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THE WORSHIP OF NATURE.

The Ocean looks up to Heaven,
As 'twere a living thing—
The homage of its waves is given
In ceaseless worshipping.
They kneel upon the sloping sand,
As bends the human knee—
A beautiful and tireless band,
The priesthood of the sea.
They pour the glittering treasures out,
Which in the sea hath birth :
And chant their awful hymns about
The watching hills of Earth.

The green earth sends its incense up,
From every mountain shrine,
From every flower and dewy cup
That greeteth the sunshine.
The mists are lifted from the rills,
Like the white wing of prayer,
They lean above the ancient hills,
As doing homage there.
The forest tops are lowly cast
O'er breezy hill and glen,
As if a prayerful spirit passed
On Nature as on men.

The clouds weep o'er the fallen world,
Even as repentant love,
Ere to the blessed breeze unfurled
They fade in light above.
The sky is as a temple's arch,
The blue and wavy air
Is glorious with the spirit-march
Of messengers of prayer.
The gentle moon—the kindling sun—
The many stars are given,
As shrines to burn Earth's incense on
The altar fires of Heaven !

BLANCHE D'ALBI.

I was attracted to one of the graves, surrounding the Church of —, by some affecting circumstances which had been related to me of its poor tenant. England had afforded her that last gloomy resting-place, but she was not a native of its soil ; and the inscription on the modest head-stone placed over her remains told that "Blanche D'Albi, born in 1801, in the canton of Zurich, Switzerland, departed this life in Lombard-street ; London, in the year 1820." Oh, simple record ! more eloquent, more touching, than all that poetry and sentiment could have woven into the most diffuse epitaph.

So far from her country, her kindred and her home—taken away so early, in the bud of life ; there amongst the dust of strangers, under those black walls, beneath that rank soil, those baleful weeds, lay the daughter of that lovely mountain land, to which, doubtless, in the happy sanguine confidence of youth, she had so often anticipated the rapturous hour of her return. All this, and more than this, was suggested to the heart by that brief inscription. But it did not tell all—It did not tell that the young creature who slept below had been singularly beautiful, of the happiest and gentlest nature—engaging to a very unusual degree, the darling of fond parents ; the happiest maiden of her happy land ; the blithest bird of her native mountains, till—but why not relate at once the few simple notices which have fallen in my way, connected with the brief existence of the young stranger ? They will form at best but an imperfect and very uneventful story, but such a one as found its way to my heart, and may interest those whose tastes and feelings are yet unperturbed by the feverish excitement and exaggerated tone of modern fiction.

Blanche D'Albi, at the time of her decease, had been for more than a twelvemonth resident in the family of Mr. L—, one of the wealthiest merchants in the city of London. She had been engaged as French governess to his four little daughters, who were also provided with an English teacher, and attended by half the masters in the metropolis. The young Swissess had been received on the most unexceptionable recommendation, as to character, connexions, and elegant acquirements, but nothing more of her private history was communicated, than that she was the only daughter of a respectable Protestant minister. That the sudden death of both her parents occurring within a few months of each other, had left her at the age of eighteen a destitute orphan, deprived of the protection of an only brother, who, previous to the death of her parents, had taken service in the Swiss corps of De Meuron, and had accompanied that regiment to India. So situated, Blanche D'Albi had recourse for her future maintenance to

the expedient so often resorted to, even under happier circumstances, by numbers of her young countrywomen.

In company with several young persons from her own canton, embarked on the same enterprize, and provided with such recommendations as could be obtained to mercantile houses in London, or to such of their own countrymen as were already established there, Blanche bade adieu to her "own romantic land," and very shortly after her arrival in England, it was her good fortune to be engaged in the family of Mr. L—, where her situation might with truth have been called almost enviable compared with the general lot of young persons in the same circumstances. She shared the school-room, and the task of educating four engaging spoilt children, with an elderly English governess, to whose domineering, but not harsh temper, she willingly yielded supremacy, and was therefore treated by Miss Crawford with some-what of the indulgent consideration she would have bestowed on an elder pupil. The little girls soon attached themselves fondly to their young indulgent governess, and their affection soon obtained for her all the good will and unbending kindness it was in the nature of Mrs. L— to confer on any human being in a dependent situation. Mr. L—, a man of cold and formal manners, fully impressed with the sense of his own wealth and consequence, but one whose better feelings were not all sacrificed at the shrine of Mammon, treated her invariably with almost attentive politeness, during the stated intervals within attendance on her young charges, she was admitted to his society. It is true, he exchanged but few words with her, and those appeared constrained, as if by the latent fear of compromising his dignified importance ; but there was gentleness in the tone of his voice when he addressed himself to the timid orphan, and a benevolence in his eyes, which carried with them to the young bereaved heart of Blanche D'Albi, a far kinder signification that was implied by the mere words of his unvaried formal salutation, "I hope you are well to-day Ma'am'selle ?"

Blanche had not only every comfort, but many luxuries at her command, especially that which she prized beyond all others, the disposal of her own time for some hours in the evening of each day. Taking all circumstances into consideration, therefore, the young emigrant might be pronounced singularly fortunate, in having so soon found shelter in so secure a haven. And she felt that Providence had been very gracious to her, and her heart was grateful and contented—But was she happy ? Who ever asked that question ? Who ever doubted that she was so in a situation so favored with peculiar advantages ? The home she lost, the friends she had left, the brother so widely separated from her, the recollection of her own dear village, and of her young happy years—No one ever inquired into—or interested themselves about all these things. No voice inviting confidence ever interrupted those deep and silent spells of inward vision, when all the past was busy in her heart, and one frank kind question, one affectionate word, would have unlocked—as from the source of a fountain—all the ingenuous feelings, all the tender recollections, all the anxious thoughts and innocent hopes, that were crowded together in that pure sanctuary, cherished and brooded over in secret and in silence, till the playful vivacity of her nature (its characteristic charm in happier days) was subdued into a tone of almost reserved seriousness. At times, during the play hours of the children, when they had coaxed her to mingle in their innocent sports ; at such times the playful beauty of her nature would break out into a gleam of its former brightness ; and then her laugh was so joyous, her countenance so sparkling, her voice so mirthfully in unison with their childish glee, that a stranger would have taken her for the eldest sister, and the happiest of those four happy children.

Those also were among her happiest moments when, encircled by her young and attentive auditory, she spoke to them—for to them she could speak of it—of her own native land, of its high mountains, whose tops were white with snow in the hottest summer days ; of the seas of ice, with their hard frozen ridges ; of its beautiful clear lakes, on one of which she and her little brother had been used to row their fairy bark—Of the Chalots, when in their mountain rambles, they had been feasted on rural dainties by the hospitable peasants—Of the bounding chamois, and of their daring hunters, amongst whom her brother Theodore, and a young friend of his, whom she called Horace, had been foremost in bold enterprise ; and then she told, how once returned from a long and venturous chase, the friends had brought her home a little wounded chamois—and the children never tired of hearing how she had nursed and reared, and at last, with success almost

unexampled, brought to perfect tameness, the wild creature of the mountain ; and how Horace Vandreuil (they had learnt to speak his name and that of Theodore familiarly) had encircled its slender elegant neck with a small silver collar, on which was engraven, "*J'appartiens a Blanche.*"

Once the little inquisitive creatures had innocently questioned her about her parents,—asked her if she had loved them as dearly as they did their papa and mamma ; but then, the only answer they obtained was, that the mirthful voice of their playfellow died away into a tremulous inarticulate sound, and that suddenly hiding her face on the fair bosom of the youngest child, who was seated on her lap, she gave way (for the first time before them) to an agony of tears and sobs, that wrung their young hearts with distressful sympathy, and soon melted them all to tears as they clung round her, with their sweet, loving, broken consolations. There is something more soothing in the caressing tenderness of childish sympathy, than in all the consolatory efforts of mature reason. In the first agony of a bereaved heart, or rather when the first benumbing shock is passing away, who would not shrink from rational comforters—from persuasive kindness—from the voice of friendship itself, to weep unrestrainedly in the clasping arms of an infant—on its pure innocent bosom ? It is as if a commissioned angel spoke peace from Heaven, pouring the balm of heavenly comfort on a wound too recent to bear a touch less gentle, less divine.

From that hour the little girls spoke only of Theodore and Horace, when, collected round Blanche, they pleaded for one of her "pretty stories about Switzerland." From the secret indulgence of tender recollections and dreamy hopes, Blanche insensibly fell into those habits of abstraction too common to persons of imaginative minds, and deep and repressed sensibility, and not infrequently she drew upon herself the sharp observation of Miss Crawford, or the cold surprise of Mrs. L—, by starting in bashful confusion, at the repetition of some question or remark, which had failed in rousing her attention when first addressed to her. It was an evil habit, and Blanche was conscious of its being so, and she listened with penitent humility to Miss Crawford's school lectures on the "affectation and ill-breeding of young persons who give way to absence of mind," and to Mrs. L—'s wonder at "what Mademoiselle could be thinking of ?"—What could she be thinking of ?—Oh heaven !—In that dull square—pacing those formal walls, under those dusty trees—in that more dull more formal drawing-room, when the prattling tongues of her little charges were no longer at liberty—when she felt herself indeed a stranger and an alien—what could she think of, but of the days that were past, and of those that might be in store for her, if ever. And then there swam before her eyes visions of a white low dwelling all embowered in honeysuckle—of a little green wicket in a sweet-briar hedge—and of one who leant over it, idling away the precious moments, long after he had presented the garland or the nose gay, arranged for her hair or her bosom,—and then the scene changed to a grass plat and a group of linden trees, and her own dear parents sat under their shade, with other elders of the village, whose children were mingling with her in the merry dance on that fine green sward, to the sweet tones of Theodor's flute,—and then there were parting tears, and inarticulate words—and the agony of young hearts at a first separation—and a little boat lessening across the lake—and waving hands—and the last glimpse on the opposite shore, of glittering uniforms and waving plumes,—and then there was darkness, and fear, and trouble—and the shadow of death fell on the dear white cottage, and a sullen bell tolled,—and, yet again—and one funeral, and then another wound away from its low entrance, across the grass plat beneath the linden trees, towards the church, where the new minister But the fond dreamer shut her eyes to exclude that torturing sight—and then—and the harsh voice of some cold observer—(all voices sound harshly to senses so absorbed) recalled her to reality, and to painfully confused consciousness, of the surprise and displeasure her inattention had excited. Poor Blanche ! thou hadst been the beloved of many hearts ! the darling of some ! the object of almost exclusive affection !—How difficult to be contented with less !—How cold, by comparison the after interest we may awaken in other hearts ! even in gentle and tender hearts, whose first affections are yet given to dearer claimants. How hard to endure the measured kindness of mere well-wishers,—the constrained courtesy of well-bred indifference—the unintentional slight of the regardless many !—the cutting contumely of the malicious few ! How withering, contrasted with former looks of love, and