

POETRY.

A FRAGMENT. Two larks upon the breast, And laborer's donee; Two pale feet crossed in rest, Two eyes with coil-weights shut.

SELECT STORY.

THE PIONEERS.

By J. Finmore Cooper. "THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS," "THE PATRIOT," "HOMEROUND," "BOUNDS," ETC.

"I see no streets in the direction of our walk," said Elizabeth, "unless you call the short avenues through these pine bushes by that name. Surely you do not comprehend building houses, very soon, in that forest before us, and in those swamps?"

"Had you seen her?" Mr. Jones interrupted the lady with a tone that said very plainly to the gentleman that he was touching a forbidden subject.

"I know it, I know it," cried Richard, "and if it were in my power, I would make a king. He is a noble-hearted fellow, and would make an excellent king, that is, if he had a good prime minister. But who had he? voices in the bushes—a combination about mischief, I'll wager my commission. Let us draw near and examine a little into the matter."

"Notwithstanding the lady's reluctance, Richard, stimulated doubtless by his sense of duty, prevailed; and they were soon near as distinctly to hear sounds."

"This," cried the young man, with an accent that sounded as if he took a bitter pleasure in his poverty, while he held a shilling up before his eyes, "this is all the treasure that I possess—and this my rifle! Now, indeed, I have become a man of the woods, and must place my sole dependence on the chase. Come, Natty, let us stake the last penny for the bird; with your aim, it cannot fail to be successful."

"I would rather it should be, John, had you my heart jumps into my mouth, because you set your mind so much on it; and I'm certain that I shall miss the bird. Them Indians can shoot one time as well as another; nothing ever done by me. I say, John, here's a shilling; take my rifle, and get a shot at the big turkey they've put up at the stump. Mr. Oliver is over-anxious about it."

"The Indian turned his head gloomily, and after looking keenly for a moment, in profound silence, at his companions, he replied: 'When John was young, eyesight was not straighter than his bullet. The Mingo squaws cried out at the sound of his rifle. When did he ever shoot twice? The eagle went above the clouds when he passed the wigwag of Chingachgook; his feathers were plenty with the women. But see,' he said, raising his voice from the low, mournful tones in which he had spoken to a pitch of keen excitement, and stretching forth both hands, 'they shak, like a deer at the wolf's howl. Is John old? When was a Mohican a squaw with seventy winters? No! the white man brings old age with him—run is his tomahawk!'"

"Why, then, do you use it, old man?" exclaimed the young hunter; "why will you, so noble by nature, aid the devices of the devil by making himself a beast?"

"You are a Delaware, my son; your words are not heard—John cannot shoot." "I thought that had had Indian blood in him," whispered Richard. But the poor fellow shall have two shots at the turkey, if he wants it, for I'll give him another shilling myself; though, perhaps, I had better offer to shoot him. They have got up their Christmas sports, I find, in the bushes yonder, where you hear the laughter.

"Hold," cried Richard, "I exclaimed Elizabeth, clinging to his arm; 'would it be delicate to offer a shilling to that gentleman?'"

"Gentlemen, again! do you think a half-breed, like him, will refuse money? No, no! he will take the shilling, say I, and even run to, notwithstanding he moonlight so much about it. Billy Kirby is one of the best marksmen in the country; that is, if we except the gentleman."

"Then," said Elizabeth, who found her strength unequal to her will, "then, sir, I will speak." She advanced, with an air of determination, in front of her cousin, and entered the little circle of bushes that surrounded the trio of hunters. Her appearance startled the youth, who at first made an involuntary motion toward retreating, but, recollecting himself, bowed, by lifting his cap, and resumed his attitude of leaning on his rifle. Neither Natty nor Molegan betrayed any emotion, though the appearance of Elizabeth was so entirely unexpected.

"I find," she said, "that the old Christmas sport of shooting the turkey is yet in use among you. I feel inclined to try my chance for a bird. Which of you will take this money, and after paying my fee, give me the aid of his rifle?"

"Is this a sport for a lady?" exclaimed the young hunter, with an emphasis that could not be mistaken, and with a rapidity that showed he spoke without consulting anything but feeling.

"Why not, sir? It is as inhuman, the sin is not confined to one sex only. But I have my humor as well as others. I ask not your assistance, but"—turning to Natty, and dropping a dollar in his hand—"this old veteran of the forest will be so ungrateful as to refuse one fire for a lady."

Leather-Stocking dropped the money into his pouch, and throwing up the end of rifle, he freshened his priming; and first laughing in his usual manner, he threw the piece over his shoulder, and said: "If Billy Kirby don't get the bird before me, and the Frenchman's powder don't hang fire this damp morning, you'll see as fine a turkey dead, in a few minutes, as I have known the Dutch women, on the Mohawk and Schoharie, count greatly on coming to the merry-making; and so, lad, you shouldn't be short with the lady. Come, let us go forward, for if we wait the finest bird will be gone."

"But I have a right before you, Natty, and shall try on my own luck first. You will excuse me, Miss Temple; I have much reason to wish that bird, and may seem ungallant, but I must claim my privileges."

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