to her that chime of peaceful melody
Recalls the absent one!

THE PROBLEMS.

I was very much in love with Miss Isadora Curren. I had met her at two balls—had danced with her twice at each, besides helping her to ices and cakes, and now I am making a visit to some friends in the country where Miss Isadora was also a guest. What happiness! What good fortune! Miss Isadora sang, and laughed, and flirted, and I had no eyes or ears for anybody but Miss Isadora. I was very much in love—so everybody said, and so I confessed to myself—and I was not too old not to be very much flattered at the idea of being thought in love with a girl who was so much admired.

One sweet, soft summer afternoon I sat at Miss Isadora's feet, gazing into her pretty face, while she cast her eyes by turns on the charming landscape that lay before the window, and upon me. I was very happy. Other guests were sauntering up and down the room, or amusing themselves in various ways—by reading, working, or listening to the music of a fair performer at the piano.

It was a pleasant scene—I was thinking about it, and connecting it all in my mind with Miss Isadora. Had she been absent, I was assured that not only I, but everyone else, would have been wretched, and I contemplated with delight the scene of happiness which the charming Isadora had created. As my eyes wandered round the room observing the various groups, they fell at last on the sweet, thoughtful face of the little daughter of my hostess—a school girl of sixteen.

She was sitting alone in the recess of a window, with her eyes bent on a volume, on which she seemed vainly striving to fix her attention. In spite of the resolute little frown with which she would turn her eyes on the pages, in a few moments the moving lips would become quiet, and a smile would steal slowly over her countenance, as the gay remarks of some of the company fell on her ear. Again and again she turned resolutely to her task, and as often she failed in keeping her mind to it.

It was indeed an impossibility, under the circumstances, but I could but be amused as I watched her. She did look like such a sweet, innocent, conscientious little thing as she sat there, struggling with temptation, that for a little while I almost forgot my beautiful charmer—Miss Isadora. I rose and sauntered towards the little student.

"What is puzzling your head so, Miss Violet?" I said, pausing before her and smiling.

"Ah, Mr. Seldon, it is the forty-eighth problem. If you only knew how hard it is!"

"Geometry?" cried I; "why do people think it worth while to puzzle such charming little heads as yours with such abstruse matters? But let me see if I can help you."

I sat down beside her, and took one side of the book, while Violet's delicate little hand held the other. I had just begun my elucidations, when I heard Miss Isadora's voice calling me—"Come, Mr. Seldon, we are going to walk." My first impulse was to drop the book and desert little Violet in the midst of her difficulties—but my better nature prevailed, and I said resolutely, "I cannot come just now, but I will follow you presently."

"Oh, Mr. Seldon, you shall not stay with me," cried Violet earnestly; "indeed it would distress me. Please leave me and my dull old problem, and go with Miss Isadora, and I shall be quite vexed, quite grieved!"—and she looked up in my face with pleading eyes.

I thought I had never seen eyes of such a deep, heavenly blue, and altogether she looked so very sweet, innocent, and lovely, that I could not feel it a hardship to remain with her, even though separated meanwhile from the divine Isadora.

"No, no," I said, kindly and cheerfully, "I will solve your problem first, and there will be time enough afterwards to overtake the party—so now for it."

My pupil was apt, and in a few moments all obscurities were cleared up, and little Violet's face was bright with smiles.

"Thank you—thank you, Mr. Seldon; you have been very kind, and I hope it is not too late for you to overtake the walking party."

"Perhaps not," said I carelessly; "but I want to know first why you were so very anxious about that problem."

"Why?—why don't you know that tomorrow is my last day at school, and that it is examination day? I thought everybody knew that to-morrow was examination day!"

"Not everybody," I replied, smiling; "for I did not know it. But tell me all about it."

"Oh, no, do not ask me—it would take too long; and Miss Isadora—"

"Never mind Miss Isadora," said I, becoming impatient at the frequent repetition of her name; "I find it is now too late to join the walkers, and, if you please, I prefer taking a little ramble in the garden with you."

"Oh, delightful! with pleasure!" cried Violet, gaily, and stepping from the low window, we walked down the shadowy garden walk together. The afternoon was uncommonly lovely, and as the glimpses of sunlight fell on the girlish face of my little companion, I thought I had never seen a being so fresh, so innocent, and charming; but I added mentally, "She is nothing compared to the queenly Miss Isadora."

Ere long we heard the voices of the returning party, and with the consciousness of a duty pleasantly performed, I was again at the side of my charmer. I thought she was rather cool towards me at first; but that soon wore off, and I was the happy slave whom she selected to carry her fan, or to seek her forgotten gloves or handkerchief. I appreciated her condescension, and was, as of course I should have been, supremely blest. In the evening Miss Isadora sang, and sang the songs that I preferred. All radiant with smiles and jewels as she was, she dignified to lean on my arm—to dance with me—to eat the ices I presented—to endure my adoring glances, and never was mortal more flattered and bewitched than I. That night, after going to bed, I rose, and for Miss Isadora's sake spoiled half a quire of good paper.

It was not until the next day, when little Violet returned smiling and happy from school, with a silver medal around her neck, that I again thought of her.

"So, Miss Violet, you have passed examination creditably, I see," said I, pointing to the medal.

"Ah, yes," she replied, blushing, and holding it up that I might see the word *Problem* engraved on it—"and I know whom to thank for it. Indeed, Mr. Seldon, I think this medal belongs rather to you than me; but for you, I am sure, I should not have had it."

"Do you think so? Well, then, give it me."

Smiling, she took it from her neck and handed it to me, saying, "I am sure you will not take it—you would not care for such a thing."

"Yes, but I shall, if you will yourself place it round my neck."

Violet hesitated and blushed, but did as I desired, and turned hastily away. She looked so shy, so modest, and so innocent, that I was irresistibly charmed! I followed her down the garden walk.

"Is not this rose beautiful, Miss Violet?" I said, gathering a half-opened bud.

"Ah, yes, most beautiful," she replied, turning to look at it.

"Forgive me, Miss Violet," I continued; "but to me it looks like you. May I put it in your hair?"

"No, you would be too awkward," she replied, smiling; "I will do it myself."

She took the rose and placed it in her hair in so graceful a fashion, and so greatly did it set off her beauty, that I could not withdraw my eyes from her, and Bryant's exquisite lines rose to my mind—

"Innocent maid and snow-white flower,
Well are ye paired in your opening hour;
Thus should the pure and lovely meet,
Stainless with stainless, and sweet with sweet."

So several weeks flew by, and had I not known that I was incontrovertibly in love with Miss Isadora, I should almost have fancied that I was losing my heart to little Violet, so rapidly did she win upon my heart. I would not admit myself to have been so fickle as to have changed, but I could not deny that Miss Isadora bewitched and fascinated me—my heart was most full of tenderness when I thought of sweet little Violet. It was a problem which I could not solve—which of these two charming beings I was most in love with; and but that such a thing has been declared impossible by all persons skilled in such affairs, I should have cut the matter short by believing myself in love with both.

While in this undecided state of mind, events began to take a turn which soon let me see a little further into my own heart, and left me in no doubt as to my feelings. A young gentleman, Mr. Cameron, also a great guest at the house, suddenly began to pay assiduous attentions to Violet. I was indignant—I felt as if personally insulted in the most flagrant manner—my blood boiled whenever the man presumed so much as to speak to "my little Violet," or to look in her innocent face. I wondered she

should permit it—but she, poor child, seemed quite unaware of the dangerous nature of this man. I longed to put her on her guard, and one day made up my mind to do so, in the course of the afternoon walk. I was preparing to accompany her, when I saw that Mr. Cameron was already by her side. I was in a horrible humour; and though Miss Isadora said, with her sweetest smile, "Come, Mr. Seldon, you shall be my escort," I excused myself, and would not walk at all.

I went and sat alone in my room, indulging my jealous fancies—yes, I was jealous—I could no longer deny it. I had made that discovery, and before that another, which was, that little Violet was dearer to me than life itself. Miss Isadora, with all her brilliancy, had faded from my heart—all her charms and graces seemed worthless, compared with one innocent, child-like smile of sweet little Violet's—and she—she was now, perhaps, lost to me for ever. I was wretched. After a time I heard gay voices below, and presently a voice singing. It was one I did not know, but very clear and sweet; its tones were full of freshness, purity, and feeling, and, as though drawn by a magnet, I stole nearer and nearer to the enchanting sounds. I entered the drawing-room just as the voice ceased, and Violet rose blushing from the piano.

"Charming! delightful! what a shame you have never sung before!" resounded from all sides, and one of the ladies explained to me—"Mr. Cameron has at last prevailed on Violet to sing; I am sure we ought to be much obliged to him for using his influence to such advantage."

I bit my lip, and glanced towards Violet. Mr. Cameron was bending over and whispering to her—her eyes were cast down, and a blush was on her cheek. It was a sight that was hateful to me, but as if fascinated I stood, and could not withdraw my gaze. Violet—my Violet listening to the flatteries of another! I saw her rise to dance with Mr. Cameron, and I could endure it no longer: in a passion of jealousy I hurried from the room. I found my way to the library, and mechanically took up a book. It was Violet's geometry, and it opened to the forty-eighth problem. I sat at the table with it open before me, my eyes fixed upon it, while my thoughts wandered back to that first sunny afternoon when I sat by Violet's side, so unconscious that she would soon be to me the being most dear on earth—the one to whose hands was committed my weal or woe. I took Violet's little medal, which I still wore, from my neck, and laid it on the book and gazed in a reverie on the word *problems*. The door opened, and Violet hastily entered. Coming behind me she looked over my shoulder, exclaiming, "What! more problems?"

"Yes, Miss Violet," I answered, sadly; "but now they are too hard for me to solve."

"Indeed! then it is my turn to help you, as you once helped me," she exclaimed, laughing. "Pray tell me if I can help you."

"Ah, if you only would?" I replied, looking up searchingly and earnestly into her face.

She was silent, and cast down her eyes. Something in her blushing face and shrinking manner encouraged me.

"Yes, Violet," I said hurriedly; "there is indeed a problem that perplexes me, and which you alone can solve. I hardly dare to ask you, for it seems impossible that you should; but do you think you could ever—in time, I mean—learn to love me? or," I added, with a burst of grief and tenderness, "must I give my little Violet up to another?"

Tears came into Violet's eyes, and she trembled.

"What you ask is impossible," she began, and paused. In bitterness of heart, I bowed my head upon the table, that she might not see my agony. "Because," she added, laying her hand on my shoulder—"because I cannot learn to love you, when I already do so with all my heart and soul! Yes," she added, smiling through her tears at my bewilderment, "that lesson I began to learn with our first problem."

SPIRITUALISM.

In considering the growth, or spread of spiritualism, we cannot but notice how the credulity of those who affect to believe in it keep pace, ever, with the pretensions of those by and through whom the supposed evidences of its reality are manifested. Now, in our own minds, we have identified believers in spiritualism with those superstitious and partially insane individuals who are in the habit of looking at the new moon over their left shoulder, and are filled with gloomy forebodings and presentiments of evil if they are unfortunate enough to spill the salt, &c. It seems, after all, as if people were taken very much at their own valuation. We mean to say that such a class of persons as we have particularised, would witness the sleight of hand performances of a "Wizard of the North" and because he himself acknowledges that they are but tricks, performed in such manner as to deceive the eye, they would believe him readily, we presume, and wonder at his skill alone. On the other hand, bring them into the presence of a professing spiritualist, or so-called "medium," and at once their wits seem to desert them, and they are ready to attribute to spiritual intervention, tricks and deceptions that, in most instances, would not do credit to an ordinary conjuror, and to hug, as evidence of a future existence, performances remarkable only for the inferiority of their conception. Seeing that the

nature of Heavenly occupation, or employment (if we may be allowed the term), is supposed to be so much more sublime than anything we poor mortals can imagine, what ought we to think of those miserable specimens of humanity who affect to believe that the spirits of the departed stand ready at the beck and call of self-styled mediums, whose merit consists principally in being needy. The idea that the immortal spirit of a "Milton" or "Newton" leaves, or is permitted to leave, at a beck from one of these impostors, the sublime atmosphere of heaven, to slip a doorkey into Smith's pocket, or pinch Jones on the leg, would be the very acme of absurdity, if it were not so utterly blasphemous. There is one feature about these manifestations, prominent enough, one would think, to put everybody claiming to have a grain of common sense upon their guard, and that is, that these so-called "phenomena" are presented only under the cloak of darkness. Now why should this be the case? Surely light would not disconcert, in the spirit, one who was such a seeker after it in the flesh. It is difficult to imagine what possible objection any well regulated spirit could have to mid-day performances, unless indeed the evenings are their only spare time, and even then one would think that a room, brilliantly illuminated, would be more pleasing to everything and everybody concerned.

This spirit-inclination to keep dark is all the more unaccountable, when we take into consideration the fact that they (the spirits) are, we believe, invisible. If this were not the case, if the spirits were all very visible, we could easily understand how it would add to the confusion of any "shade" to be seen pulling Brown's whiskers, or strumming on a tambourine reeking with phosphorus and the more illustrious the performer, the more, we presume, he would "blush to find it fame." Some believers in spiritualism would doubtless say, "We do not pretend to call spirits out of Heaven, but out of some sort of 'purgatory' or 'ever-presentness,' if we may so say." But such an argument, while it might subtract somewhat from the profanity of spiritualism, could not materially alter the bald absurdity of its pretensions.

Montreal.

LOOP REVIL.

ARTISTIC.

MR. RUSKIN is occupied at Venice in studies for the completion of a supplementary volume to "The Stones of Venice," a sort of art-guide or art-history of the masterpieces existing in that city.

FRENCH artists have been invited to take part in a fine-art exhibition at Vienna. All pictures accepted at the Paris Salon will be admitted without further examination.

THE excavations of Olympia were recommenced on Sept. 27. An inscription has been found of the first century before the Christian era which contains a list of colleges of priests.

THERE has just been opened in London a class for teaching ladies drawing and engraving on wood. The work has many advantages. It is clean, not laborious, may be carried on at home, and is fairly remunerative. From £1 to £5 a week may be earned at it, and really superior artists may get a good deal more.

If a statue, made of plaster of Paris or *papier maché*, be coated with thick white dammar varnish, and then dusted with pulverized glass, it will have, when dry, the appearance of alabaster. If it be afterwards varnished a second time, and dusted with coarsely pulverized white glass or mica and again dried, it will be a very successful imitation of Carrara marble, especially if the marble veins be first traced with some delicate blue pigment.

A bronze statue was unveiled at Copenhagen, Sept. 25, to H. C. Oersted, the discoverer, in 1821, of electro-magnetism, who died twenty-five years ago. On a hexagonal pedestal, surrounded by a group representing the Past, the Present, and the Future, stands a statue of Oersted holding the wire of an electric battery over a magnetic needle. The ceremony was attended by the King of Denmark, the King of Greece, the Crown Prince and a number of distinguished scientists.

"DEVINS' VEGETABLE WORM PASTILLES" are of the greatest medical improvements of modern times. They combine what has hitherto been considered the most opposite and distinct qualities—being as agreeable to the taste as the most delicious confectionery, as delightful to the smell as fresh flowers, and more effective in their medicinal operation than any preparation hitherto discovered; they are safe for the most delicate child, and are guaranteed to remove every vestige of worms. The genuine have the word "Devins" stamped on each pastille.

Read the following flattering notice of one of our Montreal institutions:

OPINION OF DR. SHEPPARD, ONE OF THE DIRECTORS OF "THE HAMMAM," JERMYN ST., LONDON.

Montreal, October 13th, 1876.

As I have had much experience of the Turkish Bath in England and have just bathed here at the new establishment in St. Monique Street, the proprietor has asked me to state my opinion of its merits.

This I am happy in doing. The Montreal Hammam is admirably conducted and deserves every support. The heat of several chambers is well maintained, and the superintendent, who has had great experience in England, is quite equal to all the requirements and duties of an institution devoted to the promotion of health and comfort.

EDGAR SHEPPARD, M. D., D. C. L., Medl. Supt. of Colney Hatch Asylum, London, Eng.