

SONNET.

I stood and leaned upon a balustrade:
Beneath me lay the gray-roofed city, Rome.
The sun had sunk beneath Saint Peter's dome,
While all the bells their Ave Mary played.
Sweet music filled the air, and the young moon
Trembled in liquid tenderness on high;
But I was looking northward with a sigh,
And said, "Ah, quiet vale, I greet thee soon!"
Now when the daylight fades I stand and gaze
Upon the silent fields and the dark hills
That close around my lonely home, till fills
My heart with longing for the Roman days.
O longing, changing heart! O world too small!
Would all were one, or one dear place were all!

F. S. in November Atlantic.

[For the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.]

WALTER PENWELL'S PROGRESS.

CHAPTER III.

In the Steamship, in the Railway,
In the thoughts that shake mankind.
Tennyson.

"Several members of Parliament left this morning for Ottawa. Mr. Penwell goes with them as the representative of the *Daily Examiner*."

This was a paragraph which appeared in one of the evening papers of Wharftown in the month of August in the year eighteen hundred and blank-ty. The mission was a fortunate one for Penwell. It took him away from the scene of his folly and left him opportunity to persevere in his good resolutions. He was rapidly making a name for himself in other fashions than the one I have mentioned. He had been admitted to the bar and had promise of fair practice. He was well known as a contributor to the press. He had been complimented by politicians and rather smiled on by ministers. And the lessons he had got from publishers and rough friends had knocked the edge off his conceits and made him more practical and sensible. Besides, he was bent on making a living independent of his friends who were not wealthy, and this laudable ambition impelled him to read hard and write well and bear himself sedately. The party with which he went was a good one, and comprised several friends. He had never been far from home before and the journey was all novelty to him. He had never mixed much with elderly men; and was at first very reserved and shy with them. But his quiet ways and obliging disposition won on most of the party, and ere the first day's journey was over, he had made a favorable impression on all the parliamentary party, and had started some curious topics of conversation. He had a strange fashion of admiring old times, not common with young men,—his reading having led him among the older writers and to the contemplation of an early period of social life. One of the most talkative of the party was a Mr. McGarland who represented the county of Appleville in Parliament. This gentleman was very modernised, and would support any plan for abolishing anything merely because he did not like anything which was older than he was. He was fond of coming to talk with Penwell, who was not less delighted to find a man who would dispute with good humor.

"This railway is the highest triumph of civilization," said Mr. McGarland. "How the old fogies of fifty years ago would have stared at this."

"There are a good many people who stare at it now," said Penwell, "and condemn it too, and question the goodness of it also; and I am not so sure that they are not right."

"What! doubt the benefit of the railway! Look at the rate we are going. Could we make such time on a stage coach?"

"They were going rather faster than this at Abergele the other day, and the widows and orphans don't think very highly of the railway. What is speed to safety? And what is speed to comfort and pleasure, and the beauties of nature that we miss here? Stage coaches do not collide. They give you a chance to see the beauty of the land, and to eat your meals in decent comfort. What do we see from the railway car window, but a blurred picture of the landscape, like a painting that the painter has rubbed his sleeve across while it was yet wet? We are half choked with soot and dust. We are made most uncomfortable by the heat. We can't get rest for our heads, legs or backs. It is an infliction, railway travel, at the best, and it won't do to make too much of it."

"But the time we save," said Mr. McGarland.

"We waste more time in ordinary than we gain on the railway. I have heard of a young man who spent a considerable time trying to find out how many days he could save in his life by shortening his signature; and a wise friend said to him, 'about as much as you lose in making the calculation.'"

"But look at the good that the railway has done to the farms and villages," said Mr. McGarland.

"What good? It has taken all their produce to the towns at either end, and made prices dear for the farmers, and villagers who are not farmers. It has introduced unaccustomed luxury among them. It has taken away all their clever young men and all their pretty girls, and stripped them of every chance of social refinement among themselves; and it has introduced false political issues and electoral corruption among them."

"You have got the soul of a sixteenth century Tory transmigrated into you, I believe."

"I rather like Roger North—and Christopher ditto," said the brazen Penwell, as Mr. McGarland left him and went away to tell the others what extraordinary things the young fellow had been saying.

In the train there was a certain elderly gentleman who represented one of the finest counties in New Brunswick. His daughter was travelling with him to the capital to enjoy her first season of court-life as we have it in this country.

Mr. Dolby was a man of much reading and experience, but unfitted for public life. He never spoke; he never canvassed; but as he carried with him always some three or four votes on a division, he was a man of mark in the House. On committee she was the terror of lawyers and petitioners; for he had a rigid regard for the regular results of a legislative act, a judicial decision or an electoral contest. Any one who needlessly attempted to alter the order of things was a dangerous person in his eyes. With such principles, it is needless to say he called himself a Conservative and voted with the Ministry; but he had a disregard for the French members, and when his help was needed, it was necessary that French Ministerialists should keep dark. His whim had been humored as much as he was consistent with dignity and prudence, but as he was always likely to bolt, he was treated with uncommon courtesy. He never dined at his lodgings. His little daughter was a gem. She had soft brown eyes and dark brown hair which had a trick of caressing her forehead down close to her eyebrows. Her mouth was like a rosebud. Her complexion was not that colorless brown tint which passes for brunette; it was as if she had such a supply of light in her soul that it could not find its way out through her eyes alone, but stole through her cheeks as well. Penwell was the only young man on the train; the others were fathers of families and uninteresting as such. But Penwell had been noticed by the little beauty who had been criticising him when he talked with Mr. McGarland. "He is rather good looking," she said to herself, "but conceited. He thinks he knows more than that old gentleman he is talking to. There is a little sadness about his eyes, though. I wonder if he has ever been in love. Perhaps he will want to be introduced. I am sure I wish he would, for I'm tired of talking to horrid old members who wear glasses, and tell Pa I'm getting to be quite a fine young lady."

And Penwell was looking at her also, and wondering if he should ever have interest in a young lady again. Of late, he had been wont to recite to himself, and for my edification:

"Brightest eyes that ever have shone.
Sweetest lips that ever were kissed,
May smile and whisper and I not list,
Or look away and never be missed.
Ere ever a month is gone."

But that sort of apathy is not deep. When a man talks of his coldness, he has already reason to doubt it; it is too conscious. The coldness that is unconscious is always deep; but only a freak of nature or a great disaster produces that. Most of us get over our griefs mighty easy. And I would back the influence of pretty lips against the deepest grief that ever my young friend was afflicted with. He began to grow interested in the little beauty. He cast furtive glances. He saw her get tired of her book and actually take up a newspaper, hunt for the part that was clipped and wonder what it was about, and then throw it away again; then he saw her try to get rest for her head with a due regard for her hair; then he determined to be introduced. Mr. McGarland came along opportunely, and, at Penwell's request, brought him up, and, after his own fashion, introduced him as a young man who wanted something as young, as modern and as lovely as Miss Dolby to cultivate and educate him.

"Miss Dolby will find me a willing scholar. We all owe the beginning of our education to woman. Our mothers begin with us, our schoolmistresses continue our education and our loves complete it," said Penwell with as serious a face as he could make.

"Pray, are you a member of Parliament?" said she.

"If he made a speech like that in our House we should hiss him down," said Mr. McGarland. "We do not tolerate any sentiments, except those of patriotism."

"I am aware," said Penwell, "that you discourage anything like elegance; it is the product of an earlier age. Halifax would be coughed down. Sheridan would be laughed at. Fox would be deemed too dangerous even for the Liberal Party."

"Oh, if you are going to mount the editorial Pegasus and carry us back to old times perforce, I must go away and leave you with the teacher—happier than you deserve to be, you young Tory."

"I am afraid I can teach Mr. Penwell very little," said Miss Dolby. "You, gentlemen of the press, are supposed to be omniscient, and you are an editor."

"That is ex-officio omniscience. We have the libraries at command and the Cyclopedias are at our elbows. A Dictionary of Dates, a Cyclopaedia, and a Burton's Anatomy are the three things needful for an editor. With these he is all powerful and all wise."

"I am sure you do not confine yourself to the dictionaries. You are fond of books, are you not?"

"I was born among them," said he, "and I have been handling them all my life, but I am ashamed to think how little I have learned from them."

"Perhaps more than you think," she said, with a delicate shade of flattery. "The wife of Ali Baba, in the story, measured out her money in a pot and some of the coins stuck to the bottom, you know."

"Oh, you read the dear old Arabian Nights! I fear they are going out of fashion. There are lots of costly copies, but I see no popular sorts of volumes. What a world it was to live in! Such brightness, such beauty, such romance, such adventure! It was a good stroke of Mr. Dickens—wasn't it?—to make Old Scrooge remember Ali Baba as the pleasantest of his boyhood's memories. The old sinner was not so bad after all, when such a figure remained in his life so long."

"What is that little book you were reading a little time ago? I thought it seemed to amuse you very much."

"It is the 'Autocrat of the Breakfast Table

and it is a dictionary of good things. You shall have it, if you wish."

"Thank you, I will look at it, but I know it very well. I have read it once, and looked into it often. I have a sort of friendship for the author. I think he is a good man. He is so liberal too. His humor is very kind, and his religious principles are so wide!"

"You refer to that remark of his about planting oaks in flower pots; he does not seem to have a creed or to relish the idea of a church."

"I do. Is it not a fine image?"

"That depends. I am not so sure of it. It is always safe to suspect, if not to condemn any thought which bears against the religious faith and practice of eighteen centuries. Churches are older than flower pots, and philosophers than Mr. Holmes."

"I thought all you young gentlemen read only modern philosophers. Some of my friends are fond of the Westminster Review and lend me an occasional number which I read."

Penwell wanted to laugh at the notion of the "Review" being put down among the philosophies, but he did not. He said, "I am afraid I should quarrel with the friend who lent you the 'Review' with any recommendation of it? Don't you know it is rather of an infidel turn?"

"Well, of course, I know, but then one likes to read clever things, and can do so without quite believing them."

"Would you listen to evil stories about your father merely because some scandal-monger told them well?"

"That is a new way of putting it. I should certainly not." And she stopped and leaned back in her seat.

They were sweeping through a rough country now; but in a little while the train stormed the up grades of a high hill-side and below them there was the most beautiful sight. The hills rose high across a beautiful valley. A brook ran slowly at the hill's feet. A little way down the hill-side and out across the little plain the land ran green and smooth. Here and there a farm was marked. Here and there a farmer's house sent up its smoky column to the sky. Here and there a team rested in the shade, a group of children gazed at the train as it swept above them. A well filled waggon wagged lazily along the road. A boy was trying to catch a refractory horse in a field. Some women stood at their doors and, with hand to brow, gazed after the train. And then the scene passed out of view and the rock cuttings of the mountain took them again.

"A good deal more than this train passes these people by daily," said Penwell; "a good deal of danger and trouble, and luxury, and ambition, and jealousy, and greed. We carry them all with us."

"Are you romantic, Mr. Penwell? You seem to like the idea of a woodland cottage—with love in it, of course."

"I think love is as often found in a cottage as anywhere, or, what is as good as love, content. Content is the whole sum of love, is it not? If I am content with my lot or my life, am I not in love with it?"

"When you make love to a young lady, tell her you are content with her and see if she will be content with that," said Miss Dolby with some archness.

"I am not likely to make love for some time to come. I am horribly mercenary and ambitious. That is, I do not think I shall fall in love very easily. But one does not travel in trains, nor meet lovely ladies every day in the year, for excuse for going to worship," said Penwell with a little of his old trick, against which he had sworn, breaking out on him.

"Do you think it is always good to pay compliments?" she said a little gravely.

"The best compliment is the truth, and if I say you are beautiful and intelligent, and have good taste in books, I am not paying you any compliment other than the truth, am I?"

"Who is to be the judge of the truth?"

"Let me be," said Penwell with a sudden eagerness which surprised himself and called up a blush to the cheek of the little lady who was not unmindful of the interest she had awakened in the young man since they had begun to talk.

He rose up, feeling that he had been rash and that the young lady had better be left alone. His head was turned slightly by the beauty and the vivacity and the intelligence of the lady, and he was astonished at himself for the interest she had raised in him. Was he going to lose his head again? Was this the cold and calculating fellow who had started from Wharftown? The fact was that love was necessary to the young man. He could do nothing in life without that noble stimulus, and he yearned after some grand passion which should move him to noble deeds and to hard work, to gain its end and to enjoy its felicity.

By some disarrangement of the trains, the party were delayed at St. Johannes, a city of shops and signs. Signs covered the city, as if it had had a pestilence which had caused it to break out all over in parti-colored abominations. There were signs everywhere so thick that Penwell said, "surely this was not that wicked and perverse generation to whom no signs should be given, for they were as thick as texts in the revelations." St. Johannes was a thriving city. It had cut itself out of the rock. It had risen to the music of industry like Thebes to the music of Apollo. It was so shrouded in fog that neighbors never knew each other though they lived side by side for years. But by common consent, every one would tell you that this was the very first foggy day they had had for a month past. And this falsehood was supposed to be harmless because the people had built several churches as an offset. The citizens of St. Johannes were a most enterprising people—their banks occasionally thought them a trifle rash. They were also an artistic people—they had dedicated a temple to Apollo and put a bust of Shakespeare over the door of it. They were noted for their vivacity of conversation—they

would bet you two to one upon almost anything.

There was a rush upon the hotels, and the party found a difficulty in getting accommodated. Mr. Dolby and his daughter, being known, secured lodgings. The rest of the party had to put up with shakedown in a hotel parlor. Whosoever says that a shakedown in a big room, with a dozen fairly elderly gentlemen, is not a pleasant incident in a journey, is a person of disgracefully effeminate habits. I think it is splendid. Penwell put up with the rest. His description of the evening is very vivid, and I cannot do justice to it. The grave and stern old gentlemen were on a lark; necessity forced them into unwonted fun, and all their latent boyhood came out. They sat on the floor and played whist. They had recitations. A future Cabinet Minister sang all Moore's Melodies. A future Judge sang the comic song of St. Ke in. A senator told a story. A member perpetrated a pun. The pipe of tranquility produced discord and laughter. The wine when it was red was looked upon with favor. And at the conclusion, the company joined hands round a gentleman of sixty five and sang out of tune most horribly, "Auld Lang Syne." Not one man was ever the less dignified for the unwonted relapse into the ways of that pleasant land of Bohemia in which all of them had travelled a little in youth.

The morning train took them away from St. Johannes, and, as there was time to spare, they determined to go in a body to Quebec, if only for an hour.

Penwell found himself again near Miss Dolby. He had thought of her often during the evening. He had wildly resolved that a railway accident would be welcome if he could have the delight of rescuing Miss Dolby. The brown eyes had pierced very deep indeed. She had been a little troubled at his manner, for she was only eighteen and had never had any "affairs," and was therefore unprepared for any adoration at first sight. But his views so novel to her, his frank way, his pleasant voice, his earnestness, all prepossessed her in his favor, and she was willing to renew the conversation of the previous day. But her father was unusually dignified and silent. He had unbent too much the night previous, and was disposed to be more than ordinarily grave this morning. For the best part of the journey, therefore, Penwell was unable to renew his tête-à-tête. He had handed her a book, and got a "thank you." He had brought her a drink, and been rewarded with a smile. He had called her attention to the scenery, and been gratified by her attention. He had told her father a story, and she had laughed. She grew weary, and he panted to be able to offer her his shoulder to lean against. She chatted with a sexagenarian, and he grew morose. She mused pensively, and he wildly dreamed that she might be thinking of him. Not till Quebec was reached, and for a short time the party trod the quaint streets and sought out the remains of famous gates, did he have a chance. The party were standing on the noble bluff that looks out over the river and the country—a noble view, and for a little while he had a chance.

"What are you thinking of, Mr. Penwell?" she said with some interest. "Of the battles and bruises of Quebec?"

"Have you read the Virginians?" said Penwell. "I was thinking of them. I was thinking of Harry Warrington who came out here leaving the dear friends at home—and of James Wolfe, (not Colonel Wolfe), who left his sweetheart at home in Merry England, the England of the German Georges, of the Bellendens and Tepells, of the Harveys and Bolingbrokes! Do you remember how angry little Harry was when the court did not go into mourning for their James Wolfe—as if the 'strutting little turkey-cock of Herrenhausen' had any heart to mourn for him?"

"Ah," she said, "you love Thackeray."

"Yes, I love him greatly. A good man, a great nature, a noble writer. He has been to me a liberal education. I think I should not be much surprised to see Master Harry Warrington come rushing here with a cocked hat and a froged coat and top boots, and a sword, and swear a little and ask me to crack a bottle. I should like to go with him, but for one thing."

"What is that?"

"I should have to leave you."

She blushed and he looked a little afraid of his rashness. But she recovered and turned the conversation into history again.

"Has not England been good to Canada? Ought we not to be loyal? This fortress is a monument to her protective care."

"Yes, and a monument to our loyalty also. Do you know that noble poem of Browning, 'Home thoughts from the sea,' in which he tells us how

"Sunset ran one glorious blood red
Reeking into Cadiz Bay,"

And how on one side was Gibraltar "grand and gray" and also full in sight Trafalgar lay; and how his one thought was

"Here and here did England help me—
—How can I help England? Say!"

"Don't you think that an Englishman might reasonably feel that Canada has helped him here and ask us how could he help Canada also? English blood has been shed here for us; but Canadian blood has been shed here also for England."

"I am sure," she said admiringly, "you put it so eloquently that an Englishman must go with you. I go with you surely,"—and then she felt the blood forsake her face as she bent down and whispered,

"Would that you could, that you could!"

Their next meeting, for a day, was in Montreal. Glorious city! Beautiful by day and by night! Beautiful when approached from the river, and from the land. Beautiful in your churches, your streets, your charities. Dear to me for your hospitable hearts, for my school boy friends who have studied, have died there.